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Lived Mentoring Experience of Early-Career Teachers in Selected Gauteng Public Schools: A Narrative Inquiry

by

VIVIAN ZINHLE MASEKO

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Supervisor

Professor P. Myende

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Declaration

I Vivian Zinhle Maseko (Student number: 29640718), declare that the dissertation *Lived Mentoring Experience of Early-Career Teachers In Selected Gauteng Public Schools: A Narrative Inquiry*, which I hereby submit 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.

Vivian Zinhle Maseko

March 2021

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Faculty of Education

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CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire

CC

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu
Prof. Phumlani Myende

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- Compliance with approved research protocol,
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- Data storage requirements.

Dedications

I dedicate this dissertation

- to my late mom, Martha Maseko. Though heaven called you early, I know that you are very proud of me right now. Thank you for the love and support you have shown me. Thank you for instilling the love of learning in me, for without you and your support, I do not know where I would be in life. I am forever grateful for your presence in my life. I love you mom.

- to my sister Bongiwe Maseko, family and friends. Thank you for walking this journey by my side. Your support and words of encouragement have not gone unnoticed. Your belief in me inspired me to work hard, thank you for that.

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Abstract

This study reports on an investigation into the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Although several studies have examined mentoring of early-career teachers, international evidence suggests that the experiences of mentoring for early-career teachers in different schools are not the same, hence the need to understand the same phenomenon in the context of South African schools. Therefore, this study focused on how early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools construct their mentoring experiences, what meanings are deduced from these experiences about the nature of mentoring and the benefits of a mentoring programme, and how mentoring of early career teachers could be improved.

This study uses the ONSIDE mentoring framework. The research was conducted using a qualitative design and made use of narrative inquiry. Purposive sampling was used to select the eight participants. Data was generated by means of letter writing and narrative interviews; the generated data was then analysed using narrative analysis and analysis of narratives.

From the narratives of participants, all early-career teachers, it emerged that mentoring in the selected schools took place formally and informally, and that the teachers were all allocated a senior teacher as their mentor. While mentoring occurs, it emerged that it happens outside deliberate plans on how it should happen and what are the expectations from mentors and mentees. While it is unplanned, the findings further reveal that the participants benefit from psychosocial support, they learn more about classroom management, discipline and subject matter, and benefit from career-related support. The study further finds that these early career teachers believe that mentoring can be improved by allocating multiple mentors to one early career teacher, by monitoring and by the creation of space for independence and constructive feedback.

This study concludes that the mentoring support available for early-career teachers in schools is inadequate. Schools need to review and improve their mentoring programmes so that early-career teachers can fully benefit from them.

Key Terms

Early-career teacher

Veteran teacher

Mentoring

Mentor

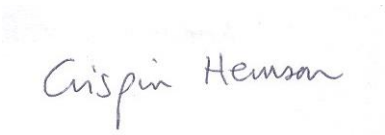
Induction

Language Editing

Crispin Hemson
15 Morris Place
Glenwood
Durban
South Africa 4001

hemsonc@gmail.com
0829265333

This is to confirm that I have undertaken language editing of a master's study by Vivian Zinhle Maseko, entitled **Lived Mentoring Experience of Early-Career Teachers in Selected Gauteng Public Schools: A Narrative Inquiry**



4th December 2020

List of abbreviations

ECT	Early-career teacher
DoE	Department of Education
SACE	South African Council for Education
HOD	Head of Department
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
PCT	Progressively Collaborative Teaching
PLD	Professional Learning Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

One of the key aspects in making new teachers stay longer in the profession is making sure that they understand and enjoy their profession as teachers. One of the ways to ensure this, is ensuring that teachers are provided with meaningful mentoring (Hugo 2018; Esau 2017; Khalfan 2017; Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014; Mukeredzi, Mthiyane & Bertram 2015; Gross 2016 & Kempen 2010). In this study, I use teachers' narratives generated through letter writing and narrative interviews to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Given this aim, this chapter presents the background and problem statement, rationale, purpose of this study and research questions. Furthermore, the main concepts of this study are deliberated. Finally, the organisation of the chapters is outlined.

1.2 Background of the study

Good teachers are characterised by being flexible within the profession and having a sense of willingness to adapt to the ever-changing policies and to teaching diverse learners (Culkin 2016, Devine, McGillicudy & Fahie 2013). These teachers believe in their learners, acknowledge that each learner is different and believe that they should not give up on them (Culkin 2016). Furthermore, Hattie (2003) argues that good teachers are masters of their learning areas. As a result, Hattie (2003) states that these teachers find it easy to improvise when required, to monitor learning, to transfer knowledge and to give feedback to learners. Such teachers are "passionate about teaching and learning" (Devine et al. 2013 & Hattie 2003: 8), thus they show a great deal of respect to their learners, have love for their learners and can inspire and influence learner achievement (Hattie 2003). This is not about duration in the profession; good teachers can either be veteran or early-career teachers.

According to Wonacott (2002), veteran teachers are teachers who have been in the teaching profession for a period of more than five years. Through the years, these teachers have gained "extensive knowledge and skills in various pedagogical and

professional aspects related to teaching and learning" (Nantanga 2014:10). Thus, they have the potential to guide and support early-career teachers to become knowledgeable. Since veteran teachers have more experience in the teaching profession, they have more knowledge of interventions that can be implemented for classroom management and difficult learners (Culkin 2016), these being some of the issues early-career teachers have been found to be struggling with (Khalfan 2017; Karsenti & Collin 2013; Harfitt 2014; Struyven & Vanthournout 2014).

Although early-career teachers are most likely to learn more from veteran teachers, they may also be a valuable resource in schools (Ulvik & Langørgen 2012). According to Ulvik and Langørgen (2012), early-career teachers are important because they contribute new ideas/ways of doing things. They are also energetic, enthusiastic, flexible, computer literate and have a way of relating to young people (Ulvik & Langørgen 2012; OECD 2018). Because these teachers are fresh from universities/colleges, their knowledge and skills in relation to the profession and their learning area are up to date (Ulvik & Langørgen 2012). Furthermore, Ulvik and Langørgen (2012) teach us that having such teachers is an advantage because they appear to be flexible and willing to learn new things. Although these teachers are associated with good characteristics, studies (Khalfan 2017; McCollum 2014; Dlani 2012) also show that they find it difficult to translate their knowledge into a practical classroom or school context, hence their strong need for mentoring.

1.3 Problem statement

In a study conducted in South Africa by Hickman and Dharsey (2014), it was found that there was an increase of 6 000 in 2009 to 13 000 in 2012 in the number of teachers graduating; however, very few of those teachers chose to remain in the profession. The majority of those teachers complained about the unnecessary workload, struggling with classroom management and being dissatisfied in their new environment, while others were attracted to other careers (Hickman & Dharsey 2014). Additionally, Hodge (2015) states that 73% of student teachers and early-career teachers have considered leaving the profession, giving similar reasons as above. This is an indication that, somewhere along the line, something goes wrong. Both early-career teachers and veteran teachers tend to leave the profession for one reason or another. For instance, Harfitt (2014) reports that most early career teachers

experience pressure very quickly as they are no longer supported by their mentor lecturers, mentor teachers and their universities. Early-career teachers enter the teaching profession with passion and hope that they will make a difference in the learners' lives (McCollum 2014). However, as they enter the school environment, some find themselves feeling alone and isolated without any form of support being given to them (McCollum 2014). Further, Kardos and Johnson (2010) and Hugo (2012) state that it is during those early years when early-career teachers need support and are at their lowest. Sadly, some of those teachers are forsaken, to face a 'sink or swim' situation alone (Hugo 2018; Kardos & Johnson 2010). As these teachers begin teaching, they are expected to work at the same level as veteran teachers, and, although they have knowledge as earlier alluded to, sometimes it is not possible for them to be like veteran teachers (Khalfan 2017; McCollum 2014). Early-career teachers are expected to adjust to the school environment, manage the classroom, know and implement policies, but all those activities sometimes become too stressful to handle (Fantilli & McDougall 2009). Hence, some early-career teachers who are discouraged consider leaving the profession (Harfitt 2014; McCollum 2014; Karsenti & Collin 2013). Therefore, Dishena (2014) suggests that schools need to provide early-career teachers with support that will aid in them learning to teach, surviving, and prospering as teachers.

Other difficulties experienced by some early-career teachers in their new work environment include heavy workload, poor classroom management, unruly learners, difficult parents and lack of support from their fellow colleagues and administrators (Karsenti & Collin 2013). Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) additionally point out that there is another reason why early-career teachers leave the profession. According to Struyven and Vanthournout (2014), other early-career teachers leave the profession to venture into other careers, the majority being male teachers and high school teachers. The reason identified by Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) as to why these teachers venture into other careers is that their subject speciality offers them more opportunities and often better conditions for jobs outside the teaching profession. Nonetheless, Hughes (2012) explains that, as much as some early-career teachers are leaving the profession, there are those who choose to remain in the profession, in particular, foundation phase teachers when compared to other phases. From research conducted by Culkin (2016), we know that most of the challenges faced by teachers

in the beginning of their careers are similar to challenges faced by teachers later in their careers. Unlike early-career teachers, veteran teachers tend to endure the challenges better and leave the profession due to retirement or illnesses (Hughes 2012).

In a research conducted by SACE (2011), it was found that teachers leave to teach in other countries or in urban areas. South Africa, amongst other developing countries, is one of the countries from which teachers are migrating to other countries; thus it is referred to as a "sender country" (SACE 2011:8). Of those South African teachers who migrate out of the country, the majority go to countries such as United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, to name a few (SACE 2011). Most of the time, teachers who migrate are early-career teachers. The reasons given for migration include unappealing salaries, ever-changing policies and poor working conditions with increased workload (SACE 2011). SACE (2011) also acknowledges the migration of teachers *within* the country, mostly moving from rural areas to urban areas, called internal migration. The reasons given by most early-career teachers as to why they move to urban areas include unfavourable work conditions, such as small classroom size which sometimes leads to multi-grade teaching (SACE 2011). Lack of resources was also listed as another reason for internal migration (SACE 2011). Although, in South Africa, early-career teachers migrate for one reason or another, it appears that most private schools or previously white schools do not experience a high number of teacher migration or even teachers leaving the profession (SACE 2011). What makes those schools attractive is that they have favourable working conditions and availability of resources, thus their early-career teachers tend to stay (SACE 2011). Synonymously in the USA, the majority of teachers migrating to urban schools usually prefer wealthier, white populated students, which has resulted in some researchers concluding that teachers do not like working with poor students (Simon and Johnson 2013). To remedy the challenge of early-career teachers leaving the profession, mentoring as part of professional development can be used.

Mentoring as part of a professional development strategy is important because it is aimed at assisting early-career teachers to adapt to their new work environment, which leads to development of oneself and professionally (Dlani 2012). Swart (2013:1) highlight that schools are expected to support their early-career teachers with

“continued professional learning”. Moreover, legislative frameworks like the Education Labour Relations Council Resolution (1998:5) stipulates that, “one of the functions of the school principal is to assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school”, hence mentoring as one of the strategy that can be used is important. Therefore, the Department of Education (2008) expects that during mentoring, the mentor and mentee should be formally matched and there should be a set of activities that must be completed by both the mentor and mentee. However, the Department of Basic Education (2009) points out that the reality of most South African schooling systems does not provide enough support for early-career teachers. Thus, Nantanga (2014) points out that South Africa too has not fallen behind when it comes to teacher attrition. In South Africa for instance, Hugo (2018) noted a startling 5% a year of teacher attrition, due to, amongst other reasons lack of support for early-career teachers. Where mentoring takes place, Swart (2013) states that there is no clear direction to how this mentoring should occur and what the intended outcomes that needs to be achieved should be. So, the way mentoring is implemented in schools is solely dependent on the school (Swart 2013). Consequently, Dale-Jones (2014) states that it is not all schools that are fortunate enough to have formalized mentoring programs, hence some schools usually opt for the more unplanned version of mentoring as means of supporting early-career teachers.

While the studies above acknowledge that mentoring does take place in schools and reveal some challenges that come with mentoring of early-career teachers, they do not highlight how this mentoring is experienced by early-career teachers. Then the question that arises is that, if mentoring takes place in schools, then how is its nature and how do early-career teachers benefit from it. Therefore, there is a need to understand how early-career teachers experience mentoring. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools.

1.4 Rationale

My motivation and interest for this study was driven by two different perspectives. The first perspective is based on my experience as an early-career teacher. The second perspective is based on my social interactions with other early-career teachers.

Personal

Four years ago, I was blessed with a job in a primary school in the township where I grew up. I was very excited that I was going to give back to the community that enabled me to become the person I am today. I had so many ideas of how I wanted my ideal class to look – and the type of learners I was going to have. However, as I entered the school environment, fresh from university, I then realised that reality was the opposite of what I had imagined. I found myself in a situation where I had to swim or sink, because of the lack of support that is non-existent in my workplace. The workload was too much to handle and I found myself struggling to cope, submitting work late and not having enough sleep. What made matters worse was that the classrooms were so overcrowded in a way that I could not interact with all the learners because I could not get to all of them. That gave rise to the classroom management challenges I experienced. Without any support from the school, I felt alone, frustrated, and stressed in my new workplace. There was a senior teacher with whom I shared a subject. Now and then I would go to her for assistance, especially with subject matters; that is when she noticed that I needed help. Then she volunteered to be my mentor. She devoted her time to helping me grow professionally and adapt in my new work environment. Her assistance helped ease the frustrations and stress that I experienced before. Gradually, things were getting better for me and that boosted my confidence. This experience awakened in me an interest and motivation to study more about the experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring.

Social

In South Africa, Hugo (2018), as recorded above, notes the high rate of teacher attrition amongst early-career teachers. Through interacting with other early-career teachers who also work in public schools, some of whom I attended university with, I realised that the challenges I experienced and complained about, before I had a mentor, were the very same challenges they were experiencing. Like me, most of them complained about struggling to adapt in their new work environment and in the

classroom, especially with classroom management. Also, some of the early-career teachers I had interacted with stated that they were not supported and even considered leaving the profession. Unlike me, some till today have never been mentored; they just had to grow a thick skin and find a way to survive. One, however, resigned because he was forever complaining about being a teacher, so he decided to change careers. Similarly, Dlani (2012) stresses that, when early-career teachers are not supported and guided in the early years, they feel alone and disheartened, resulting in others considering resigning. This made me conclude that most early-career teachers in public schools do not get enough support in terms of mentoring during the early years. Such reasons stimulated my thirst to know more about the mentoring of early-career teachers. This study is therefore important, because it aims to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools.

This study can potentially benefit early-career teachers, schools, and districts. It may contribute to helping schools/districts understand better the type of mentoring that is best suited for supporting early-career teachers. Understanding the type of mentoring best suited for early-career teachers may help schools implement and monitor mentoring in a way that will benefit the mentee, mentor and the school at large. It may also be used to guide the way that schools identify and pair mentors with mentees. This study may also assist in identifying the gap regarding what works and does not work when it comes to mentoring of early-career teachers. It has also acted as a medium through which participants have expressed their deepest thoughts on how they have experienced this mentoring and how it can be improved.

1.5 Aim and objectives

1.5.2 Aim of the study

Given the problem highlighted above, the aim of this study is to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

To achieve this aim, the specific objectives were as follows:

- Exploring how early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools construct their mentoring experiences and what meanings are deduced from

these experiences about the nature of mentoring, the benefits of a mentoring programme and how this mentoring could be improved.

1.6 Research questions

1.6.1 Main research question

- What are the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools?

1.6.2 Sub-questions

- What do the experiences of early career teachers tell us about the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers in Gauteng selected public schools?
- How do early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools benefit from mentoring programmes?
- How can mentoring of early-career teachers in public schools be improved?

1.7 Concept clarification

Below are definitions of the concepts that are foundation to this study:

Early-career teacher

An early-career teacher is a teacher who is new in the profession and has a teaching experience of five years or less (Bierbaum 2016; Kolbe 2014). These teachers are fresh from universities/colleges and have just started teaching (Ulvik & Langørgen 2012). Although Dlani (2012) is not specific about the number of years, he sees early-career teachers as teachers who are in their early years of teaching and still need to adapt to their new work environment. In the context of this study, the term early-career teacher refers to a teacher who is new in the profession and has a teaching experience of five years or less.

Veteran teacher

A veteran teacher is a teacher who has been in the teaching profession for a period of more than five years (Wonacott 2002). Through the years, these teachers have gained "extensive knowledge and skills in various pedagogical and professional aspects related to teaching and learning" (Nantanga 2014:10). Rodríguez and McKay (2010)

are not specific about the number of years, however, they define a veteran teacher as a teacher who has been teaching for many years and is able to create an environment for effective teaching and learning. In this study, the term veteran teacher refers to a teacher who has been in the teaching profession for a period of more than five years.

Mentoring

Mentoring is regarded as an "information communication" process that is usually face-to-face between a person who is seen to have more appropriate knowledge, understanding and experience and a person who is seen to have less (Hugo 2018:46). In the context of schooling, it is also defined as a relationship between two people (a veteran and an early-career teacher), where a veteran teacher develops, guides, and supports an early-career teacher so that they can adapt into their new roles and work environment (Dlani 2012; Khalfan 2017; Esau 2017; Gross 2016; Kempen 2010). As such, a veteran teacher shares and transfers important skills and knowledge that will encourage growth and development for an early-career teacher (Department of Education 2008). In this study, mentoring refers to a relationship between two people (a veteran and an early-career teacher), where a veteran teacher develops, guides, and supports an early-career teacher so that they can adapt into their new roles, grow and develop professionally.

Mentor

A mentor is regarded as a person who is experienced and possesses relevant skills in the area of interest (Whitfield & Edwards 2011). In the context of schooling, the mentor develops, guides, and supports an early-career teacher (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014). A mentor is also defined as a trained veteran teacher who is assigned the responsibility to assist and support an early-career teacher during their first year of teaching (Uushona 2018). In the context of this study, a mentor refers to an experienced teacher who develops, guides, and supports an early-career teacher.

Induction

Induction is a concept normally used by organisations to explain the processes and procedures used to introduce new employees to their new environment and co-workers (Mabaso 2012; Mlindazwe 2010). It is also regarded as an orientation process where early-career teachers are introduced to colleagues, provided with necessary

information so that they can be familiar with their workplace and what is expected of them (Dassler 2013). In this study, induction refers to an orientation process used by organisations to explain the processes and procedures used to introduce new employees to their new environment and co-workers.

1.8 Organisation of the report

This report consists of six chapters. Below is the summary of each of the chapters.

Chapter one has presented the background and problem statement of this study. Subsequently, the rationale that pointed out my interest in the study and the contributions this study will make to the body of knowledge relating to my field were discussed. Following these was the purpose of this study and research questions. Last, this chapter deliberated on the key concepts of this study.

Chapter two presents the review of literature concerning this research study. Here, local and international scholarship on mentoring of early-career teachers will be interrogated. This chapter will also present the theoretical framework that supports the study.

Chapter three presents a detailed discussion on the research design and methodology that will be used in this study. First, the research paradigm and research approach will be discussed. Following that, the selection of participants, data collection and analysis will be accounted for. In conclusion, this chapter will focus on limitations, issues of trustworthiness and the ethical considerations that relate to this study.

Chapter four focuses on the first level of analysis, identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as narrative analysis. Here, the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools will be portrayed and re-storied. The plot system will then be utilised to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of events that have occurred, how and when they have occurred as experienced by the participants of this study.

Chapter five presents the second level of analysis, identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as analysis of narratives. The re-storied narratives from Chapter four will thus be

analysed “with pragmatic process which results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories” (Polkinghorne 1995:12). The themes will then be used to answer the three sub-questions of this study and will be presented thematically.

Chapter six provides a summary of the findings. From the findings, the conclusions and recommendations for future research are discussed.

1.9 Chapter summary

The main aim of this chapter was to develop and evoke in the reader an interest regarding mentoring of early-career teachers in public schools. Hence, this chapter presented an overview of this study. The background and problem statement were discussed, pointing out issues around mentoring of early-career teachers and the gap in research. The rationale has highlighted the experiences that led to my interest in the topic, followed by the purpose of this study and research questions. A brief description of the main concepts of this study was also provided.

The next chapter presents a detailed literature review concerning this research study. Hence, scholarship on the mentoring of early-career teachers (ECTs) from local and international perspectives will be interrogated. The theoretical framework that relates to this study is also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMING

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at reviewing literature concerning this research study. Hence, I interrogate scholarship on mentoring of early-career teachers from local and international perspectives. The intention of this chapter is to understand and explain the gap in research around mentoring of early-career teachers within the context of public schools. I begin this chapter by looking at the debates on conceptualising early-career teachers. Following that, I examine the concept of mentoring; in doing so, I also bring in the concept of induction, because literature has not created a clear distinction between the two. Further from this, I present formal and informal mentoring as types of mentoring. I also bring in the concept of e-mentoring because it cuts across formal and informal mentoring. I then interrogate debates around good mentoring. I focus on what early-career teachers like and what they do not like in their mentoring, with the aim to inform the response to the one question of this study, about how mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved. Last, the theoretical framework used in this study is discussed.

2.2 Conceptualising early-career teachers

In the interrogation of the literature, it appears that there is no agreement or single way in which an early-career teacher is defined. Further, it appears that different scholars locally and internally (Boakye & Ampiah 2017; Avalos 2016; Bierbaum 2016; Smit & Du Toit 2016; Dlani 2012; Georgia State Board of Education 2012) use different concepts to refer to early-career teachers as adopted in this study. For example, Avalos (2016); the Georgia State Board of Education (2012); Bierbaum (2016); Smit and Du Toit (2016) use the concept of ‘beginner teacher’ to refer to early-career teachers. On the other hand, scholars like Dlani (2012) use the concept ‘novice teacher’ to refer to early-career teachers. Furthermore, there is a use of the term ‘newly qualified teachers’ to refer to ECTs, by authors like Boakye and Ampiah (2017). As mentioned in the background, this study adopts ‘early-career teacher’ as the concept to refer to ‘novice teacher’ or beginner teacher.

Similarly, the understanding of who is an early-career teacher has multiple perspectives. The Georgia State Board of Education (2012), for instance, defines an ECT as a teacher who has been teaching in a school for less than three years**.** However, Bierbaum (2016) and Kolbe (2014) have a slight difference in the definition of what an ECT is and define this teacher as someone who is new in the profession and has a teaching experience of five years or less. Although Dlani (2012) is not specific about years, he sees ECTs as teachers who are in their early years of teaching and still need to adapt to their new work environment. According to Boakye and Ampiah (2017), newly qualified teachers are teachers who have just graduated, fresh from university or college, while a protégé is defined as a person who receives guidance and support from an older, more knowledgeable, or influential person (*English Oxford living dictionaries* 2018). Although different scholars attach a different number of years to the concept of ECT, what is apparent is that ECTs are teachers who are not experienced in the profession of teaching. Their experience may range from 0-5 years, as established in the literature above. For this study, the perspective by Bierbaum (2016) and Kolbe (2014), which sees early-career teachers as teachers who have five years or less in the profession, is adopted.

2.3 Understanding mentoring

Mentoring as a concept is widely defined and there seems to be a common understanding of what mentoring is. According to Dlani (2012), mentoring is a relationship where one teacher develops, guides, and supports another teacher. The teacher who develops, guides, and supports another teacher is usually referred to as the mentor (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014), while the teacher who is developed, guided, and supported by a mentor is referred to as a mentee (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014). Mukeredzi et al. (2015) and Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner (2011) additionally state that mentoring is a relationship between a veteran teacher and an early-career teacher meant to assist an early-career teacher in different aspects relating to the teaching profession. Furthermore, the Department of Education (2008) defines mentoring as a relationship between the veteran teacher and an early-career teacher that is aimed at sharing and transferring important skills and knowledge that will encourage growth and development. Moreover, Hugo (2018:46) points out that mentoring is an “information communication” process, that is usually face-to-face between a person

who is seen to have more appropriate knowledge, understanding and experience and a person who is seen to have less. Additionally, Gross (2016) states that mentoring is a process aimed at the development of an early-career teacher where a veteran teacher provides support to an early-career teacher, also referred to as a “nurturing process” (Khalfan 2017:11). Kempen (2010) supports Gross (2016) and states that mentoring is aimed at providing an early-career teacher with support and motivation. Although Hugo (2018) and other scholars (Mukeredzi et al. 2015; Schacter et al. 2011; DoE 2008; Gross 2016; Kempen 2010) view mentoring as a relationship between two people, where the experienced person shares skills and information. Additionally, Hugo (2018) points out that mentoring can focus on other factors. For instance, Superior-Greenstone (2011) and Chester (2015) state that mentoring is also aimed at assisting ECTs so that they adapt to their new work environment. Similarly, Khalfan (2017) and Esau (2017) state that mentoring is aimed at assisting ECTs so that they can adapt into their new roles. According to Sasser (2018), one-on-one mentoring may not be enough to support the needs of ECTs, hence group mentoring can be utilised. Lumpkin (2011) states that group mentoring is a type of mentoring done by members of an organisation or a group. Each member of a group takes up the responsibility to help a new employee, hence it involves numerous mentors and mentees (Sasser 2018; Lumpkin 2011). Lumpkin (2011) acknowledges this kind of mentoring as mutually beneficial for the mentor and mentee. For instance, Lumpkin (2011) explains that ECTs prefer having several mentors whom they can learn from when embarking on group mentoring. In turn, ECTs share their technological skills and knowledge (Lumpkin 2011). Although numerous definitions exist on the concept of mentoring, it can be concluded that a central element to all these definitions is that mentoring is aimed at supporting new teachers to promote their growth and development in the teaching profession. When it comes to the concept of mentoring, it is no argument that we cannot not ignore the concept of induction because there seem to a confusion between the two. Hence, the next section clarifies the difference between mentoring and induction.

2.4 Mentoring and induction: Clearing confusion

There is a tendency for scholars to use the concepts mentoring and induction interchangeably. It is no argument that mentoring and induction programmes are needed to keep early-career teachers in the profession, as they both provide them with the emotional and professional support that they need (Khalfan 2017). However, in this study, mentoring and induction mean two different things. It is thus important that the confusion is clarified. Various researchers (Bierbaum 2016; Nantanga 2014; Dishena 2014; Magudu 2014) define induction as a process similar to mentoring. They see induction as a process aimed at guiding and supporting early-career teachers so that they can develop professionally (Bierbaum 2016; Nantanga 2014; Dishena 2014; Magudu 2014). Similarly, that is how scholars (Hugo 2018; Khalfan 2017; Mukeredzi 2015; McCollum 2014; Dlani 2012) view and define mentoring. However, Wong (2004) points out that mentoring and induction are not synonyms but rather words that are often used wrongly. To clarify the confusion, Mabaso (2012) and Mlindazwe (2010) introduces us to what induction is about. According to Mabaso (2012) and Mlindazwe (2010), induction is a concept normally used by organisations to explain the processes and procedures used to introduce new employees to their new environment and co-workers. For instance, induction is used to explain the mission and vision of the school, school policies and techniques for dealing with learner behaviour (Dishena 2014). Mlindazwe (2010) additionally suggests that, during induction, new employees are given the information regarding the work they will be doing and what is expected from them. In summary, induction is aimed at making early-career teachers to feel welcomed, providing necessary information and familiarising an early-career teacher with the workplace and what is expected of them (Dassler 2013). Wong (2004) and various researchers (Salau, Falola, & Akinbode 2014; Dishena 2014; Mabaso 2012; Cook 2011) add that induction occurs on the first day of employment and it involves a series of activities where a new teacher (be it an early-career teacher or veteran teacher) is shown around their workplace and introduced to his/her colleagues. As a result, Dishena (2014) states that induction is a process that can be used by schools as an effort to empower and help new teachers adapt to their new environment. Mabaso (2012) and Dishena (2014) additionally state that induction is important because it lessens adjustment issues for new employees. Mabaso (2012) points out that induction promotes a sense of belonging and security for new employees. Mlindazwe (2010) acknowledges that starting a new job creates doubts for new

employees. Therefore, Mlindazwe (2010) states that, during induction, the new staff is changed from being strangers to being active members of an organisation, which is not the same as the goal and process of mentoring. Following the points above, it is evident that mentoring and induction are not synonyms. Indeed, mentoring and induction seem to assist early-career teachers in different aspects of the teaching journey, but that does not mean that mentoring and induction have the same characteristics and play the same function. In this study, mentoring is defined, as earlier alluded to, as a relationship aimed at assisting, supporting, guiding and developing ECTs so that they can adapt into their new roles, and to further enhance their acquired skills (Hugo 2018; Esau 2017; Khalfan 2017; Mukeredzi 2015; McCollum 2014; Dlani 2012).

2.5 Formal vs informal mentoring

Numerous types of mentoring are found in literature. These types include formal, informal mentoring and E-mentoring. Below I look at these types to understand their features, advantages and disadvantages, as presented in previous scholarly work.

2.5.1 Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring is structured, and it follows a programme where a mentor is carefully selected and matched with a mentee, through a process that is formal (Department of Education 2008; Smith & Ingersoll 2004). According to Kadzomba (2015), in formal mentoring, the relationship between a mentor and mentee is usually initiated by a third party, be it the principal, district or any senior manager, and includes activities that are structured. Here, the formal selection of mentor and mentee is important because it encourages continuous commitment to assist mentees reach their goals over a certain period (Owusu-Mensah 2013). The goals, outcomes, and activities are set, and the activities set might be plentiful because of the prescribed programme (Management Mentors 2012; Ragins & Krams 2007). Since this type of mentoring is structured, the duration tends to be shorter, lasting for a year or few months (Seema & Sujatha 2015). The reason why they tend to be shorter is because of the prescribed number of meetings and activities that are set in formal mentoring (Ragins & Krams 2007). Sometimes, formal mentoring may require both mentor and mentee to officially agree upon the duration of their mentoring and how this mentoring is going to take place (Ragins & Krams 2007).

Formal mentoring is advantageous because friendships are built, job performance improved, and confidence built for both mentor and mentee (Seema & Sujatha 2015; Lumpkin 2011). Ragins and Krams (2007) add that formal mentoring has a great potential for sharing information and passing on necessary skills. Although formal mentoring is deemed to be advantageous, Hobson (2017) states that an ECT sometimes become too dependent on the veteran teacher. As a result, Hobson (2017:338) states that, by the time formal mentoring ends, some ECTs experience "transitional shock", feeling isolated and helpless. Siegal, Schultz and Landy (2011) add that there might be a personality clash between mentor and mentee that can hinder the smooth running of the programme. Ragins and Krams (2007) add that the relationship may be so bad that the mentee performs poorly, reflecting badly on the mentor. As a result, Inzer (2005) states that, in some instances, formal mentoring is not as effective as informal mentoring. Hence, the next section elaborates on what informal mentoring is all about.

2.5.2 Informal mentoring

As distinct from formal mentoring, Whitfield and Edwards (2011) report that informal mentoring occurs naturally and is dependent on individuals sharing a common interest. A mentee is one who needs support and guidance seeks assistance from a more knowledgeable person (Whitfield & Edwards 2011; Dlani 2012). However, Seema and Sujatha (2015) explains that it is sometimes a mentor who voluntarily assists an ECT with whom he/she can relate. Seema and Sujatha (2015) state that this is because those teachers remind veteran teachers (mentors) of their youthful self and how other veteran teachers made a difference in their teaching journey. As a result, relationships that are formed in this type of mentoring are usually based on mutual interest and skills that relate to the job and are usually not structured (Seema & Sujatha 2015). Hence, Lumpkin (2011) acknowledges this kind of mentoring as flexible. Since it is noted as flexible, Seema and Sujatha (2015) report that it is utilised by means of shared discussions during meetings or when a mentee seeks particular advice. Informal mentoring can happen in meetings, corridors or even the classroom (McElroy 2012). Consequently, Inzer (2005) states that the relationship tends to be long-term. Here, there are no set of goals and procedures, thus it can happen in the school corridors, copying room or even in staff meetings (McElroy 2012).

According to Lumpkin (2011), informal mentorig is viewed positively because it is not restricted by constraints and formality. Hence, ECTs who have received informal mentoring report greater satisfaction in their mentoring (Lumpkin 2011). For instance, McElroy (2012) reports that informal mentoring may close the gap an ECT may be feeling in the work environment and can also learn different teaching strategies. Because this type of mentoring mostly focuses on social relations and supporting a mentee, mentees tend to be more satisfied with their mentors since their mentors are people whom they have picked for themselves (Inzer 2005). Also, the length of the duration here results in bonds and friendships that last longer, wisdom is shared by the mentor and support is provided for the mentee (Inzer 2005). Similarly, Lumpkin (2011) states that informal mentoring results in ECTs gaining friends and companions they can depend on. Although informal mentoring is associated with positive traits, the Alberta Teachers Association (2003) report that informal mentoring also has its weaknesses. According to the Alberta Teachers Association (2003), since informal mentoring is not formally planned, ECTs might not ask or say when they need help. Also, veteran teachers might not want to intrude, resulting in difficulty in identifying the type of support a mentee might be needing (Alberta Teachers Association 2003). Whether mentoring is formal or informal, one cannot argue that ECTs tends to benefit from such mentoring. Furthermore, formal, and informal mentoring can take up the new approaches to mentoring, such as E-mentoring.

2.5.3 Electronic-mentoring (E-mentoring)

Wilson (2013) and Dlani (2012) report that mentoring formally or informally can adopt e-mentoring. According to Spanorriga, Tsiotakis and Jimoyiannis (2018), e-mentoring is defined as mentoring between a veteran and an ECT aimed at sharing information, supporting, and guiding an ECT. E-mentoring makes use of the internet or web-based technologies as a communication tool between mentor and mentee (Wilson 2013; Spanorriga, Tsiotakis & Jimoyiannis 2018). Hence, Rowland (2012) proposes us that e-mentoring can also be referred to as “tele mentoring, cybermentoring, virtual mentoring and online mentoring”. Here, the use of technology is important for bridging the gap in mentoring. Dlani (2012) adds that this kind of mentoring is meant to support early-career teachers who are unable to meet with their mentors due to work or geographical constraints, thus, it includes e-mailing, blogging, social media sites and

discussion boards, to name a few (Smith & Israel 2010). Because e-mentoring makes use of virtual communication to support ECTs, Spanorriga et al. (2018) and Wilson (2013) state that this type of mentoring is advantageous because it is easily accessible and is a flexible method for communication between mentor and mentee. Also, e-mentoring is not be limited by time, constraints of space or geographical locations (Wilson 2013; Spanorriga et al. 2018), so the mentor and mentee can meet anytime without having to travel to get there. Similarly, Dlani (2012) and Rowland (2012) states that, because e-mentoring makes use of modern technology as a way of communicating, it is cost effective, is not limited by time and is an easy method to connect a mentor and mentee without them having to meet. Spanorriga et al. (2018) also add that e-mentoring is advantageous because it provides users with updated information on ways to support new teachers. As a result, Rowland (2012) reports that e-mentoring allows more opportunities for teacher networks and formation of new relations between mentor and mentee. E-mentoring also reduces difficulties that come with face-to-face mentoring such as gender issues and race, to say the least, and is an easy way of providing written records that would have occurred between a mentor and mentee (Research Request 2011). Although e-mentoring is associated with good traits, Rowland (2012) points out that there are also some disadvantages associated with it. For instance, Rowland (2012) states that since e-mentoring makes use of technology, if one is not technology savvy, then one is disadvantaged. Additionally, Rowland (2012) explains that since e-mentoring is not face-to-face, there is an "absence of body language" (Rowland 2012:232). Hence, one cannot detect or sense emotions that one may be feeling and give necessary support. Fortunately, Rowland (2012) states that, to counteract the challenges of e-mentoring, mentor and mentees can make use of smiley faces and webcam as a solution. From the review above, it can be deduced that e-mentoring can also be used as a form of support for ECTs because it is cost effective, is not limited by time and is an easy method to connect a mentor and mentee without them having to meet (Edward 2013).

2.6 What makes for good mentoring?

In this study, various challenges experienced by early-career teachers in their beginning of teaching were identified, thus good mentoring is required. Research recognises some common characteristics of what counts as good mentoring. The characteristics are discussed below.

2.6.1 Effective mentors and mentees

Earlier in this study mentoring has been regarded as a relationship between a person who is seen to have more appropriate knowledge, understanding and experience and a person who is seen to have less (Hugo 2018:46). Therefore, Whitfield & Edwards (2011) report that mentors tend to be people who are advanced in years, and have experience and relevant skills in the area of interest. Similarly, Hobson (2016) states that it is always an advantage that an ECT is mentored by a veteran teacher with more experience in the profession. However, Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) point out that successful veteran teachers do not necessarily make good mentors. Nantanga (2014) highlights that not all old and experienced teachers make good mentors. Therefore, it is important that we learn of other qualities that constitute a good mentor.

Solomon (2019) points out that a good mentor should be willing and committed to supporting the professional and personal needs of an early-career teacher so that they can grow and develop. Such a person should not only be willing and committed to supporting an early-career teacher, but also be someone with the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding of the mentoring process (Abiddin 2012). As a result, a good mentor should be someone who has undergone mentoring training (Nantanga 2014). Khalfan (2017) highlights that, if a mentor does not undergo training so that they are fully equipped with the necessary skills and tools, mentoring can quickly become a problem. Mentoring training and development is thus important because it is where a mentor learns how to set realistic goals, activities and high standards that will enhance the growth and development of the mentee (Eller, Lev & Feurer 2014; Khalfan 2017; Burke, Aubussson, Schuck, Buchanan & Prescott 2015; Abiddin, 2012). An effective mentor in their role thus acts as a role model from whom an early-career teacher can learn (Eller et al. 2014). So, Bird and Hudson (2015) suggest that an effective mentor needs to model ways to implement effective teaching and learning, classroom management and professionalism in the workplace. Effective mentors in their roles can also nurture, provide emotional and physical support to their mentees (National treasury 2017). They can guide, advice, reflect and provide feedback to mentees in a non-judgemental way (National Treasury 2017). Because of the various roles played by effective mentors, early-career teachers can develop a voice and identity in the profession (Izadinia 2015).

A mentee is not a passive passenger during this mentoring, as there are some roles that effective mentees play. According to Hobson (2017), the effectiveness of mentoring is to an extent dependent on the qualities that a mentee possesses. Hence, Searby (2014) and Abiddin (2012) suggest that a mentee needs to possess traits such as being enthusiastic and flexible, for mentoring to be considered good. Similarly, the National Treasury (2017) and Abiddin (2012) argue that a mentee can take responsibility for their growth and learning during the mentoring. Effective mentees are also regarded as individuals who can independently reflect on their mistakes and successes (National Treasury 2017; Abiddin 2012). They are good listeners and can communicate their feelings very well during mentoring. As a result, effective mentees can demonstrate and translate what they have learned into action (National Treasury 2017). Other qualities that are associated with effective mentees includes a mentee that is a learner, reflector, problem solver, innovator and implementer (Meyer and Fourie 2004).

2.6.2 Mentor-mentee selection and pairing

According to the National Treasury (2017), appropriate measures need to be considered when matching mentors and mentees. Hobson (2017) recommends a mentor coordinator to facilitate mentor-mentee pairing. The Department of Education (2008) states that the principal, as the leader, is accountable for the selection and paring of mentors and mentees. According to Grossman and Davis (2012), for an early-career teacher to fully enjoy the benefits of being mentored, they should be assigned to a mentor who is a good fit. Hence, during the selection of mentors, Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) argue that mentors should be selected based on a criterion. Additionally, Hobson (2012) and Hobson (2017) highlight that the mentor should be someone with relevant skills and knowledge that will cater for the needs of the mentee. Therefore, the selection and pairing of mentors and mentees should be informed by the needs of the mentee and what the mentor can offer. Furthermore, Khalfan (2017) argues that effective mentors should be effective in the way they teach and implement teaching strategies. Alabi (2017:69) argues that it is always an advantage for a mentee to be paired with a mentor who shares a similar classroom background and “similarity in the work assignment” with them. Grossman and Davis (2012) also point out that it is an advantage for a mentee to have a mentor who teaches in the same grade, teaching the same subject as the mentee. Desimone, Hochberg,

Porter, Polikoff, Schwartz and Johnson (2014) points out that having a mentor and a mentee in the same setting is an advantage because both parties get the opportunity to interact more frequently. Nantanga (2014) states that it is also an advantage for a mentee to have a mentor from the same race and ethnicity as them and who shares the same beliefs as them. It is no argument that, during the mentor-mentee selection and paring, some sort of relationship forms. Below, the mentoring relationships that count as good mentoring are discussed.

2.6.3 The mentoring relationship

According to Khalfan (2017:65), "mentoring programs that are effective nurture the relationship between the mentor and mentee". Therefore, Dlani (2012) points out that during mentoring, it is important that the mentor and mentee establish a relationship that is based on trust and understanding; hence a good rapport is essential for the relationship to be effective. Furthermore, the ability for both mentor and mentee to be discreet and honest makes for good mentoring (Hobson 2017; Eller et al. 2014). These qualities facilitate communication and teamwork, which plays an important role during the mentoring relationship (Dlani 2012; Edward 2013; Collins, Lewis, Stracke & Vanderheide 2014). Moreover, the way a mentor implements mentoring, for instance, supporting a mentee emotionally, physically and giving regular feedback, counts as good mentoring (Burke et al. 2015; Abiddin 2012; Khalfan 2017). As a result, Eller et al. (2014), Khalfan (2017), Burke, et al. (2015) and Abiddin (2012) highlight that mentees who have positive mentoring relationships with their mentors report feeling supported, nurtured and cared for, in return eliminating feelings of isolation. Eller (2014) also highlights that mutual respect plays an important role in a caring relationship. Mentees want to feel that their views matter, and they should be able to share and exchange information, skills, and knowledge with their mentors (Eller et al. 2014; Khalfan 2017; Burke et al. 2015; Abiddin, 2012). So, the Department of Education (2008:46) argues that "it is important that the mentor views the mentee as an independent adult who may arrive at different conclusions from him/her". Therefore, a caring mentoring relationship should be the one that allows for mistakes to be made (Collins et al., 2014). Early-career teachers should not feel that they will be penalised if they make mistakes during the mentoring process (Collins et al., 2014). The aim of the relationship is not that the mentee should replicate the mentor or the mentor's ways of doing things, but rather, that the mentor assist and develop the mentee "to

explore the possible outcomes or consequences of a proposed strategy", so the mentee can then independently decide on the strategy that best suits them (Department of Education 2008). Hence, the Department of Education (2008) highlights that the relationship should be flexible and open to negotiation. In conclusion, Khalfan (2017:66) points out that, when early-career teachers feel that they are cared for and supported, they can relate more with the people they work with, "which will ultimately form loyalty and appreciation", hence an effective mentoring relationship is important.

2.7 Mentoring experiences of ECTs

According to Du Plessis (2013) and Mukeredzi (2017), for the majority of early-career teachers who are in a mentoring programme, there can be either good or bad experiences. The same view is shared by Eby, Butts, Durley and Ragins (2010), who also suggest that both mentors and mentees can experience good or bad mentoring. Therefore, while mentoring is associated with numerous benefits, there can also be barriers to it. Below is a discussion about how early-career teachers experience mentoring and the barriers they come across during mentoring.

2.7.1 Positive mentoring experiences

Eby et al. (2010:82), point out that positive mentoring experiences of ECTs are dependent upon two types of support, that is "career-related support and psychosocial support". Eby et al. (2010) define career-related support as a type of support that is aimed at enhancing an ECT's professional development. Hence, Baranik, Rolling and Eby (2010) acknowledges career-related support as a type of support that can boost an ECT's sense of career competence. In such situations, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) report that ECTs are supported so that they can adapt to their new workplace and be satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, Green-Powell (2012) states that ECTs self-confidence becomes enhanced as they become familiar to their new roles, responsibilities, and school culture. Thus, Green-Powell (2012) and Dlani (2012) point out that ECTs who receive this kind of support are most likely to excel in teaching and improve their learner's performance.

Eby et al. (2010) states that psychosocial support, as distinct from career-related support, is a type of support that focuses more on building the self- confidence, self-

worth and identity of an ECT within the profession. Furthermore, Dlani (2012) points out that psychosocial support prepares ECTs for their new work environment, since one of the challenges that was pointed out earlier in this study was that ECTs consider leaving the profession due to feeling alone and isolated (McCollum 2014). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) state that this mentoring can offer ECTs with the support they need so that they do not consider leaving the profession. Additionally, Dlani (2012) and Baranik et al. (2010) state that this kind of support ensures that ECTs feel supported and guided, easing the feelings of isolation. Irrespective of whether mentoring provides an ECT with career-related or psychosocial support, Kardos and Johnson (2010) argue that mentoring makes a difference. Hence, Kardos and Johnson (2010:24) note that, when mentoring is done in the right way, it "can stabilize the shifting ground on which new teachers try to stand".

2.7.2 Barriers to mentoring

The mentoring process is not a perfect process, thus sometimes both early-career teachers and veteran teachers complain about it. According to Eby et al. (2010) and Dlani (2012), the mismatch between mentor and mentee regarding differences in personalities, principles, and work ethics result in bad experiences for ECT. Furthermore, Eby et al. (2010) and Dlani (2012) points out neglect as another challenge experienced by some ECTs. According to Dlani (2012), if there is lack of time, improper planning, and lack of understanding about the mentoring process, then the mentoring process becomes a challenge. As a result, some early-career teachers who take part in mentoring feel neglected as their mentors seemed to not be interested in assisting them (McCollum 2014; Eby et al. 2010). Similarly, Straus, Johnson, Marquez, and Feldman (2013) state that mentoring fails where there is a lack of interaction or poor interaction between mentor and mentee. Straus et al. (2013) also state that bad experiences of mentoring are a result of the mentor and mentee being in competition rather than supporting and communicating with each other. Indeed, the literature above teaches us that the mentoring programme is not a perfect programme, but rather a work in progress that can be improved as years go by. Since the international literature above is not always specific on the types of schools that have yielded such mentoring experiences, one cannot conclude that the same experiences are relevant for South African early-career teachers, thus the purpose of this study.

2.8 Theoretical framework

This study employed ONSIDE mentoring. This framework was developed by Andrew Hobson in 2016 with an aim of preventing judge-mentoring, encouraging good mentoring practices, providing effective supports for the growth and development of an early-career teacher in the profession, and focusing on the positive impact mentoring has on early-career teachers (Hobson 2016). As a result, ONSIDE mentoring will be used to support the purpose of this study, as it will detail how ECTs should experience mentoring in schools.

This framework is informed by other frameworks and models that focuses on mentoring and other support strategies that are available for ECTs. According to Hobson (2016), this framework is rooted in the developmental approaches by Clutterbuck (1992, 2004) and Schön (1983), which are aimed at empowering mentees and promoting their ability to learn. Furthermore, Hobson (2016) suggests that this framework shares some ideas with the growth and compassion-based approaches to mentoring and coaching by Boyatzis, Smith and Beveridge (2013) and by Jack, Boyatzis, Khawaja, Passarelli and Leckie (2013). These assert that mentees (early-career teachers) have the ability for self-reflection, growth and development. Last, Hobson (2016) proposes that this framework is rooted in the concept of scaffolding put forward by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), because it is support provided by a veteran teacher to a mentee so that the mentee can learn and develop.

When it comes to the nature of mentoring, Hobson (2016) believes that thoroughly supporting early-career teachers' wellbeing is important because the early teaching years are accompanied by extreme pressure. In 2009, he observed the same issue and stated that early-career teachers were overlooked, helpless and isolated (Hobson 2009), hence the strong need for mentoring. Hobson (2016) suggests and views mentoring as a welcoming relationship between an inexperienced teacher (mentee) and an experienced teacher (mentor) aimed at supporting the mentee's welfare, growth, and learning. Furthermore, Hobson (2016) states that mentoring is aimed at supporting the mentees so that they can adapt into the culture of the school and the profession at large.

The mentoring processes

According to Hobson (2016), for mentoring to be effective, a thorough selection of mentors and matching them with mentees is important. Here, a mentee is paired with a person who is regarded as an expert or experienced in the area of interest (Hobson 2016). For a mentee to fully take advantage of the mentoring support, Hobson (2016) argues that a relationship that is based on trust should be formed as soon as possible. Trust is very crucial as it glues the relationship and ensures successful mentoring to promote growth and development of mentee (Hobson 2016). There should also be enough resources that will enable the mentor and mentee to meet regularly during work hours to conduct developmental activities (Hobson 2016). Any use of observations and discussions undertaken using this framework must be conducted in a non-judgemental manner; they must be supportive of early-career teachers' "development of critical reflection, autonomy and learnacy" (Hobson 2016:103). Hobson (2016) warns that anticipation and succeeding experience of early-career teachers being observed and receiving feedback can lead mentoring experiences where:

- Trust can be broken as an early-career teacher might feel judged.
- A mentor can provide too much support, resulting in an early-career teacher being too dependent on the mentor.
- Observation, feedback, and reflection can bring feelings of stress for an early-career teacher.

Hence, he suggests that it must be in a non-judgemental way. So, the mentors must handle classroom observations carefully, "adapted to the individual needs, stages of development, and emotional and psychological readiness of mentees" (Hobson 2016:103). Furthermore, mentoring should not be a process where a mentor is always right, but rather, it should promote a learning relationship that will be of benefit to both the mentor and mentee (Hobson 2016). Therefore, the ONSIDE mentoring framework is a non-hierarchical partnership between a mentee and a mentor (Hobson 2016). An ONSIDE mentor seeks to promote "progressively collaborative teaching" (PCT), so there is teamwork between the mentor and mentee as they engage in lesson planning, teaching and discussions (Tomlinson 1995).

The role of the mentor

Hobson (2016) highlights that it is generally an advantage for a mentee (early-career teacher) to be mentored by an expert or experienced person (Hobson 2016). This is because - an experienced person as a mentor will most likely be able to assume mentorship roles such as those acknowledged by Malderez and Bodoczky (1999), which includes:

- *'acculturator'*- where a mentee is introduced and helped to adapt in the work culture.
- *'sponsor'*- where a mentee is introduced to other relevant people that can give them support; and
- *'model'*- where a mentor must demonstrate good traits regarding teaching.

Hobson (2016) additionally points out how mentoring is/should be by using what he regards as the seven imperatives when it comes to the nature of mentoring. He suggests that the first important role that should be played by the mentors is that they should be "supporters, champions and advocates" of their mentees (Hobson 2016:100). Here, the mentor provides moral support and a safe environment that enables growth and development of the mentee. The other six imperatives of how mentoring is/should be are listed below. Table 2.1 below was adapted from Hobson (2016:101).

Table 2. 1: ONSIDE mentoring

Mentoring is/should be	Mentoring should not
Off-line (i.e., separated from line-management or supervision) and non-hierarchical	Occur within hierarchical and power relationships – e.g. where mentors formally assess the work of mentees. This makes it difficult to establish relational trust and for mentees to openly share their professional learning and development needs with mentors.
Non-evaluative and non-judgemental	Be evaluative or judgemental, which can also impede the establishment or maintenance of a trusting relationship between mentor and mentee, and (partly

	in consequence) impede mentees' professional learning, development, and well-being.
Supportive of mentees' psychosocial needs and well-being	Focus solely on mentees' 'performance' or the development of their capability with no consideration for mentees' emotional or psychological state or their well-being. The latter are both important in their own right *and* impact on mentees' capacity to learn and develop.
Individualised - tailored to the specific and changing needs (emotional as well as developmental) of the mentee	Be one-size-fits-all since any given mentoring strategy will be more or less relevant to and produce different (positive or negative) responses in/from different mentees.
Developmental and growth-oriented – seeking to promote mentees' learnacy and provide them with appropriate degrees of challenge	Be solely or selectively deployed as a remedial strategy to 'correct' perceived deficiencies in professional practice. This can discourage mentees from taking advantage of the 'support' of mentors and encourage them to fabricate their learning and development needs.
Empowering – progressively non-directive to support mentees to become more autonomous and agentic	(Normally) be directive, in which mentors provide 'solutions' rather than supporting mentees to find their own, and which accords mentees little autonomy and agency. This encourages mentees' dependency on the mentor and does not promote learnacy.

Finally, Hobson (2016) emphasises the importance of adequate activities to be made available for ONSIDE Mentoring to be effective Hence, Hobson (2016) emphasises the importance of scaffolding during these activities. According to Edwards and Collison (1996), there are some ways in which mentors can scaffold the learning and development of their mentee, for example, a mentor can:

- Listen to the mentee, model ways to teach and manage the classroom effectively, help plan and set goals with the mentee, have classroom

observations, give support to mentee while they teach, reflect and provide productive criticism to the mentee (Edwards & Collison 1996).

The information above represented how the mentoring of early-career teachers can be undertaken by means of ONSIDE mentoring. This framework can be used by schools as a guide on how to select mentors and mentees, the role that should be played by the mentor during this mentoring and how mentoring should take place. It can help early-career teachers understand the school culture and what they can expect during mentoring. Therefore, this framework can be used by schools to understand how mentoring works.

Benefits of mentoring

Having early-career teachers who have been supported through ONSIDE Mentoring framework is beneficial to schools (Hobson 2016). This is because the support that early-career teachers receive makes a huge difference. Early-career teachers who are supported through this framework can benefit from emotional and psychological support (Hobson 2016). As a result, ECTs who have been mentored can more readily adapt to the culture of the school because of the institutional induction they undergo (Hobson 2016). Since the framework makes use of scaffolding, it is used to advance the skills, knowledge and understanding of the mentees, while also reducing feelings of failure in mentees (Hobson 2016). Scaffolding also help build early-career teachers' confidence in the profession (Hobson 2016). Furthermore, early-career teachers can take advantage of the professional learning development (PLD) opportunities that are offered, as a result, early-career teachers who are supported in this framework are dedicated to teaching and to the workplace that has been supporting them (Hobson 2016). Hence, such teachers are shown to display actions that suggest increased morale and job-satisfaction (Hobson 2016). Considering that this framework is against judge-mentoring and the negative results associated with it, Hobson (2016) and Hobson (2017) teaches us that this framework helps mentees to be independent and highly autonomous. In result, helping reduce the feelings of reality aftershock and promote teacher retention (Hobson 2016).

The findings of the generated data of this study were scrutinised to see to what extent the participants reported such benefits. It is important to specify benefits that resulted

from the mentoring experienced by participants in this study, because they may help shed some light regarding the type of mentoring that is beneficial to early-career teachers.

Prevention of judge-mentoring

To improve mentoring, Hobson (2017) points out that judge-mentoring should not take place. According to Hobson (2017), judge-mentoring is mentoring where a mentor reveals his/her judgement/evaluations on a mentee's planning and actions. Furthermore, judge-mentoring is mentoring that makes use of excessive use of observation and provides tense feedback on the mentee (Hobson 2017). It also does not facilitate and encourage scaffolding for teaching, resulting in ECTs becoming over-reliant on their mentors (Hobson 2017). Other than ECTs becoming reliant on their mentors, judge-mentoring results can bring anxiety, stress, contribute to mentees' decision to leaving teaching and even promote and reproduce conventional norms and practices that one wouldn't necessary want to be promoted (Hobson 2017). Hence, Hobson (2017) opposes judge-mentoring.

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented debates about what international and national scholars say about the mentoring of ECTs. First was a discussion on how different scholars view and understand mentoring. Seeing that some scholars tend to explain and define induction through terms that are equivalent to what mentoring means in this study, the confusion was clarified. Following that, I discussed formal and informal mentoring, bringing in e-mentoring as an example of mentoring that can be used formally or informally. To find out what makes good mentoring, the advantages and disadvantages of mentoring were discussed. Last, I focused on the theoretical framework that is used in this study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two discussed a review of literature regarding mentoring of early-career teachers and the theoretical framework that supports this study. This chapter thoroughly reports the methodology and design that was used to generate data in this study. In this chapter, the research paradigm and the research approach that has shaped this study are discussed. Following this, the research design that was used to select the participants is explored. Here, the reader is introduced to each participant individually by providing profiles of each of them. Since this study aims to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools, a narrative inquiry is adopted. Moreover, this chapter accounts to how data was collected and analysed in this study. In conclusion, this chapter focuses on trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research paradigm

Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argue that a paradigm is a way of seeing and understanding the reality of the world we live in. Shkedi (2005:1), points out that a paradigm is “a world view”, a way one sees and understands the sophistication of the real world. Additionally, Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson (2005) state that a paradigm is another way of looking at knowledge construction and how one finds out such knowledge. A paradigm acts as a frame of reference that directs a researcher regarding the methodology that should be used to study phenomena (Tuli 2010). Paradigms are important because they tell us what is true, significant, and logical (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A paradigm comprises of elements such as ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27) and Nguyen (2019:3) note that ontology is based on the assumptions we make about “the nature of existence or reality, epistemology is concerned with how we know the truth or reality, and axiology refers to the ethical issues”. These three elements must all be taken into consideration when conducting research. This study is located within the

interpretivist paradigm. Below we look closely at the interpretivist paradigm and account for why it was used in this study.

3.2.1 Interpretivist paradigm

According to Maree (2007) and Chilisa and Kawulich (2012), interpretivism seeks to understand the experiences of others and how they view their world. Tuli (2010:100) refers to researchers of this paradigm as “naturalistic” since they make use of real-life situations as they have occurred naturally. Therefore, in this paradigm, Rehman and Alharthi (2016:55) state that “one interpretation is not chosen or preferred over others as correct”, but that this paradigm accepts multiple information from diverse researchers bringing different views to a similar issue. Similarly, Sefotho (2015:.25) also points out that this paradigm addresses the “multiple realities” found in different communities. Here, knowledge is considered as subjective and socially constructed (Willis 2007; Chilisa & Kawulich 2012). So, the truth and reality are not discovered but are created (Rehman & Alharthi 2016:55). As a result, in this paradigm, reality is dependent on social interactions and how one makes sense of the world (Willis 2007; Chilisa & Kawulich 2012. Following the points above, this paradigm was used to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. The study focused on how ECTs constructed their experiences and what meanings was deduced from these experiences about the nature of mentoring and how this mentoring could be improved. By working within this paradigm, I was able to understand the social occurrences “through the eyes of the participants” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:21), which assisted me with the analysis of data collected. Having multiple views to look at the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers not only assisted me in explaining the events that have occurred, but also helped me gain an in-depth understanding of the occurrences that have taken place during mentoring (Tuli 2010). Since this paradigm attempts to gain an in-depth understanding of people in their environment (Polkinghorne 2005), a qualitative research approach was utilised.

3.3 Research approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach is defined as a type of research where rich and descriptive data is collected to gain an in-depth understanding of what the researcher is studying (Maree 2007). According to Punch (2013), qualitative research seeks for a deeper understanding of the social life of the targeted participants rather than focusing on numbers or on measurements. Hence, Tuli (2010) states that qualitative researchers regard individuals as research participants rather than objects. Mahajan (2018) additionally points out that qualitative research put more emphasis on how individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the world they live in better. As a result, Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015) state that this type of approach focuses primarily on experiences, social interactions, meanings, and definitions.

Given the points above, Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2015) embraces the use of qualitative research by stating its benefits. First, Taylor et al. (2015) argue that qualitative research is important because it has the potential to tell the nature of certain events and identify challenges that exist within a particular context. Second, Taylor et al. (2015) explain that this approach enables the researcher to confirm assumptions and theories that he/she might be having. Last, Taylor et al. (2015) point out that this approach provides solutions/suggestions where a researcher can draw conclusions about a certain practice. This is similar to my desire to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools, to test the theory that is used in this study and to provide solutions/suggestions where I can draw conclusions (Taylor et al. 2015).

In this study, qualitative research was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. To understand the experiences and attitudes of participants, Bricki (2007:3) explains that this approach makes use of questions such as ‘what, how or why’ of a phenomenon, rather than ‘how many ‘or ‘how much’. These questions listed by Bricki (2007) are in line with the questions of my study, which are:

- What do the experiences of early career teachers tell us about the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers in Gauteng selected public schools?

- How do early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools benefit from mentoring programmes?
- How can mentoring of early-career teachers in public schools be improved?

A qualitative research approach was relevant to this study because it had the ability to provide detailed descriptions of a phenomena, focusing on lived experiences, views, and stories of the participants (Tracy 2013).

3.4 Research design

This study aims to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools by using narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a design that seeks to understand peoples' experiences by making their stories a central focus of the research (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). It is based on the premises that, as people, we get to understand and make sense of experiences through stories (Clandinin & Connelly 2000). Therefore, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Flick (2018) refers to this inquiry as a 'reconstruction' of experiences of people through story telling. Narrative inquirers, therefore, acknowledge the significance of stories as a "meaning-making strategy" for the creation of knowledge (Green 2013). Frank (2010:665) suggests that:

"stories enjoy an exceptional place in human lives, first, because stories are the means and medium through which humans learn who they are, what their relation is to those around them (who counts as family, as community, and as enemies), and what sort of actions they are expected to perform under which circumstances."

Furthermore, Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2015:632) states that a story is important because it gives insight to the lived experiences of the participants, hence it may include "characters, a scene, a place or context" in which it has occurred. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) believe that, when one tells and retells these rich stories, it becomes possible to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomena that is being studied. Thus, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that stories are important because they are memorable and they bring together layers of interesting knowledge for understanding people, their experiences and culture. Moreover, Oliver (1998:247) points out that our stories are an invitation to knowing people and the world they live

in. Narrative inquiry is important because it enables the researcher to gather data from people on how experience the world, through their stories (Webster & Mertova 2007). These experiences emerge because the researcher and participants work collaboratively and are “constructed over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly 2000:20). Attending to experience through narrative inquiry means exploring the commonplaces in which narrative inquiry can be examined. These commonplaces include temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Huber 2010). Connelly and Clandinin (2006: 479) suggests that, in the temporality feature, “events under study are in temporal transition”. Therefore, it is important that while collecting and telling the stories, a narrative inquirer focuses on the past, present and future events, while attending to the “temporality of their own and participants’ lives, as well as to the temporality of places, things and events” (Clandinin & Huber 2010:3). In the sociality feature, a narrative inquirer needs to explore personal and social conditions concurrently (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). Personal conditions include “the researcher’s and the participants feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions” (Connelly & Clandinin 2006:20). Social conditions focus on how people socially interact with other cultures and the relationship they have with other people (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr 2007). It is therefore important that a narrative inquirer understands the circumstances under which people’s experiences and events develop (Clandinin & Huber 2010). Events and experiences usually take place at a certain area or place, so, in a narrative inquiry, location plays a vital part of the storytelling (Green 2013).

This design proved to be suitable for my study because I wanted to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Through collaboration between the participants and myself, this design had the potential to enable the participants to share their experiences while I listened to the stories they narrated, enabling me to construct and collect data (Garvis 2015). Since narrative inquiry studies experiences as stories (Clandinin, Pushor & Orr 2007), it was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. When early-career teachers shared their experiences of mentoring through stories/narratives, that gave me an insight into the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers in Gauteng selected

public schools, how these teachers benefit from mentoring programmes and ways in which this mentoring can be improved.

3.5 Sampling

3.5.1Selection of participants and location

In this study, data was collected in Gauteng Province. The focus was on any kind of school whether primary or high school. Purposive sampling was used to select participants in this study. According to Polkinghorne (2005), Tangco (2007) and Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), purposive sampling, also referred to as 'judgement sampling', is a technique whereby participants are selected based on specific qualities they may possess that are relevant to a researcher's study of interest. Cohen et al. (2007:115) refer to such participants as "knowledgeable people" because of their depth of knowledge that they have acquired through experience over time. Here, knowledge, experience, and the ability for the participants to express and communicate their experiences and opinions are important (Bernard 2002). Hence, Patton (1990:169), Teddlie and Yu (2007) and Etikan et al. (2016) point out that purposive sampling is dependent on selecting "information-rich cases" from a smaller number of participants. According to Patton (1990), these information-rich cases are important because one can gain a depth of information about matters relating to a study. The researcher uses his/her judgement regarding what needs to be known, then purposely invites those participants who are able and willing to share the information relating to the phenomenon of interest (Teddlie & Yu 2007; Bernard 2002; Etikan et al. 2016). In this study, participants were purposely selected because they possessed characteristics that were relevant to the purpose of this study. A criterion that was considered for purposive selection is as follows:

- The participants were early-career teachers who are not experienced in the profession of teaching, their experience ranging from 0-5 years.
- Participants were between the age of 22-30 years.
- Participants were teaching in Gauteng Province.
- Participants are mentored/were mentored by a veteran teacher.

Considering that this study adopted a qualitative research approach, it is necessary to note that, according to Polkinghorne (2005) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003), in qualitative research, the sample size is usually small. According to Tagg (1985), smaller samples are important because they enable the researcher to carefully explore the experiences of the participants and gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences and what their stories mean to them. Furthermore, Ritchie and Lewis (2003:84) add that, to do justice to the depth and rich information gathered, "the sample size need to be kept to a reasonably small scale". As a result, eight (8) participants were selected in this study. Similar to the views of Lalla (2013) and Cohen et al. (2007), my rationale for selecting a small sample was to get hold of those few participants who were prepared to devote their time to working with me over an extensive period so that I could gain in-depth understanding of their experiences regarding mentoring.

3.5.2 Description of each participant

Below is a representation of each participant's profile. Pseudonyms were used, hence the names are fictitious, to protect the participants' identities.

Table 3. 1: Profile of the participants

PN	G	R	A	NOS	TE	GT
Thabo	M	African	30	Former Model-C	2	9/10
Simphiwe	F	African	29	Public	4	R
Bongi	F	African	28	Public	4	10 /11/12
Tebogo	F	African	29	Public	4	6/7 /11
Cebile	F	African	28	Public	5	4/5
Omphile	F	African	30	Public	4	1/2/ 3
TK	M	African	30	Public	3	4/5/6
Jabulile	F	African	25	Public	1	8/9

Key : PN=PARTICIPANT'S NAME **G**=GENDER **R**=RACE **A**=AGE
NOS=NATURE OF SCHOOL **TE**= YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE
GT= GRADE(S) TAUGHT

Thabo is a 30-year-old African man. He teaches in a former Model-C high school in Pretoria, Gauteng. He teaches Mathematics in Grade 9 and Mathematics Literacy in Grade 10. He has been teaching for two years now.

Simphiwe is a 29-year-old African lady. As a first-time teacher, she taught Grade R in a public primary school in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal. After a year, she moved to Gauteng to further her studies. There, she found a job at a public primary school located in Tembisa. She teaches isiZulu, English, Mathematics and Life Skills in Grade R. She has been teaching for four years now.

Bongi is a 28-year-old lady. She started teaching in a public high school in Springs where she taught Grades 10,11 and 12 Mathematics. Currently, she teaches in a public primary school in Tembisa. There, she teaches Grade 7 Mathematics and Natural Sciences. She has been teaching for four years now.

Tebogo is a 29-year-old lady. She first taught in Pretoria where she taught Grade 11 Mathematics and Life Sciences in an English medium public high school. After a year, she found a permanent post in Tembisa and moved there. Currently, she teaches Mathematics in Grade 6 and Natural Sciences in Grade 7. She has been teaching for four years now.

Cebile is a 28-year-old lady. She teaches in a public primary school in Tembisa. When she started working, she taught Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology in Grade 5. She now teaches Natural Sciences and Technology in Grade 4 and 5. She has been teaching for five years.

Omphile is a 30-year-old lady. She first started teaching as a temporary teacher in Tembisa. She taught Grade 2 Foundation phase then found a permanent post at another public primary school that is around Tembisa. Currently, she teaches Grade 3 in the foundation phase. She teaches Sepedi, English, Mathematics and Life Skills. She has been teaching for four years now.

TK is a 30-year-old man. He teaches in a public primary school in Tembisa. When he started working, he taught Mathematics in Grade 5 and Sepedi in Grade 6. Now, he teaches Sepedi in Grade 4 and Mathematics in Grade 5. He has been teaching for 3 years now.

Jabulile is a 25-year-old lady. She teaches Grades 8 and 9 in a public high school in Tembisa. Her subjects are Life Orientation, Social Sciences and Sepedi. She has been teaching for a year.

3.6 Data collection

To explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools, data in this study was generated by means of letter writing and narrative interviews.

3.6.1 Letter writing

Letters are a form of communication written from one person to another (*Cambridge English Dictionary* 2018). They are written with the hope of getting a response referred to as a "give and take conversation" (Clandinin & Connelly 2000:105). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), letter writing as a data collection instrument is advantageous because participants can "make meaning of their experiences, build and maintain relationships with people they are communicating with". Another advantage of letter writing is that it comes in many forms such as mails, journals, letters, and postcards to name a few, thus letter writing can be formal or informal (Barton & Hall 2000). Through letter writing, participants can "narrate experiences, dispute points and offer explanations" (Barton & Hall 2000:1). Furthermore, Barton and Hall (2000) report that letter writing has a way of assisting people to relive past experiences.

However, in this study, letters were not used as a form of communication between the participants, their mentors and me. The written letters were used to explore and reflect the deepest thoughts and views of the participants that are sometimes difficult to state in a face to face interview (Lalla 2013). These types of letters are called "unsent letters" (Cooper 1991:99). According to Cooper (1991), unsent letters are advantageous because they enable the writer to express him/herself in ways that are as honest and

detailed as they could, unlike when being interviewed face to face. Hence, the content of the letter may be expressive and personal (Cooper 1991). Letters were used by the participants as an instrument to express their views regarding the nature of mentoring in their schools, the benefits that come with being mentored and, ways in which this mentoring can be improved. Participants were asked to write a letter to their mentor, reflecting and describing their experiences as early-career teachers regarding mentoring. Since, as alluded to, the letters were not going to be sent, I then collected and utilised them to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools.

3.6.2 Narrative interviews

An interview is a "two-way conversation" (Maree 2016:92) between a researcher and participants intended for the researcher to collect meaningful data and learn about the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviour of the participants. Qualitative interviews are important because they enable the researcher to understand the world as it is viewed by the participants (Maree 2016). To generate the answers that were needed to answer the research questions, a narrative interview was used. A narrative interview proved to be suitable for this study because, according to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), it allows the participants to tell their stories as means of insight about their experiences. This type of interview was aimed at assisting me to view the world through the eyes of the interviewee so that valuable information could be gathered (Maree 2007). According to Anderson (2015: 632), a narrative interview is not only aimed at the recording of events that occurred in time, but rather is an attempt by the researcher to link narratives "in time and in meaning".

To gain a better understanding of the lived mentoring experiences of early career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools, Wengraf's (2001) method of narrative interviewing was utilised. As such, a set of open-ended questions were prepared, in a form of a semi-structured interview. The interview was face to face and took place at a location that was convenient to the participants. During the interview, the participants were encouraged to share their experiences and views regarding mentoring (Greeff 2002). The interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. After transcribing and re-reading the first interviews, further questions emerged from what the participants said and what others did not say in the first interview (Wengraf 2001). This led to my

doing a follow up second interview (Wengraf 2001). Considering that South Africa was already in lockdown when the second interview questions were formulated, I was unable to meet face-to-face with the participants. So, the second interview was conducted using WhatsApp. Owing to the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews, Irvine, Drew and Sainsbury (2012) report that these interviews can also be conducted telephonically or electronically through social media platforms, hence WhatsApp was suitable. The participants were sent a set of questions to complete and send back to me. Narrative interviews proved suitable for this study because they helped me gain knowledge of how the events of time have influenced each participant's way of thinking and feeling (Brunn 1994). As a result, I was able to gain insight into how early-career teachers constructed their mentoring experiences, the meaning deduced from those experiences about the nature of mentoring, the benefits and how this mentoring could be improved. Like any data collection method, letter-writing and narrative interviews had some limitations. Thus, below, issues of concern relating to the data methods used in this study are discussed.

3.6.3 Issues of concern relating to data collection methods

A key issue of concern regarding this study is that, in interviews and written letters, the participants might not tell the truth regarding their mentoring experiences. Participants may also fail to express themselves appropriately, resulting in them refraining from sharing important information or sometimes even making up stories (Molden 2011). Polkinghorne (2005) further explains that the problem with human experiences is that they cannot be directly observed, therefore the data is dependent upon the participants' ability to discuss their own experiences effectively. With letters, Harris (2002) reports that it is not easy to observe emotional interpretations such as concerns, joy, empathy, and considerations from what is written on paper. Morris (2015:8) explains that, with interviews, "the extent to which the interviewee trusts the interviewer, the questions asked, the level and kind of probing and the interruptions" too influence how participants narrate their stories. So, to address the concern in this study for participants to be able to narrate their experiences, it drew on the point made by Knight (2009) regarding the importance of a good rapport. According to Knight (2009), a rapport is a way of connecting with others to create an environment of trust and understanding. To create such an environment, good communication is crucial (Bartkowiak 2012). Hence, I was supportive, open minded, sincere, sensitive, and

respectful in the way I asked the questions (Leach 2005). Also, the participants were assured that their identity was to be kept confidential and open-ended questions were asked (Maree 2007; 2016).

3.7 Data analysis

Polkinghorne (1995) reports that narratives can be analysed using two methods. The methods that can be used to analyse data narratively are 'narrative analysis and analysis of narratives' (Polkinghorne 1995:5-6). Narrative analysis and analysis of narratives were both used to analyse data in this study.

3.7.1 Narrative analysis

According to Polkinghorne (1995), narrative analysis is a process that involves storying and re-storying of events that the participant has experienced or even observed. Polkinghorne (1995) further reports that this type of analysis focuses more on events, actions and experiences that are put together in a form of a plot. The plot plays a crucial role because it is where knowledge and understanding are gained regarding events that have occurred, how they occurred, when and why actions were taken against those events and subsequently what the results of those actions were (Polkinghorne 1995; Jovchelovitch and Bauer 2000). Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000:5) simplify the importance of a plot by stating that it is where "smaller stories within the big story" gain meaning. Furthermore, Smith (2016:2010) points out that this type of analysis focuses more on the "what and how of talk", for instance "what the story is about and how is it structured". Here, the researcher looks for participants' stories through various forms of representations such as journals, interviews, and letters, for instance (Oliver 1998:249). In this study, the narratives that were analysed consisted of the narrative interviews and unsent letters about the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Narrative analysis proved to be suitable for this study because of its nature to focus on events, actions and experiences as participants narrated their stories (Polkinghorne 1995; Jovchelovitch and Bauer 2000). As advocated by Loh (2012), the data collected from the narrative interviews and the unsent letters were collected to construct these narratives. Each of the narratives portrayed the participants' journey of being mentored as early-career teachers. To analyse data using narrative analysis, this study adopted

the multimethod re-storying outline proposed by Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss and Ahmed (2019: 3-4).

Phase 1: From interview to transcript

This phase began after collecting data from the narrative interviews by means of tape-recording. Maree (2007:104) states that data collected by electronic or digital means must be transcribed. As a result, all the data collected from narrative interviews were transcribed. The narrative interviews were transcribed "verbatim" and included gestures and cues (Nasheeda et al. 2019; Maree 2007: 104). Following that, I began to familiarise myself with the data. To achieve this, I read and re-read the data in the transcripts against the audio records several times (Clandinin & Connelly 2000:131; Maree 2016), familiarizing myself with the "main characters, place and time" the events have taken place (Nasheeda et al. 2019: 4).

Phase 2: Storying the transcript

Nasheeda et al. (2019: 4-5) argue that storying of transcripts involves a "chronological plot". To chronologically plot the occurrences as experienced by the participants, I re-read the transcripts again, including reading the unsent letters too. Following, "the data were organised and re-organised into events" (Nasheeda et al. 2019:4). I then used subtitles to structure the resulting story (Nasheeda et al. 2019).

Phase 3: Cocreating

The next phase included my working collaboratively with the participants in cocreating their stories. During the construction of the stories, there were numerous consultations with the participants just to clarify any questions that rose as the construction of the stories progressed (Nasheeda et al. 2019).

Phase 4: Meaning making

After consulting with the participants and getting clarity where needed, the final draft of the stories was completed. According to Kurtz (2014), during storytelling, participants tend to use the second or third person to refer to themselves and events they have experienced. So, during re-storying, the participants stories were narrated in the first person and in a logical sequence so that they are understandable to the reader (Nasheeda et al. 2019). Nasheeda et al. (2019:5) and Knight (2009) further

argue that, during storytelling, sequencing of the narratives is important because it reveals important occurrences, “major turning points and voices” of the participants. Hence, it was used during re-storying.

3.7.2 Analysis of narratives

Polkinghorne (1995) also speaks of analysis of narratives, as distinct from narrative analysis, According to Polkinghorne (1995:195), analysis of narratives is a process that is dependent on “pragmatic cognition”. In other words, it is a process used to organise experiences in accordance, focusing on general characteristics, features, and categories (Polkinghorne 1995). To do this, Clandinin and Connelly (2000:132) state that, in this type of analysis, a researcher looks for “patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes” in a story told by participants and in their social environment. In analysis of narratives, common themes in data are identified, then the themes are arranged in relation to common collected stories (Polkinghorne 1995). Therefore, the aim of analysis of narratives is to yield knowledge from a set of themes found in participants stories (Polkinghorne 1995). In this study, the data generated from narrative interviews was analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) steps for thematic analysis. The steps discussed below were adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006:16-23).

Phase 1 is familiarising myself with the data, as has been outlined already in the first stage of analysis in this study, hence here I discuss phases 2-6, the processes of thematic analysis of narratives.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

According to Maree (2006), coding is the process where one thoroughly familiarises oneself with the data, separating it into meaningful segments. Hence, in this phase I read the data from the transcribed interviews and unsent letters several times and located meaning, ideas, and unities which I used to generate initial codes (Braun & Clarke 2006). The initial codes were then collated into meaningful segments (Braun & Clarke 2006). Because I developed the codes straight from the transcriptions and letters, Maree (2006) reports that these types of codes are referred to as inductive codes.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase stresses more on a deeper level of themes as compared to codes. Here, the codes are grouped into different themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). To identify potential themes in this study, all the initial codes that shown similar features were grouped together to form the main theme (Loh 2012; Braun & Clarke (2006). By the end of this phase, I had a "collection of candidate themes and sub-themes" that were obtained from the data that was coded (Braun and Clarke 2006:20).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Here, the collection of themes and sub-themes were reviewed, and some were refined to ensure that they were appropriate for this study (Braun & Clarke 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), in this phase that is where you see what counts as a theme, what needs to be removed and what needs to be improved regarding your themes. To ensure relevancy of the themes, I went through the organised themes, checking their appropriateness to the study and seeing if they were arranged in order (Braun & Clarke 2006). With themes that I found not suitable; I revised those themes, while others were removed (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), to define and name themes means acknowledging the importance of what each theme entails and understanding the type of aspect each theme is representing. After all the themes were reviewed and some revised in this study, the themes that were used to analyse data were defined and named (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Phase 6: Producing the report

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that, in this phase, one must represent the sophisticated story of their data in a way that the reader of the research will be convinced about it and its validity. As a result, Braun and Clarke (2006: 23) emphasise that, in this phase, careful consideration needs to be taken so that the story narrated provides a "concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account "across all the themes. After reviewing the themes of this study and taking careful

consideration about the structure of the story, the “final analysis and write up of the report” was produced, guided by the aim of this study (Braun & Clarke 2006: 23).

Analysis of narratives proved to be suitable for this study because I wanted to collect “rich descriptive data” (Maree 2007:51), which in return enabled me to construct meaning from the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools.

3.8 Ensuring trustworthiness

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative researchers move back and forth numerous times as various ideas are narrated. As a result, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) caution us that in narratives a researcher may be too comfortable and at ease in the inquiry, thus a researcher needs to be ‘wakeful’ about what he/she is doing. To be wakeful, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) points out three types of criteria (*apparency, verisimilitude and transferability*) that can be used by researchers which were adopted in this study.

3.8.1 Apparency

According to the *Oxford living dictionaries* (2018), apparency means something that is clear or understood. Similarly, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) point out that apparency means being understood clearly. Hence, Clandinin and Connelly (1998) argue that apparency can be seen in terms of how the reader understands and makes sense of one’s life. Apparency is important because it confirms whether data collected is interpreted correctly and credibly, as stated by the participants (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). To ensure apparency, member checking, also known as participant verification, was used in this study (Harper & Cole 2012)**.** This was done to ensure that events and experiences recorded were plausible (Webster & Mertova 2007). According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), member checking is a method used by researchers to confirm that the participants’ voices are represented correctly by enabling them to agree or disagree about the data interpreted. Consequently, Anney (2014:277) states that the aim of member checking is to “eliminate researcher bias” when the researcher analysis and interprets results. To ensure apparency through member checking, the data collected and the interpretations were sent back to the participants so that they could confirm the validity of the information (Alston 2018). Furthermore, participants were

given an opportunity to propose changes if misquoted (Anney 2014). Additionally, the interview questions were reviewed by my supervisor and I used “rich descriptions of the participants’” stories (Maree 2007:37) to analyse the data. To further establish apparency, the analysis and interpretation of results were viewed against the documents that I used during data collection (Guba 1981).

3.8.2 Verisimilitude

According to Loh (2013), verisimilitude means writings that seem credible and real. Hence, Alston (2018) states that, in verisimilitude, the writing should be in such a way that will evoke in the reader feelings that what is said/written is possible or could be true. Verisimilitude as a strategy to ensure trustworthiness is important because it enables readers to have a second-hand experience of being in the same situation as the participants (Loh 2012). Here, the readers can put themselves in the shoes of the participants (Loh 2012). To establish verisimilitude, Loh (2013) points out that a study must seem believable to the readers. So, to ensure verisimilitude in this study, the results of this study were done in such a way that they represented the experiences of ECTs accurately.

3.8.3 Transferability

According to Bitsch (2005), transferability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be transferred to the context of the reader. Furthermore, Alston (2018) points out that transferability is a method used by the readers of the research, as opposed to generalization which is utilised by the researchers to the research findings. Hence, Maree (2016:124) states that transferability does not generalise but rather “invites the reader of research to make connections between elements of the study” in relation to the reader’s experience or research. Readers of the research, therefore, study the research document and its findings to determine whether they can be transferred to their environment (Maree 2016). If the similarities are adequate, then the reader might be able to transfer the findings to their environment (Alston 2018). To achieve transferability in this study, I provided a “thick description” (Maree 2016:124) of situations and methods regarding this study. According to Anney (2014), thick descriptions enable the researcher to clarify all the research processes to the final report, hence they were utilised in this study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000) argue that ethical considerations involves practising good principles and refraining from harm. Orb et al. (2000) further state that, through applying relevant ethical principles, harm can be prevented. Ethical considerations are important because they allowed me to think closely on how the research can affect the participants (Faculty of Humanities 2010). To guide this study, ethical guidelines as described by the University of Pretoria were used. Permission was sought from the University of Pretoria Faculty of education Ethics Committee (Maree 2007).

3.9.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Once all permission had been granted, letters requesting permission were sent to different schools and the Gauteng Department of Education. Participants were invited to partake in this study. Participants were then issued letters and informed of the procedures for participating in this research (Faculty of Humanities 2010). Participants were informed that participation was completely voluntary (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014). In other words, participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw and decline participation in this study without penalties (Kemmis et al. 2014).

3.9.2 Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

According to Creswell (2007), the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants should always be protected when research is conducted. To keep the information provided by the participants anonymous, I explained that the information they provided was to be handled with strict anonymity and confidentiality (Kemmis et al. 2014). Participants were not to be asked any information that would have disclosed their identities (Kemmis et al.2014). Participants were also assured that the information they provided was to be treated with strict respect and confidentiality (Maree 2007). To make sure that this was achieved, I used pseudonyms to protect the identities of the participants (Maree 2007). Furthermore, the results of this study were to be utilised only for academic purposes and the summary was made available for participants on request (Kemmis et al. 2014).

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the methodology and design that was used to generate data in this study. Following that, the research paradigm and the research approach that has shaped this study were discussed. To analyse data, this study drew on both narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. Both narrative analysis and analysis of narratives proved to be suitable for this study, because they assisted me in providing thick narrative descriptions of the experiences of early-career teachers in schools regarding mentoring. In conclusion, this chapter focused on trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4

RE-STORIED NARRATIVES OF EARLY-CAREER TEACHERS EXPERIENCES REGARDING MENTORING

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the methodology that was employed in this study. This chapter provides a window into the stories as lived and narrated by the participants of this study. It lays out the first level of analysis identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as narrative analysis. Here, eight early-career teachers' lived experiences regarding mentoring are portrayed and re-storied. Furthermore, the participants take us through their journey as first-year teachers experiencing mentoring in their schools. The narratives that are re-storied in this study were generated from the narrative interviews and letter writing (unsent letters). As a result, the re-storied extracts provided in this chapter include the data from the letters and interviews. The re-storied narratives are aimed at answering the research question: *"What are the experiences of early-career teachers in schools regarding mentoring?"*

4.2 Re-storied narratives of participants

4.2.1 Re-storied narratives of Thabo

4.2.1.1 "Being thrown into the deep end"

My mentor was a senior teacher. I was not really assigned to a mentor. My mentoring was very informal. It was not a formal system where I was told and introduced to a mentor. There was no formal programme of mentorship to say I was going to be mentored by someone, for this long, and that there was going to be a report at the end. It was informal because of my connections with other teachers who are senior in the field. When I started working, my mentor heard that I was not getting along with the HOD who was supposed to mentor me, then he decided on his own that he was going to help me so that I can get on my feet. He assisted me with the daily running of the school, would invite me to his home to do our work, gave me Maths resources, we would even communicate via WhatsApp calls and emails on weekends or after work hours, so it was informal in that sense. We taught in the same school, although he has

ever since retired. He was a PL1 teacher, teaching Maths in the senior phase and in Grade 10. Our mentoring is still ongoing because if I have got issues, I still go back to my mentor for assistance or clarity.

I regarded my mentor as an open, freely approachable person and a father-figure in the teaching fraternity. During mentoring, he made sure that he "*throws me into the deep end"* and he did this deliberately. He would be there to see if I were managing and just leave me alone. He did this deliberately, so that I as a teacher can figure out what to do. He encouraged independence because that is what happens in real life. He would check up on me now and again, checking my relationship with the parents, how my kids were performing and how far I was with the content coverage, how I was as a person, what I was up to, those kinds of things. He emphasised the importance of being professional, to be gallant in how I conduct myself and to be ethical about what I do. Today I know how to use the school's code of conduct as an instrument to create understanding on how my class operates, what is acceptable and what is not, without being a tyrant but instead using the code of conduct. I also know how to reach a mutual understanding with learners on conducive behaviour in class because my mentor stressed that there should be a difference in how learners behave in a Maths class.

4.2.1.2 "My mentor: A listener, guide and role model"

My mentor played a huge role. He was a religious man. I remember how he used to encourage me to be spiritually strong for the profession, encouraging me to pray and meet to sing uplifting hymns so that I was fuelled for challenging circumstances ahead. For him, teaching had a deeper meaning than just teaching. I found that teacher to be more of a guide. He would listen to me, allow me to share my ideas, would consider and even implement some of the things that I suggest, and this was good. He was a father figure and my role model.

He also played a big role in terms of not sticking with the qualification that I have got when I got out of university. He explained to me that, in many instances, in his experience, the students at university have all the information they need when they do their practical. However, the problem is in managing the class and in disseminating this information so that it is understandable and that the learners can do and cope with

the work. He impressed on me to say it is not simply enough to have a qualification. He said that I must go further, that I must understand the type of children I have, I must understand what is happening with them, what type of kids are they. Are they coming from the township or flats somewhere, you know? Are they kids that are not staying with their parents, are they staying with an aunt? He said that I need to understand the dynamics of who I am teaching, which is what they do not teach you at university, because there a learner is just generic. However, in real life a learner is very specific and detailed, you need to understand their behaviour. As a young teacher, this is difficult because I am not a parent, I have not been exposed to so many schools and different working environments, I am just having the textbook knowledge from the university, he said to me that is simply not enough. He pressed on me as a black teacher to say I must improve my qualification, saying I do not have to have a degree all the time, just that I must keep on studying something.

4.2.1.3 "Learning to take charge of my class"

I have learned a great deal from my mentor. I have learned to be rational and positive amongst a lot of negativity happening in education. I have learned to be firm in how I portray authority, to take charge of my class, to be fulfilled in my role as a manager and to really manage my class, managing everything very thoroughly. When I did professional studies at university, I was trained to manage a class that is orderly, motivated, ready to learn and all those things. But the real experience is that classroom management is very chaotic. I had an issue with discipline, and I remember once saying to a child that I was going to take them to the HOD. My mentor heard this and after I had been to the HOD asked to talk to me. I went to him and he advised me that I should not get into the habit of threatening learners with another teacher. He said that learners will play the two of us against each other and I will end up losing a lot of authority. That gave me a big boost into relying on my own capabilities to manage my class. He taught me that when it comes to discipline, I cannot transfer the responsibility to someone else. He encouraged me that as a teacher I should deal with the situation directly.

To ensure that there was effective teaching and learning, when faced with an unruly learner, my mentor emphasised that I should not nurse the feelings of unruly children. He said that I should be decisive and call for judgement on what should happen next,

that a child should never feel like they oversee my class. This means that a child has got to know that they have overstepped the boundaries and that there are consequences such as not giving the child much attention in terms of affection for a certain period. It may mean that the child must apologise. It may mean involving the parents with an objective and what you are expecting the parents to do. I learned that you handle the misbehaviour, not deal with the child and that the child needs to know that they cannot behave like that.

4.2.1.4 "The power in exchanging ideas and experiences"

What I have observed is that a lot of teachers who are senior think that teachers who are entering are there to be ordered around and be given instructions. I would say that this thing of expecting ECTs to take instructions all the time is terrible; it is a serious inhibition and blockage of growth. If ECTs are expected to take instructions all the time, then I do not see any growth during mentoring. Mentoring should be more of an exchange of ideas, experience, interface between the more senior teachers and the junior teachers. There should be sharing of power., more like passing the baton and trusting that whoever you are passing it to is able and capable too. There are a lot of things that senior teachers can learn from young teachers and there are a lot of things that young teachers can learn from the older teachers too, especially when it comes to handling difficult parents and classroom management. But maybe when it comes to curriculum issues, the younger teachers can be a lot of help to the more senior teachers that are mentors. Power dynamics need to be discussed. If there is an open discourse and discussion between the mentor and mentee, where they have goals and an understanding between the two of them, I think a lot can be achieved.

4.2.1.5 "Using a combination of formal and informal mentoring"

Schools should also use a combination of formal and informal mentoring. I say a combination, because teaching involves a lot of improvisation, adaptation and creativity which sometimes cannot be formalised. In informal mentoring, you get the lived experiences of others to create your own understanding of your duties and of the profession. However, this informal mentoring must be structured by the formal mentoring. In the formal mentoring you will be able to say these are our goals and targets. You'll be able to say this mentorship is going to run for maybe six months and in this six months there's going to be a register of evaluation, reporting on the results

or progress and areas of intervention so that we can see the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. From there, then we can decide on what can be done to intervene, improvise tools and resources to help ECTs do their jobs better.

4.2.2 Re-storied narratives of Simphiwe

4.2.2.1 "My mentor was a foundation phase HOD"

I was assigned to a mentor day 1 of employment. My mentor was a foundation phase HOD. We were teaching the same grade and we were in the same school. She initiated the relationship and explained to me that she was going to be my mentor for a year. She is the one who showed me around the school, where my class was and how things work at the school. Since I was the only one new at the school by that time, she was always with me in the classroom, hence my mentoring was formal. I can say that we were observing each other. For example, I would teach, she would sit, observe me, and write notes, then next lesson I would be the one observing her. At the end of the day when the learners have left, we would sit and reflect on our lessons. She would tell me the positive first, then where I have made a mistake and how I should improve. She would also give me an opportunity to add and reflect on what I have observed – for me that was good. Our conversations mainly comprised of reflections from our observations, sharing of ideas, classroom management and my personal wellbeing as a newly qualified teacher in the school. I remember having a challenge with chalkboard writing; she corrected me and demonstrated how I am supposed to write on the chalkboard. That really helped me.

4.2.2.2 "My mentor: An affectionate being"

My mentor was motherly, and I regarded her as a good listener. She was affectionate in nature and I felt a sense of trust in her. She was approachable in the sense that whenever I experienced challenges, I felt comfortable enough to go to her for assistance because I knew that she would be there to listen and come up with solutions. She was always willing to help me and did not make me feel like I was bothering her. Now and then she would relate my challenges to her experiences as an ECT. Her stories made me aware that the challenges we experience today as ECTs are the very same challenges senior teachers experienced as they started working. For example, she would tell me how classroom management was challenging for her too, that what made matters worse was that some learners were much older than are

typical now. She would narrate about her difficulties as a young teacher, how she grew a thick skin, adapted, and came up with creative ways of surviving in the field. Her stories gave me hope that everything will eventually get better, that someday I would also be a master of my learning area and will probably mentor someone too. Her stories made me feel a sense of belonging, that I was not alone and different, that most teachers go through similar experiences as me and that in time everything gets better.

She was my advisor too. I say an advisor because she guided me when I was lost, provided me with necessary resources and showed me how to use them. She helped me implement what I have learned at university into action. She also connected me to other teachers who taught the same phase as me and have been in the field for a while., teachers whom she thought I could benefit from. She encouraged me to join other activities that were available at my school and connected me to the relevant people for those activities. I viewed her as an expert in the foundation phase.

4.2.2.3 "Learning about professionalism and proper planning"

My mentor shared and passed on important skills and knowledge that one needs to survive in this profession. She told me that being a professional teacher is not only by qualification, but by the way I conduct myself too. She said that the way I talk to learners and parents must be professional. She taught me that, every time I address a parent, I must start with a positive comment, even if I want to discuss something negative that the child has done. At first, dealing with difficult parents was scary, but with the tips from my mentor I got better at it. I once had a parent who came to school fighting and very angry. So, my mentor told me that in such situations I should learn to calm down and apologise so that the parent can calm down too. She encouraged me to listen to the parent's side then explain mine without pushing the blame to the parent or child. She pointed out that teaching comes with many challenges and that I must be ready to tackle all of them. She said I must be ready to wear many caps because as a teacher I am more than a teacher, I am a parent, nurse, social worker, police and more.

When it came to lesson preparation, I have learnt that I must not only depend on policy documents and teaching plans. I have learned to be creative in the way I conduct and

present my lessons so that they are fun and interesting to learners. My mentor encouraged me to manage my time properly. She pointed out that learners get easily bored, hence time management is crucial. She taught me that whenever I plan for my lessons, I should plan in a way that learners get an opportunity to learn something, write an activity and get an opportunity to ask questions. Now and again I would find myself with unruly learners, yes, even in the foundation phase. Since I was new, the children did not understand the type of person I was, so some would do as they please in class. My mentor noticed this and emphasised that whenever I am faced with unruly learners, I must deal with the child's behaviour and not the child. She said that a child is never bad, but they must know that misbehaving is not acceptable. She said that I must look for the root cause of the behaviour. She furtherly pointed out that learner misbehaviour is sometimes a cry for attention and that maybe those learners do not get that attention from home. So, in such instances she encouraged me to find the root cause of the behaviour, and then from there decide on the proper disciplinary measure to take.

4.2.2.4 "Feeling uncomfortable and dependent"

For me, it was not good that my mentor was always in class with me. It made me feel uncomfortable in my own space and dependent on her. After graduating and getting my own class, I had so many ideas of how my ideal class was going to be like and how I was going to make that happen. But, implementing my ideas was not possible because I had someone with me all day every day, someone who expected me to do things their way. So, when my mentor was absent, it became difficult for me to manage the class; because she was always with me, it brought fear in me that "Yoh!" I cannot manage this. So, to improve mentoring, I think that mentors should do class visits rather than be with mentees in class all the time. I think being visited in class will be better because one can do self-reflections on what they have done right or wrong and basically what works in their class. While teaching, you can see where learners understand and do not understand, hence you are able to see where you need to improve so that the learners understand. In a way, you learn independence but also know that when you need help, your mentor will be around to assist.

4.2.2.5 “ECTs must have more than one mentor”

To improve mentoring, I would suggest that ECTs have more than one mentor, not only one mentor because it is important to learn different strategies from different people. I feel that if you are having one mentor, it is like this person is feeding you how to do things. Sometimes you might not even agree with what the mentor suggests because you are your own person, you are not incapable, you just don’t know how to utilise the theory you have learned at university and put it into practice. So, it is better if you learn from different people so that you can select whatever you want to use, whatever is comfortable that you think might work for you. With my mentor, I sometimes felt like she was forcing me to use her teaching style while I have mine, and that was not good. Sometimes you might not even benefit from being mentored, so, imagine finding yourself in such a situation. Then it means it would have been a waste of both your time and energy. I think that it will be better if maybe we have three or more mentors, then select what you like from them.

4.2.3 Re-storied narratives of Bongi

4.2.3.1 “My mentor was a veteran teacher”

My story of mentoring began after a month of employment. I was not assigned to a mentor immediately because the person who was supposed to be my mentor was hospitalised. So, I spent almost a month without a mentor. The HOD of Science would give me assistance here and there, but after a month my mentor came back and then that is when I started experiencing having a mentor. My mentor was a veteran teacher, she was a PL1 teacher, but she taught in the school, I think for 32 years if not 35, and I think she retired sometime last year.

In terms of the mentor match, mine was perfect because we were in the same school and she was teaching the very same subject I was teaching. She was very interactive, and I met with her almost every day. Before we left after school, she would sit down with me and say this is how I’m supposed to do a lesson plan, that I must make sure to look through my ATP and see if I’m in line with the content that I’m supposed to deliver with the kids. In some cases, she would even go to class with me just to see me as I teach and then give me feedback afterwards. She would tell me where I need to improve and how to improve. She would tell me what is it that she is impressed with and that I should keep it up. Sometimes it was the opposite; she would invite me to

her class to observe her while teaching. She showed me how to implement what I have learned at university into practice. She would say: *"remember in school you were taught about this? This is how you apply it"*. That helped me a lot.

4.2.3.2 "My mentor: An advisor, guider and supporter"

My mentor used to give me advice, showed me guidance and support. I remember having a situation where I was supposed to submit marks, then had a few learners who did not do their work, some because of absenteeism, others simply because they did not want to do their work. My mentor advised me that I should call them, maybe during lunch, so that I can talk to them one on one. She would explain to me how a learner's mind work, that whenever some are in class others would always want to be the centre of attention, hence they do not do the work. So, under her guidance, I have learned that in such situations I have to talk with the learner one on one, find out what their problem is and give them another opportunity to do the work. She also pointed out that I was quite friendly and that I should not really show learners my friendliness. She said that once you show learners that you are friendly, they tend to become too familiar and forget the boundaries. So, I learned that I should be firm to survive in this profession.

I experienced a great deal of support from her. Sometimes, I would face situations here learners wanted to disclose certain things to me. That felt like a lot to handle because learners disclose a lot of things. I would go to her for advice; she would listen, share words of encouragement with me and then give me advice. She reminded me that as a teacher I am a teacher in a parental role and that I must play this part. She said that I cannot run away from it and that there are others that are still going to come with even bigger problems. I would also get worried, for instance, that a certain teacher did not greet yesterday and in the afternoon. I would be worried that maybe I have done something wrong, something to offend that teacher. So, my mentor taught me not to think a lot into things, especially if it is something that will not affect my work.

4.2.3.3 "Learning about interpersonal skills in the workplace"

From my mentor, I have learned the importance of interpersonal skills and certain values that one must possess in this profession. The workplace can be very challenging because you deal with different people, expectations, and minds. So, in a

way I learned to have emotional intelligence in the workplace, not only with learners but also with colleagues. I learned about how to be cooperative and work with other people. With teachers, it is not only about teaching and learning or liaising with other teachers, but it is also about building a community of colleagues that understand and know how to work with each other and socially. What I liked is that I was in learning not only about learners and the classroom, but also about other things.

She handled classroom management very well and passed on those skills to me. She would say to me: *"start with cleanliness and have class rules"*, so that effective teaching and learning can take place. She encouraged me to involve learners more during teaching and learning, that the lesson should not only be about the teacher. When faced with a naughty learner, she taught me that I should not show emotions to the learner, no matter how much angry they might make me. She said that I must not react in a way that learners see that they have me in a corner. She said that I must not be quick to judge. That I must take time to know the learner. I must take time to understand where they come from and to my surprise, everything that she said would always be true because all these unruly learners had an underlying problem. For instance, I would find out that at home they do not get much attention, maybe the child leaves with only granny and granny does not have time to play. So, they want to play in class, even when it is not time to play. At times they come from abusive homes. So, she told me that in every class there will always be that unruly learner, the learner that always does the opposite. She encouraged me to not put emotion to it and to not always judge them. She encouraged me that I should learn their behaviour, I should use proximity. If that learner is sitting at the back, I should move them to the front. If that does not work and they keep on doing the same behaviour even after punishment, I should try and engage the learner on a personal level. Check who they live with and the situation at home. So, with such learners, what I have learned from my mentor is that I must try and meet the learners halfway. I must allocate duties to them that will make them feel important. In a way, I have seen that it works because those learners start being obedient, and every time they want to do something bad, they look at you and somehow feel ashamed.

4.2.3.4 "The use of criteria as a monitoring tool"

What I have observed is that say you are a newly appointed teacher and maybe you have done your teaching degree a long time ago, some of the things will probably slip your mind. So, if there were some criteria that a school could use and always refer to, I think that would ensure that the newly appointed teacher is fully aware of what is supposed to be done and must happen. I think it would be so much nicer if mentoring is part of policy, to say that the new teacher should be mentored during the first month, then that mentoring be monitored using criteria.

I think that criteria as a monitoring tool can help in selecting good mentors and checking the progress made by the mentor and mentee during mentoring. I think it can help really to ensure that mentors and mentees are allocated enough time to meet and complete activities they have set out to achieve because sometimes it is just a matter of *"did you find a good mentor or were you given a good mentor?*". In unfortunate situations, you might find a mentor who simply does not care, or not necessarily that they do not care but that they have been in the field for too long, they are tired and want to retire. So, imagine you are being assigned to such a mentor! Such a mentor will teach you all the short cuts and as a first-time teacher you need all the information you can get. Yes, you have learned about things from university, but putting them into practice really requires a good mentor. Maybe you might benefit, maybe you might not benefit at all you know. But if maybe there is a policy document that forces the school to mentor early-career teachers, I think that can help.

4.2.4 Re-storied narratives of Tebogo

4.2.4.1 "Learning through trial and error"

When I started working at my previous school, it took almost 3 months before I had a mentor. My mentor was not assigned to me, he volunteered to mentor me. When I first arrived at the school, I was straight from university and was not aware of the real world of teaching. It was almost the end of the term that we had to submit formal assessment tests to be written by learners. So, as I started preparing for the formal assessments, I did not follow the ATP in my preparations. I was not aware that assessment should be in line with the ATP. I then gave my HOD the assessments to examine and that is when he realised that I needed a mentor, then he volunteered to mentor me. My mentoring was informal. It was informal because I did not sign anything to meet with

my mentor. If I had a problem, I did not have to make an appointment to see my mentor. Since it was informal, he was straight forward with me. He would call a spade a spade. He was real because, at the end of the day, you face real life situations, unlike a formal one where I feel like it just brings a lot of tension.

At first, I could not believe that he was going to do a good job of mentoring me because he was young. I felt like I would not learn anything from him. But as he started informally teaching me things that I needed to know as a novice teacher, my view about him changed. He allowed me to experience the real world of teaching on my own, then came in when he saw that I was struggling. Mostly, I was the one who would go to him if maybe I needed a specific help, but then it was mainly based on subjects. Yes, he did help me with other things, things like filling a leave form, class register, classroom management and dealing with difficult parents, but most of the time it was subject help. This mentor was someone I was sharing the same subjects with. Although he was young, he was an HOD and has been in the school for about seven years and because of that, he was regarded as an experienced teacher at the school.

4.2.4.2 My mentor: "A tutor, role model and supporter"

I can say that my mentor played the role of being a tutor. He showed me how to follow the ATP as a guide during lesson planning so that I can complete everything expected of me within the required time. He taught me that it is possible to use other teaching methods rather than chalk and talk when conducting a lesson. He encouraged me to use what I have, to be creative in my lessons and make Maths fun for learners. Things around me like food, furniture and stationery were my best resources. He was my role-model, not only because of being young and mastering his subject, but also because he was organised in his work. From him I learned to never let my work pile up, to do things in time, that every time I give an activity to learners, I should mark, record and file it immediately.

I can say that I regarded my mentor as my supporter, because he was always available to assist me whenever I needed help. He provided me with the necessary skills and knowledge I needed to work at my level best. Not only did he share information with me, but he listened too. Whenever I had a suggestion, he would listen to it and try to explore the possibility of implementing it. What I also loved about my mentor was that

we shared the love of learning. He was a life-long learner too. So, he would check up on how far I was with my university work and if I was managing. He supported me studying because it is what he believed in too. He stated that it was a good thing that I was furthering my studies because it would enable me to stay relevant with what I teach and the world at large. Today I am not just a master of my subject, but I am competent in what I do too because of him. My mentor treated me as an equal, my views were respected, and I felt free to talk to him, I really liked that about our mentoring. That helped me learn the ropes quickly and boosted my confidence as a newly qualified teacher.

4.2.4.3 "Learning from my mentor's strategies"

I remember having a challenge with one learner in my classroom. She was often absent in school so, my principal wanted me to do a follow-up and write a report about that learner. I was stressed because I did not know how to go about it. My mentor assisted me on how to do a follow-up and communicate with the parent of that learner. He said that in such instances, I should invite the parent in a form of a letter and keep a record of that. So, I drafted the report, my mentor proofread it and made recommendations for me. My principal was very happy with the manner I compiled the report. So, if it were not for my mentor, I would have not known how to do it.

When it came to classroom management, my mentor told me that I should communicate with my learners what I want and what consider unruly. He advised me to keep a book where I record unruly learners and make them aware of that. When learners became unruly, I would record them and let the class representative sign what I recorded. If a learner were recorded more than three times in the book, I would then invite his/her parent to school. The book assisted me maintain discipline even during teaching and learning. My mentor added that for effective teaching and learning to take place, I must know the learners I teach and interact with every day. By knowing them, he stated that I should know their names, who sits where, who is disruptive when sitting with whom, who is the class clown and all those things. He encouraged me to remember the learners' names, saying that knowing their names makes it a bit easier to manage the class because you can directly address the culprit who is misbehaving or disruptive. So, I memorised the learners' names until I knew them, especially the naughty ones. Whenever they were disruptive in class, I would call out their names

and tell them to keep quiet. In that way, some would be embarrassed and ashamed, then would keep quiet. Sometimes though, there were those who were resistant to keeping quiet. In such situations, he advised me to separate them if they would be sitting together, saying that such learners should be moved to the front, where I can see and monitor them clearly. Truly, my mentor's strategies have helped me a lot.

4.2.4.4 "Mentoring of ECTs should be monitored"

I think that most schools do not mentor ECTs. They do say it in the books, but it is not there. It is like they take a person, put them inside a pool and say swim but they do not really teach them to swim. So, I feel like mentoring ECTs is not there, it is there on paper but not implemented. So, for mentoring to work, I think that principals or management of the school really need to look deep into it, ensure that new career teachers are really mentored and to do a follow up to monitor it. I think that managers must monitor mentoring and do a follow up to check that, okay Tebogo, this is where you have started, six months later say, let us check, where are you now? Is there an improvement? So, management should do a follow up if really ECTs are being mentored, unlike giving you a mentor and saying, "okay here's your mentor" and that is it. I know this because it is what happened to me where I currently work. I was given a mentor to say this is my mentor but had never met with her to do anything pertaining to mentoring. They say a fish rots from the top, so I would say that maybe schools do not monitor mentoring because there is no one monitoring them too. So, I think that districts should really want some sort of report from schools to check the progress of the new teachers they send to these schools. I think if principals are pressured by Districts to do the right thing, that will force them to monitor mentoring and ensure that it takes place.

4.2.4.5 "ECTs must have multiple mentors"

I would suggest that ECTs have multiple mentors. Not have one mentor. I will relate this to my experience. My mentor was good at Maths, made me love it too and be good at it, but then the challenge was that he was not an expert in everything. I feel that if he was not the only one mentoring me, things were going to be easier. So, to improve mentoring I think that newly qualified teachers must have four or five mentors. I think in that way it can be effective because if I'm good at something, I would love to share what I'm good at, but then now if I must share even what I'm not good at then

the mentoring is not going to be effective. So, I think that in mentoring, a person should not be mentored by one person but by multiple people.

4.2.5 Re-storied narratives of Cebile

4.2.5.1 "Learning from an older and experienced teacher"

I was not assigned to a mentor immediately I started working. I worked in January and February of 2014 without having any mentor. Then a new teacher was appointed at my school, she was teaching the same subject and grade as I was. She was an older and experienced teacher. The HOD saw it fit that she could make a good mentor. The HOD asked her if she could mentor me since she was experienced in the field and in the subject that I was teaching. The teacher agreed and became my mentor. This was after two months of me working at the school. The mentor did not have a class like I did, so we met on regular basis.

I can say that my mentoring was formal. It was formal because I did not go looking for a mentor; she was assigned to me by my HOD. I met her almost every day just to plan and reflect on lessons. She focused more on my professional learning and on ensuring that our work was similar. Whenever she felt there should be classroom observations, we would sit together prior to that, discuss the time and period she would come to my class or the time I would go observe her. During observation, she would record her observations and we would do reflections afterwards. If it was my turn to observe, I would also record what I saw important and discuss my observations afterschool. She would then report our progress to the HOD when we had our meetings. We had those meetings once in a month. The mentoring ran for an entire year.

4.2.5.2 "My mentor: A role model, mother and an advisor"

My mentor played numerous roles that helped me. She was my role model. She modelled how I should behave as a professional teacher, for instance, that I should come early to work, submit my work on time and participate in school activities. She was not just a subject teacher, but a master of her learning area, and that inspired me. She was reliable, and I trusted her. She was always there to assist me, and I felt comfortable being mentored by her because I had that ease of mind that she will not go around spreading my challenges. She played the motherly role. She took me under her wing and showed me support and direction at a time when I felt vulnerable and

lost in my new workplace. I think her being old made her to naturally play the motherly role. She would check on me, on my wellbeing, checking how I was doing, if everything were okay with me and with my university studies.

I can say that she was also my advisor. I struggled with classroom management, so she gave me tips and strategies that helped me a lot. She taught me to thoroughly prepare for my lessons and use the ATP properly. We would sit in the afternoon and prepare for the future lessons, what I liked about her is that she was not a bossy mentor. She said to me *"when learners have well planned work to do, they are less likely to misbehave"*. She also said I need to learn to have a "serious face". She warned me that I was too nice and that learners pick up very easily when you are too nice and can use that to their advantage. She was my cheerleader too. She would raise it in meetings how good I am in certain things and would recommend me to lead certain activities and competitions. That made me feel good about myself and what I was doing. It boosted my confidence.

4.2.5.3 "Learning multiple lessons"

To manage my class, my mentor encouraged me to draw class rules with my learners. She said that the rules should be short and age appropriate, so that learners can take accountability of what is and is not acceptable in their classroom. I also learned about having that "serious face", so that teaching and learning can take place. My mentor said that *"learners need to know when it is time to work and when it is time to play, if one is too nice, they will want to play, and nothing will be achieved".* When faced with an unruly learner, my mentor emphasised that I should take charge of my class. She said that when a learner misbehaves, I manage the behaviour not the child, that the aim is for the learner to take accountability for his or her actions. She pointed out that sometimes a learner's misbehaviour is a cry for attention or even something serious. So, she taught me that when I find myself with an attention seeker or an unruly learner, I should find out the main cause of such behaviour rather than shouting at the child or being mad. She said that there should be consistency in the way I deal with unruly learners. Also, the sitting arrangements make a huge difference, so I should take note of how the learners sit.

She taught me to properly prepare for my lessons using the ATP. I remember that my mentor and I would sit in the afternoons, compare our work against the ATP, count the number of hours needed and the type of activities we were going to do. She taught me how to design a proper paper that consists of all cognitive levels, because before I used to set very easy papers, papers that did not cover all learners' intelligences. Her work ethic was phenomenal and that rubbed onto me.

4.2.5.4 "Young teachers as mentors too"

What I think must be improved regarding mentoring is that young teachers who have also been mentored should be used as mentors too. Something like a buddy system. Mentors should not only be senior teachers. I think that if you are having a mentor that is young, you can relate to that person better and communication becomes easier, as compared to when you have a mentor that is very old and perhaps tired because they have been in the field for too long. Yes, young teachers do not have much experience in the field, but their skills in relation to the curriculum and tackling things are still fresh. They are energetic and flexible, so they can keep up with you, will not forget you and might be having interesting ways of helping you as a new teacher. They are not fixed to doing things in a certain way, so in a way your voice is heard. Sometimes it is difficult to express your views when having an older mentor because they expect you to do things their way, but with a young mentor, I do not think that will be the case.

4.2.5.5 "Mentoring should be thoroughly supervised"

I think that HODs or whoever person that oversees the allocation of mentors and mentees must really keep tabs on this mentoring. I say this because of what I have observed where I work, that the teachers who are actively mentored are those in the MST (Maths, Science and Technology) department, as compared to others. So, mentoring should really be supervised, especially in our public schools. It should be supervised in a way that maybe there is a book of record to say indeed the mentor and mentee have met and done whatever they still need to do this and still need to improve whatever. At the end of the mentoring, I think that the mentee can be given some sort of an evaluation sheet to rate their mentoring and their mentor, and to give suggestions for improvement. I think that rethinking how mentoring should work can help schools do things differently because they will know what works and does not. I

think it can also help schools see if a senior teacher fits as a mentor because they might have experience but might not make good mentors.

I think that one can never have enough mentors, one mentor is just not enough. So, I would suggest that mentees have more than one mentor. I think that you need to have more mentors, then you have more people to rely on and to help you tackle your challenges. Each person comes with their own strengths, experiences, and ways of doing things. So, you can pick and choose what will work for you better. Multiple mentors bring a variety of qualities that I think can make a big difference to us new teachers when combined.

4.2.6 Re-storied narratives of Omphile

4.2.6.1 "A kind of a person who wanted me to grow"

When I started working, I did not get a mentor immediately. My first year of teaching I had no mentor but then the following year that is when I was assigned to a mentor. We used traditional mentoring. Our mentoring was a one on one interaction where I met with my mentor every day. Sometimes she would stay with me till a period ended, observing and helping me where necessary, like when I was doing teaching practical. The duration of our mentoring was a year. We started in January and ended when schools closed in December. She was in the same school as me and what I liked is that she was an older person. Obviously, she had experience and many years in the profession. She was a PL1 teacher and has been teaching for 15 years.

My mentor was the kind of a person who always wanted to see me grow, she would let me teach and handle difficult situations on my own, then give me constructive feedback after. Depending on the degree of support needed, we would sit during short break or after school to do reflections. During our reflections, she would point out what she loved about my lesson and where I still needed to improve. I can say that taking feedback is not a simple task-because I felt exposed and discussing one's mistake can be frightening and uncomfortable. But I received the feedback and implemented things she suggested. When she saw that I was still not getting what she said right, she would wait for the next period, then demonstrate to me in class. Sometimes she let me do my own reflections of my teaching and even implement some of my

strategies. I really loved that because to me it meant that she was an open-minded person.

4.2.6.2 "My mentor: An advisor, educator and guider"

I regarded my mentor as my advisor, educator, and a guider. She was a well-informed somebody. She encouraged independence because she was the kind of a person who believed in one learning from real life situations. So, she would observe me teach on my own and rescue me where necessary. Although it was hard at times to hear where I've done wrong, her feedback encouraged me to say that at least I had someone who was watering my growth and development professionally so that I could blossom into someone greater in the future. Her feedback opened my eyes to things I was not aware of or may have overlooked while teaching.

We shared a similar goal and interest of making a difference in the lives of the children we are faced with every day. Because she was with me in class every day, she did not wait for me to ask for help. She offered her help whenever she saw me not coping or doing something incorrectly. Whenever she was observing me, I felt free because she did not make me feel like I was being assessed for marks. I felt like this was for my growth and development, so I appreciated the help.

4.2.6.3 "Learning what it takes to get ahead"

My mentor taught me how to teach, to build a relationship with learners, to keep learners calm in the classroom and, most importantly, to have honest conversation with parents. I have also learned to pray for my learners' success, to love and treat them equally, irrespective of their differences. I can say that I have learned to celebrate and cater for diversity in my class, that I should be patient with my learners as they learn in different ways and pace. I remember having a learner with a disability and did not know how to help that learner of mine. So, my mentor taught me that, if I have such a learner, I must learn more about their disability so that I can be able to help them learn appropriately. I learned to also accommodate learners according to the grades they are in. If, for instance, I am with grade 2 learners, I should be on their level, including the jokes that I make.

My mentor offered me valuable insights on what it takes to get ahead, helping me decide on the best course of action in difficult times. When faced with an unruly learner, she said, *"there's no smoke without fire",* so she encouraged me to always try and look for the deeper cause of the learner behaviour. She said that most unruly learners behave the way they do because of how they were raised or their family background. She encouraged me to learn to understand why learners behave in a certain way, to build a relationship with the learner and learn to communicate better on what is acceptable and not acceptable in the class, to communicate that if a learner still misbehaves there will be consequences – such as detention, reporting the behaviour to the principal or involving the parent. For me, mentoring has been shown to be a cost-effective way to improving relationships with learners. It has been a key factor that led to my educational success because I became familiar with my school environment, improved relationships with teachers and staff, improved my feelings of academic competence and got greater access to other supports such as tutoring and counselling because of mentoring. I can say that I have learned what it takes to get ahead in this profession.

4.2.6.4 "I do not want to be a passive passenger"

Although I met with my mentor every day, our meetings were more on how I interact with learners than anything else. She did not involve me much with lesson preparation and planning. For instance, if it were a Maths period, she would just come to class and continue from where she left off the previous day. So, I got confused to where exactly the lesson came from and why she was teaching it like that, she taught according to her experience. For those reasons, I spent a lot of time trying to find out what is acceptable and not acceptable in the school. I would ask where she got the information and she would say just teach the way I teach. She wanted to teach me shortcuts and as a new teacher I think that was not good because I needed all the skills and knowledge to better my development in the school. Some of the resources she had were not relevant to my teaching style; that was my challenge. So, to improve mentoring, I think that mentors should involve us when it comes to lesson planning and selecting resources that must be used to assist learners. That is what I want like more than anything else. I do not want to be a passive passenger who always follows. I want to be involved when it comes to the resources that must be used in class.

4.2.6.5 “Mentoring should be compulsory in all schools”

I wish that mentoring can be made compulsory in all schools. I wish that it can be carried out as part of a structured developmental programme to help new teachers develop confidence and enhance the quality of teaching. I say this because I have observed that it is not all schools around me that mentor new teachers. As new teachers in surrounding schools, we meet through workshops and competitions, friendships are formed and that is when we start sharing our experiences. Some teachers would tell me that there is no mentoring in their schools, that they were just given a class to teach on day 1 and that is it. Some will tell you that, yes, they have mentors, but the mentoring is not effective because there is nothing they do with their mentors. Because of such reasons, I think that mentoring of new teachers should be made compulsory in all schools. Not only be made to be compulsory but for schools to implement it and record everything that happens during this mentoring.

4.2.7 Re-storied narratives of TK

4.2.7.1 “What boosted my confidence”

I was assigned to a mentor first day in the field. My mentor was my HOD. My mentoring was formal, when I started working at the school, the principal formally introduced me to my HOD, telling me that she was going to be responsible for mentoring me. We both taught Maths in grade 5. My mentoring started off with my mentor orientating me. She introduced me to my fellow teachers, showed me my class and around the school. She gave me a Maths file with lesson plans that I was going to use, together with relevant textbooks. She also gave me my timetable and told me about the daily running of the school. The following day we sat, and she showed me how to use the lesson plans.

Day 3 was the reopening of schools for learners, my mentor went with me to class just to introduce me to the learners and then left. She let me handle my class on my own, then I would meet with her every after school just to update her on what I did in class and what I was going to do the following day. As time went by, she saw that I was finding my way around, so she suggested that we no longer meet every day but twice in a week, that really boosted my confidence that at least I was getting better at my work. We agreed to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays. We no longer had meeting in the afternoons also, but we met during lunch. Upon meeting, I would sign a register

of attendance and everything we did was recorded in a book that she had. Now and then she would go to class with me just to see how I was handling things; we would then sit and reflect on my lessons.

4.2.7.2 "My mentor: A role model, guider and networker"

My mentor was my role model. Our relationship was good because she made me feel accepted in my new workplace. She was not selfish of her time, would share her experiences of how she coped as a new teacher and what made her the teacher that she is today. She never hesitated to answer any questions I had or addressing any concerns that I experienced. She taught me how to implement what I have learned at varsity; some things I knew in theory, especially when it comes to classroom management, but then she showed me how to go about using the strategies I have learned at university.

She was also more like my guide and networker. She is the one who introduced me to other teachers and showed me how things work at the school. She showed me my class and helped in setting it up. She would steer me to the right direction whenever she saw me lost. Her reflections with me were very fruitful and encouraged me to be a better teacher. Whenever I have done something good, she would praise me, that really boosted my confidence and made me work harder so that I do not disappoint her. Sometimes I would struggle with finding the Maths solutions or explaining the steps in a way that learners can understand. So, rather than spoon-feeding me, she would guide me on what I should try so that the learners can understand. She also gave me so many Maths resources like lesson plans and textbooks that made my life easier as a new teacher.

4.2.7.3 "Going to class fully equipped with skills and knowledge"

My mentor taught me that for each lesson I present, I must go to class prepared. She encouraged me not to stick on one resource, to use the Internet and various textbooks as a source of information so that I go to class fully equipped with skills and knowledge that is relevant to my subject. She encouraged me to be creative in the way I present my subject. She said that Maths is a practical subject, so I should make it fun for learners, who should be able to link whatever I teach them to their real-life situations, and that my class should be a free environment where all learners feel free to

participate. So, I would give my learners a class test each Friday to create a competition and make learning fun. There was this time where my mentor came to observe me while teaching, she noticed how there was this one learner who was quick to give answers and how I focused more on her for answers. She advised me that I should accommodate all the learners in my class, that I should give other learners a chance to answer too, that a class is not about one learner, but it is about all the learners. So, I have learned that I must engage all learners in my teaching and learning and that my lessons should be learner-centred. I have also learned to set quality question papers, question papers that consist of all cognitive levels.

With classroom management, I would like to say that I met some kids who were naughty in class. Those learners gave me a tough time and I did not know how to handle them. I remember how there were some learners who would always disturb my class when a lesson was in progress. I told my mentor about the issue because I did not know what action to take. She taught me about the importance of good communication skills. She guided me that learners need to be reminded of the class rules, not that they forget them but they like testing teachers' limits. She taught me to properly communicate with learners, tell them what I expect of them and the type of behaviour I expect in my class. My mentor taught me that sometimes unruly learners behave the way they do because it is a cry for attention. So, she advised me to know my learners in a deeper level, find out what is really frustrating them and give them positive attention. This may mean allocating duties, so that the learners feel important too, or even moving them to the front.

4.2.7.4 "Mentoring should be included in the school timetable"

I think that mentoring is good because one can learn valuable tips on how to adapt. To improve mentoring, I would suggest that it is included in the school timetable somewhere to say now it is time for the mentee and mentor to meet and discuss "*1,2,3"*. All schools should have a session that now it is time for mentoring of ECTs. During this session, mentors could workshop ECTs and guide them. There should be specific activities that must be done per week or per month by both mentor and mentee, something like a lesson plan. Then the report should be submitted to whoever will be responsible for mentoring these ECTs. I am aware that the intake of ECTs in

schools is not a lot, so other teachers can do intervention with their learners during this time.

4.2.7.5 "Feeling uncomfortable and embarrassed"

I think that the thing of correcting /rectifying mentees in front of the learners is a terrible habit that a lot of experienced teachers do when they say they are helping. I will relate this to my experience during mentoring. Sometimes I would be in class, maybe busy with the lesson, then my mentor realises that I have taught something incorrectly. Her immediate action would be to rectify me in front of the learners. That made me feel uncomfortable and embarrassed that it happened in front of the learners. It also made me feel like even the kids in class where now not taking me seriously. So, I think that maybe when mentors see us do or say something wrong, they should rectify us in private and not while we are busy teaching. During the lesson, maybe they should just write down what needs to be corrected then when we meet, tell me that I have made a mistake here, please improve or do this and that. In that way, I think that mentoring can be very effective and fully enjoyable for the mentees.

4.2.8 Re-storied narratives of Jabulile

4.2.8 .1 "My mentor opened her door for me"

As I started working as a newly qualified teacher, I realised how challenging teaching is. The workload was too much for me and I remember how I did not have enough time to sleep because I was forever preparing. Each day I had to prepare for three different subjects which was too much for me. My HOD saw that I was not coping with the work and offered to mentor me, this was after two months. She was teaching in the same school as me. We also teach the same subject but in different grades.

My mentoring was very informal. I was not given a mentor by the school, my mentor offered to help me after seeing me struggle. I only met with her whenever I wanted something. I went to her and I asked her questions. I would also ask for tips about classroom management and the daily running of the school; she helped me a lot. She understood me, did not judge me, I felt free with her and I learned a lot from her. She always encouraged me to believe in myself and my strengths to be able to overcome every challenge that I face. She reminded me that every dark cloud has a silver lining

and that sometimes, as people, we need a bit of support to get on our feet. Her door was always open for me whenever I needed help.

4.2.8.2 "My mentor: A listener, mother and supporter"

I regarded my mentor as a good listener and more of a mother to me. She was always willing to listen to me, share her time, knowledge, and skills without any reservations. Whenever I had a question, she was immediately there to assist and provide me with possible solutions. Whenever I was lost, she guided me about what was right and wrong, what was acceptable and not acceptable in the profession. There was a time where the learners were out of control and taking advantage of me, I called them with mean names and my mentor heard that. She advised me to never do that again, as it was not professional. She said that no matter how angry learners make me, I should not let learners see that I am angry, that I should be the adult in such situations and not stoop to the level of the learners.

My mentor was willing to continually share information and give me ongoing support, I liked that about her. I felt understood by her and I trusted her judgement and views. She knew what works better with learners and teaching. So, she would share her teaching strategies with me, including her life experience in this profession and allowed me to pick and choose whatever will be suitable for me. She was very supportive. Whenever I felt lost and like giving up, she would encourage me not to give up and that I should believe in myself. She helped me see the positive side of being a teacher. She would tell me what she likes about my work, abilities, and talents, that boosted my self-esteem.

4.2.8.3 "Learning to be brave"

There was a time where I felt like quitting because everything was too much to handle. Classroom management was the most difficult thing ever. I spent a lot of time screaming, yelling, telling learners that they are making noise and it was like they did not take me seriously. My mentor encouraged me to be brave about my situation, act like I was mean, have that serious face you know. She also taught me that when I see that a learner is out of line, I reprimand that learner behaviour immediately. She said that if I feel very angry, like I am about to explode, that I should just go out for few minutes, gather myself and go back to the classroom. When I get there, she said that

I should call the learner, explain that whatever they did was not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Most of the time the learners apologised, and we would move on. But there are those who just did not want to listen. So, she taught me that I should have a record book where I record any misconduct, let the learners know about it and that If they appear whatever times then I will call their parents. If a learner appeared in the book multiple times, maybe like five times, then I would invite their parent to discuss the matter. So, because most do not want their parents to know about their bad conduct, they started behaving. The record book has really saved my life.

My mentor offered me emotional support too. I would feel all kind of negative things like maybe I was not meant for this career, like I did not belong where I was. I would feel like giving up, but my mentor reminded me that indeed I do belong, that it was not a mistake that I'm in this profession, that I was not called into this profession to just give up and that the learners needed me. She told me to have confidence in myself and always hope for the best. She would share words of encouragement and remind me that I was not alone there. That she was there for me to assist with everything I needed support. Gradually I started seeing the light, things became easier and my mentor became more like a mother to me. She encouraged me to not take things personally, to talk to the learners in a professional way and if that does not work to then involve a third party. Planning using the ATP is a challenge for us new teachers. I personally just taught according to the textbook, teaching whatever I thought was important. So, she showed me how to use the ATP as an instrument for teaching and learning. She taught me to plan my work in line with it so that at the end of the term I finish what is expected of me.

4.2.8.4 "Corrections should be done in private"

I think that mentoring of ECTs is a good thing because we learn a lot from the mentoring programme. What needs to be improved is that if maybe I have done something wrong it will be better for my mentor to tell me that I was wrong in private, rather than telling me in front of the learners. That was my challenge because the learners now would listen to her and not to me, that made the learners to lose respect for me. Yes, our mentors mean well, but sometimes the way they help us makes learners lose confidence in us as newly qualified teachers. So, I think that corrections should be made in private. I also believe that as a human being it is only fair to give

others time so that they can learn, do not expect them to be perfect. I suggest that mentors should give us time to learn and not expect us to be perfect. Sometimes I felt like my mentor expected me to be perfect, like if she showed me something, she wanted me to do it exactly and if ever I made a mistake it was a problem. I think that during mentoring, mentors should give us room and time to learn, not expect us to be perfect.

4.2.8.5 "Teachers with more experience need to take charge"

We need more experienced teachers to take charge when it comes to mentoring new teachers. Teachers who are hard workers and good role models should take charge of mentoring. I feel like some good, experienced teachers do not want to mentor others, maybe because there is nothing motivating them to be mentors, maybe because they don't know how to start or are not getting enough support from their schools, I don't know. What I know is that their good experiences, knowledge, and skills are not passed on and that is unfortunate. So, I think they need to be recognised and acknowledged when it comes to mentoring. Maybe schools or the district should encourage positive reinforcement, possibly by offering awards of excellent to all mentors who complete the programme and whose mentees show a great deal of improvement. Maybe schools or the district should pay mentor teachers just to motivate them to keep on being mentors. It is no argument that mentoring consumes a lot of time, time that these mentors might use to do something else. So, maybe if they are paid, then they might be willing to assist.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a close and personal storyline about the lived experiences of the participants. The lived mentoring experiences of eight early-career teachers were portrayed and re-storied. The next chapter, therefore, moves on to analyse data using *"analysis of narratives"*. The re-storied narratives of the participants are broken down with the aim of finding out the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers in schools, how early-career teachers benefit from mentoring programmes and how this mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved.

CHAPTER 5

MENTORING EXPERIENCES OF ECTS: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the first level of analysis (narrative analysis) was presented. Eight early-career teachers' lived experiences regarding mentoring were portrayed and re-storied with the aim of acquiring a glimpse of their experiences. The re-storied narratives included data from the letters and narrative interviews. This chapter presents the second level of analysis, identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as analysis of narratives. The re-storied narratives from Chapter four are analysed "with pragmatic process which results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories" (Polkinghorne 1995:12). Here, the use of themes offers answers to the three sub-questions of this study. The chapter begins with the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers. Following this, the benefits of mentoring and how the mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved are highlighted. Lastly, the chapter summary is outlined.

5.2 Nature of mentoring for ECTs

This section provides answers to what the experiences of early career teachers tell us about the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers in Gauteng selected public schools. Upon reviewing the re-storied narratives of the eight participants, five themes were identified. The themes are the following: Who are the mentors? Assigning or allocation of mentors; the nature of interaction; and the role of the mentor. These themes are discussed below:

5.2.1 Mentors as senior teachers?

After a thorough scrutiny of the re-storied narratives of the eight participants, it became evident that early-career teachers are usually mentored by teachers who are senior managers or teachers who are experienced in the teaching fraternity, having taught for a period of more than five years (Wonacott 2002). Moreover, the participants of this study seem to have mentors whom they work in the same school with, some even

sharing the same subject and teaching the same grade as their mentees. Thabo explains:

> *My mentor was a senior teacher. We taught in the same school, although he has ever since retired. He was a PL1 teacher, teaching Maths in the senior phase and in Grade 10. I regarded my mentor as an open, freely approachable person and a father-figure in the teaching fraternity.*

Bongi shares the same sentiments as Thabo regarding to who her mentor was. She states:

> *My mentor was a veteran teacher, she was a PL1 teacher, but she taught in the school I think for 32 years if not 35, and I think she retired sometime last year. In terms of the mentor match, mine was very perfect because we were in the same school and she was teaching the very same subject I was teaching.*

Similarly, Cebile and Omphile too highlight that their mentors were older and experienced teachers in their schools. Cebile states:

> *A new teacher was appointed at my school, she was teaching the same subject and grade as I was. She was an older and experienced teacher. The HOD saw it fit that she could make a good mentor. The HOD asked her if she could mentor me since she was experienced in the field and in the subject that I was teaching. The teacher agreed and became my mentor.*

Omphile reports the following:

> *She was in the same school as me and what I liked is that it was an older person. Obviously, she had experience and many years in the profession. She was a PL1 teacher and has been teaching for 15 years.*

Simphiwe however, is not specific about the teaching experience of her mentor, rather she points out that her mentor was an HOD, teaching the same grade and at the same school as herself. She reports:

> *My mentor was a foundation phase HOD. We were teaching the same grade and we were in the same school.*

Similarly, Tebogo states:

> *This mentor was someone I was sharing the same subjects with. Although he was young, he was an HOD and has been in the school for about seven years and because of that, he was regarded as an experienced teacher at the school.*

Then TK adds the following:

> *My mentor was my HOD. We both taught Maths in grade 5.*

Unlike the other participants who had mentors whom they shared a subject and a grade with, Jabulile points out that she did not share the same grade with her mentor:

> *My HOD saw that I was not coping with the work and offered to mentor me, this was after two months. She was teaching in the same school as me. We also teach the same subject but in different grades.*

The ONSIDE mentoring framework is used as a basis of generating questions to interrogate the data. The framework suggests that it is generally an advantage for a mentee (early-career teacher) to be mentored by an expert or experienced person (Hobson 2016). Similarly, from the participants' narratives, we are learning that HODs, senior or veteran teachers are usually preferred by schools to take on the task of being mentors. This might be because those teachers are usually deemed to be people with a wide range of knowledge and skills that are related to teaching and learning (Nantanga 2014). They are also regarded as people who can help steer change to how early-career teachers approach situations, they help guide and advice early-career teachers so that they can reach their full potential (Whitfield & Edwards 2011). Consequently, these mentors tend to be people who are advanced in years, have experience and relevant skills in the area of interest (Whitfield & Edwards 2011).

In this study, the majority of the participants (Thabo, Simphiwe, Bongi, Tebogo, Cebile, Omphile and TK) highlight that their mentors were people who taught in the same school as them, teaching the same grade and subject. One participant (Jabulile) reports that, although her mentor was someone in the same school and teaching the same subject as her, she did not share the same grade as her mentor. Supporting the choice of schools to opt for mentors internally, Alabi (2017:69) argues that it is always an advantage for a mentee to have a mentor who shares a similar classroom background and "similarity in the work assignment" with them. Additionally, Desimone et al. (2014) point out that having a mentor and a mentee in the same setting is an advantage because both parties get the opportunity to interact more frequently, which was evident from the stories of participants.

5.2.2 Assigning or allocation of mentors

When it comes to the assignment or allocation of mentors and mentees, the DoE (2008) states that an early-career teacher is usually matched/ paired with a person

who is seen as more knowledgeable and experienced as their mentor. However, not all early-career teachers who need support are fortunate enough to be assigned to a mentor (Kardos & Johnson 2010). Hence, Seema and Sujatha (2015) explain that sometimes a mentor is the one that volunteers to mentor an early-career teacher. As a result, Alabi (2017) states that mentors can be assigned formally, or they can volunteer to mentor others. Given the reasons above, the allocation of mentors to mentees can be done formally or informally. In this study, some participants have expressed that they were formally assigned to a mentor by their schools, while others point out that their mentors volunteered to mentor them. Furthermore, there seem to be no clear understanding of when this allocation/pairing must take place, hence, the participants' experiences vary tremendously.

The extracts below take us through the journey of the participants regarding to how they are assigned to mentors. Thabo expresses how his connections helped him informally get a mentor. He states:

> *I was not really assigned with a mentor. My mentoring was very informal. It was not a formal system where I was told and introduced to a mentor. There was no formal programme of mentorship to say I was going to be mentored by someone, for this long and that there was going to be a report at the end. It was informal because of my connections with other teachers who are senior in the field.*

Like Thabo, Tebogo points out that her mentoring was informal. However, it was not through any connections that she found herself with a mentor, but as a result of a series of trial and error attempts to do things on her own that her HOD realised the she needed help, then offered to help her in a form of mentoring. She narrates:

> *As I started preparing for the formal assessments, I did not follow the ATP in my preparations. I then gave my HOD the assessments to examine and that is when he realised that I needed a mentor, then he volunteered to mentor me. My mentoring was informal. It was informal because I did not sign anything to meet with my mentor.*

Jabulile too states that her mentoring was informal and that her mentor offered to help her after noticing that she was not coping with her work. She says:

My mentoring was very informal. I was not given a mentor by the school, my mentor offered to help me after seeing me struggle. I only met with her whenever I wanted something.

Unlike Tebogo and Jabulile who had to undergo a series of challenges before their mentors realised that they needed help, Simphiwe expresses that she was fortunate enough to have a mentor from day one of her employment, and that she was given a mentor by her school. She states:

I was assigned with a mentor day 1 of employment. She initiated the relationship and explained to me that she was going to be my mentor for a year. My mentoring was formal.

Like Simphiwe, TK states that he was also allocated with a mentor from day one of this employment. He explains:

I was assigned with a mentor first day in the field. My mentoring was formal, when I started working at the school, the principal formally introduced me to my HOD, telling me that she was going to be responsible for mentoring me.

Bongi shares that her mentoring was formal, however, unlike Simphiwe and TK, she points out that she was assigned to a mentor after a month. She states:

My story of mentoring began after a month of employment. I was not assigned with a mentor immediately because the person who was supposed to be my mentor was hospitalised. So, I spent almost a month without a mentor. The HOD of Science would give me assistance here and there, but after a month my mentor came back and then that is when I started experiencing having a mentor.

Cebile expresses that she also got assigned to a mentor formally, although this was after two months. She explains:

I was not assigned with a mentor immediately as I started working. I worked in January and February of 2014 without having any mentor. I can say that my mentoring was formal. It was formal because I did not go looking for a mentor, she was assigned to me by my HOD.

Omphile explains that she got assigned to a mentor after a year. She reports:

My first year of teaching I had no mentor but then the following year that is when I was assigned with a mentor. We used traditional mentoring.

As the participants of this study take us through the journey of their experiences, we learn more about the assignment of mentors to mentees in selected Gauteng public schools. Because this study is guided by the ONSIDE mentoring framework, it suggests that, during selection and matching process, mentees are paired with their mentors and relationships are formed (Hobson 2016). However, from the participants' experiences, what is apparent is that not all the participants are paired with mentors; some of the mentors volunteer to mentor the early-career teachers in an informal setting. Hence, the evidence of differences regarding how early-career teachers are assigned to mentors suggests that the allocation of mentors to mentees in schools can either be formal or informal. For instance, the majority of the participants (Simphiwe, TK, Bongi, Cebile and Omphile) pointed out that their mentoring was formal, while others (Thabo, Tebogo and Jabulile) indicated that their mentoring was informal.

Nonetheless, whether formally or informally assigned to mentors, what is also evident from the participants' extracts is that during the pairing of mentors to mentees, there is no clear direction to when exactly early-career teachers are supposed to be assigned to mentors. Kardos and Johnson (2010) point out that assuming that all mentoring programmes are orderly and that the mentors always know what to do during this mentoring would be a mistake. Additionally, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) point out that mentoring programmes differ when it comes to the selection and assignment of mentors to mentees. Hence, the participants' experiences regarding to how they are allocated/assigned to mentors vary tremendously. Some participants narrate that they are allocated with mentors from day one of employment, while others (Bongi, Cebile and Omphile) state that they were paired with mentors after a month or so and Omphile points out that her allocation with the mentor was after a year.

5.2.3 Nature of interaction

It was earlier alluded to in the literature review that the relationship between a veteran teacher and an early-career teacher aims to assist an early-career teacher in different aspects relating to the teaching profession. Mukeredzi et al. (2015) and Schacter, Gilbert & Wegner (2011) state that it is important that we know about the nature of interaction that is available for early-career teachers. According to Hobson et al. (2015), mentoring is more effective where the mentor and mentee meet on regular basis. Edward (2013) believes that the more a mentor and mentee communicate and

work together, the better chances of development for both. In this study, although not all the participants interact with their mentors on regular basis, what was clear is that they all had some sort of interaction with their mentors. This section mirrors the experiences of the participant regarding the nature of interaction with their mentors. Below, we are taken back to how the participants experienced the nature of interaction with their mentors as each participant narrated their story.

Thabo explains that for him, the nature of interaction with his mentor was one which encouraged independence. He narrates:

> *During mentoring, he made sure that he "throws me into the deep end" and he did this deliberately. He would be there to see if I were managing and just leave me alone. He did this deliberately, so that I as a teacher can figure out what to do. He encouraged independence because that is what happens in real life. He would check up on me now and again.*

Like Thabo, Tebogo points out that her mentor too encouraged independence because he let her experience the world of teaching on her own. She states:

> *He allowed me to experience the real world of teaching on my own, then came in when he saw that I was struggling. Mostly, I was the one who would go to him if maybe I needed a specific help, but then it was mainly based on subject. Yes, he did help me with other things, but most of the time it was subject help.*

For Simphiwe, the interaction with her mentor was more of mutual learning because she explains that they were observing each other. She says:

> *I can say that we were observing each other. For example, I would teach, she would sit, observe me, and write notes, then next lesson I would be the one observing her. At the end of the day when the learners have left, we would sit and reflect on our lessons.*

Bongi states that she met with her mentor daily:

> *She was very interactive, and I met with her almost every day. In some cases, she would even go to class with me just to see me as I teach and then give me feedback afterwards.*

Cebile too points out that she interacted with her mentor on regular basis. She explains:

> *I met her almost every day just to plan and reflect on lessons. She focused more on my professional learning and that our work was similar. Whenever she*

felt like there should be classroom observations, we would sit prior, discuss the time and period she would come to my class or the time I would go observe her.

As with Bongi and Cebile, Omphile states the following:

I met with my mentor every day. Sometimes she would stay with me till a period ended, observing, and helping me where necessary. She would let me teach and handle difficult situations on my own, then give me constructive feedback after. Depending on the emergency of support, we would sit during short break or afterschool to do reflections.

While on the other hand, TK expresses the following:

I would meet with her every after school just to update her on what I did in class and what I was going to do the following day. As time went by, she saw that I was finding my way around, so she suggested that we no longer meet every day but twice in a week. Now and then she would go to class with me just to see how I was handling things; we would then sit and reflect on my lessons.

Jabulile, however, points out that she was the one who went to her mentor whenever she needed assistance. She explains:

I only met with her whenever I wanted something. I went to her and I asked her questions. Her door was always open for me whenever I needed help.

From the narratives above, it is evident that all the participants of this study were fortunate enough to meet and interact with their mentors on a regular basis. However, we are also learning that there are inconsistencies regarding to the frequency and length of the interaction with mentors. Similarly, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) and O'Brien and Goddard (2006) point out that, when it comes to the nature of interaction, mentors display different levels of interaction with their mentees. Some mentors are very interactive and show a great deal of support, while others are relaxed and do not interact much with their mentees (O'Brien & Goddard 2006). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) additionally state that the interaction can vary from a few meetings at the beginning of the year to a very structured and interactive programme that can run over a couple of years. This might be because of the formal and informal nature of the assignment of mentors to mentees, as highlighted earlier in the findings of this study. Simphiwe, Bongi, Cebile and Omphile, who were in a formal mentoring process,

highlight that they met with their mentors on regular basis and that upon meeting there was a set of activities they conducted. For instance, they narrate about having mentors who did classroom observations, and from the classroom observation gave them guidance and support relating to effective teaching and learning. TK, who was also involved in formal mentoring, points out that in the beginning he interacted with his mentor on regular basis; however as he progressed and grew in the profession, his mentor limited the number of interactions. Considering that the framework that guided this study is informed by other frameworks and models that focus on mentoring and other support strategies that are available for early-career teachers, it makes use of scaffolding. Hence, it advocates the activities that Edwards and Collison (1996) suggest as a way mentors can scaffold the learning and development of their mentee, such as modelling ways to teach and manage the classroom effectively, helping plan and set goals with the mentee, having classroom observations, giving support to mentee while they teach, reflecting and providing productive criticism to the mentee (Edwards & Collison 1996). This is consistent with the narratives reported by the participants above. On the other hand, Omphile and Jabulile, who received informal mentoring, express that they are the ones who went to the mentors when in need of assistance, while Thabo explained that his mentor encouraged independence and would check up on him now and then. Because of the three participants' experiences regarding the nature of interaction, one may argue that the nature of interaction for the Omphile and Jabulile was limited because of its informal nature and not having any guidelines on what is supposed to be done and when. Ragins and Kram (2007:251) point out that it is not that the interactions are limited, but that in informal mentoring, the interaction "may vary in length and content" based on the nature of support needed. This is because informal mentoring is unstructured as it can take place in meetings, corridors or even the classroom (McElroy 2012; Seema & Sujatha 2015). Hence, Omphile and Jabulile indicate that they are the ones who went to their mentors for assistance.

5.2.4 The role of the mentor

In this study, mentees are regarded as people who are developed, guided, and supported by a mentor (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014). The needs of the mentees to be developed, guided and supported give rise to the countless roles that are played by mentors. From the participants' re-storied narratives, the key role played by the

mentors is the role of a parent. In their roles as parents, mentors advise, guide, educate, model and support early-career teachers. Below, the participants of this study highlight the kind of relationship they had with their mentors.

As Thabo explains the role played by his mentor in their mentoring relationship, we learn more about a kind of a mentor who played the fatherly role, who was supportive and acted as his role model. Thabo expounds:

> *I found that teacher to be more of a guide. He would listen to me, allow me to share my ideas, would consider and even implement some of the things that I suggest, and this was good. He was a father figure and my role model.*

Simphiwe too portrays having a mentor who played the role of a parent, adding that she felt a sense of trust in her mentor because of the kind of a person she was towards her. She narrates:

> *My mentor was motherly, and I regarded her as a good listener. She was affectionate in nature and I felt a sense of trust in her. She was approachable in the sense that whenever I experienced challenges, I felt comfortable enough to go to her for assistance She would be there to listen and come up with solutions. She was always willing to help me and did not make me feel like I was bothering her.*

Cebile shares the same sentiments as Thabo and Simphiwe, that her mentor also played the parental role. She states:

> *She played the motherly role. She took me under her wing, showed me support and direction at a time when I felt vulnerable and lost in my new workplace. I think her being old made her to naturally play the motherly role.*

Jabulile shares the following:

> *I regarded my mentor as a good listener and more of a mother to me. She was always willing to listen to me, share her time, knowledge, and skills without any reservations. Whenever I had a question, she was immediately there to assist and provide me with possible solutions. Whenever I was lost, she guided me about what was right and wrong, what was acceptable and not acceptable in the profession.*

Tebogo, like Thabo, Simphiwe and Jabulile, talks about a kind of a mentor who was not selfish of her time. He explains:

He was always available to assist me whenever I needed help. He provided me with necessary skills and knowledge I needed to work at my level best. Not only did he share information with me, but he listened too. Whenever I had a suggestion, he would listen to it and try to explore the possibility of implementing it.

While some participants express that their mentors play the parental role and giving them time, others teach us that their mentors provided them with support, guidance, and advice.

Bongi narrates:

My mentor used to give me advise, showed me guidance and support. I experienced a great deal of support from her.

Simphiwe points out that whenever she was lost, her mentor guided her. She states:

She was my advisor too. I say an advisor because she guided me when I was lost, provided me with necessary resources and showed me how to use them. She helped me implement what I have learned at university into action.

Like Simphiwe, TK expresses that his mentor steered her to the right direction whenever she was lost. He points out:

She would steer me to the right direction whenever she saw me lost. Her reflections with me were very fruitful and encouraged me to be a better teacher.

Omphile, however explains that her mentor encouraged independence and would rescue her where necessary. She explains:

I regarded my mentor as my advisor, educator, and a guider. She was a well-informed somebody. She encouraged independence because she was the kind of a person who believed in one learning from real life situations. So, she would observe me teach on my own and rescue me where necessary.

From the extract of Thabo, Simphiwe, Cebile and Jabulile, it is evident that the main role played by their mentors is a parental role, and although others like Bongi, TK and Omphile are not specific that their mentors were motherly or fatherly, the actions of their mentors prove that they played a parental role. Thabo highlights that his mentor was a father figure, while Simphiwe, Cebile and Jabulile point out that their mentors were motherly or were more of a mother figure. In this study, the presence of a mentor provides a close bond between the mentor and mentee to an extent that early-career teachers regard their mentors more of parents than anything else. This may be

because Venderbilt (2010) points out that an emotional bond is formed during mentoring. Scholars (Ford 2012; Buell 2004, Anderson and Shannon 1988) too acknowledge that a mentor can act in a parental role during mentoring. According to Anderson and Shannon (1988:40), during mentoring, a mentor acts as a "substitute parent to an adult child". As a result, Ford (2012:6) and Buell (2004) state that it is natural that early mentoring relationship is accompanied by a "parent-child relationship". In the parent-child relationship, the mentor acts as a role model, supporter, nurturer, and an advisor or a guider for the mentee. This is evident in the narratives of the participants, because Thabo highlights that his mentor used to listen to him and was his role model. Simphiwe, Jabulile and Tebogo too point out that their mentors listened to them, even adding that their mentors guided them and were willing to assist whenever they came across challenges, while Cebile, Bongi and Omphile aver that their mentors provided them with support, advice, and guidance. TK even points out that his mentor would steer him to the right direction when he was lost. Because mentors were earlier identified as veteran teachers or senior teachers in the school, this might be the reason why they take up the role of parents, providing guidance and support so that the needs of early-career teachers can be accommodated and their potential is reached (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014; Venderbilt 2010).

5.3 Benefits of mentoring for ECTs

This section provides answers to the second research question, namely*: how do early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools benefit from mentoring programmes?* According to Dlani (2012), mentoring is beneficial to both the mentor and mentee. Despite this mutual benefit, the focus in this study is only on early-career teachers. After a detailed scrutiny of the re-storied narratives, the findings of this theme were concluded. The findings of this study indicate that from the relationships that early-career teachers have developed with their mentors, the participants benefit from psychosocial support. They learn more about classroom management and discipline, strengthen their knowledge of subject matters and benefit from career-related support.

5.3.1 Psychosocial support

From the re-storied narratives, we learn that early-career teachers benefit from psychosocial support as they are mentored. Earlier in this study, it was reported that Eby et al. (2010) point out that psychosocial support is a type of support that focuses more on building the self- confidence, self-worth and identity of an early-career teacher within the profession. The finding of this study reveal that mentors play a crucial role in terms of supporting the emotional well-being of ECTs and guiding them so that they are empowered and motivated to work in their schools. The extracts below highlight the benefits of mentoring for early-career teachers.

Below, Thabo explains how his mentor supported him:

> *I remember how he used to encourage me to be spiritually strong for the profession, encouraging me to pray and meet to sing uplifting hymns so that I was fuelled for challenging circumstances ahead I have learned to be rational and positive amongst a lot of negativity happening in education. I have learned to be firm in how I portray authority. To take charge of my class, to be fulfilled in my role as a manager and to really manage my class, managing everything very thoroughly.*

Jabulile expounds about how her mentor's support boosted her self- esteem:

> *Whenever I felt lost and like giving up, she would encourage me not to give up and that I should believe in myself. She helped me see the positive side of being a teacher. She would tell me what she likes about my work, abilities, and talents, that boosted my self-esteem.*

Like Jabulile, Tebogo and Cebile feel that their mentor's support boosted their confidence. Tebogo states the following:

> *He would check up on how far I was with my university work and if I were managing. My mentor treated me as an equal, my views were respected, and I felt free to talk to him. That for me helped me learn the ropes quickly and boosted my confidence as a newly qualified teacher.*

Cebile explains:

> *She would check on me, on my wellbeing, checking how I was doing, if everything were okay with me. She would raise it in meetings how good I am in certain things and would recommend me to lead certain activities and competitions. That made me feel good.*

Similarly, TK shares that his mentor made him feel accepted:

> *She made me feel accepted in my new workplace. She was not selfish of her time. She never hesitated to answer any questions I had or addressing any concerns that I experienced. Whenever I have done something good, she would praise me, that really boosted my confidence*.

Additionally, Bongi narrates that when faced with challenging situations, her mentor was there to listen and support her. She states:

> *Sometimes, I would face situations were learners want to disclose certain things to me. That felt like a lot to handle because learners disclose a lot of things. I would go to her for advice, she would listen, share words of encouragement with me then give me advice.*

The narratives above attest to how early-career teachers benefit from psychosocial support during mentoring. Given that one of the challenges that was pointed out earlier in this study was that ECTs consider leaving the profession due to feeling alone and isolated (McCollum 2014), the framework of this study suggests that mentoring should be supportive of mentees' psychosocial needs and well-being (Hobson 2016:101). Psychosocial support is defined by Coppin and Fisher (2015:94) and Kram (1985) as a type of support where mentor provides a mentee with a sense of "social support", which is carried out in a form of "friendship, role modelling, counselling, acceptance and confirmation". The findings of this study reveal that early-career teacher's social and emotional needs are accommodated through mentors sharing words of encouragement, showing concern for their mentees, admiring, and showing acceptance for the early-career teacher. Thabo seem to have experienced challenges in the profession and narrates about how his mentor emotionally encouraged him to be spiritually strong for the profession, going to an extent of even praying and singing uplifting songs with him. As a result of the support he got from his mentor, we are learning that Thabo's confidence in his abilities has been boosted because he highlights that he now knows how to be firm and to take charge of his classroom. Jabulile states that whenever she felt like giving up, her mentor was there to support and encouraged her. As a result, she reports that the support she got from her mentor helped boost her confidence. Ragin and Kram (2007) too suggest that psychosocial support improves an early-career teacher's sense of proficiency and professional development. So, Jabulile, Tebogo, Cebile and TK point out that their mentors' support

boosted their self-esteem and confidence in their new workplace. TK also adds that her mentor made her feel accepted, while Bongi shares that whenever she felt like everything was weighing on her, her mentor was there to listen and encourage her. The findings of this study are consistent with the framework of this study and shares the same sentiments as the literature reviewed in this study.

5.3.2 Learning about classroom management and discipline

The findings of this study reveal that, regardless of the school type the participants work at and the type of mentoring they were part of, they all got to learn more about classroom management and discipline. The participants of this study share their experiences as first-time teachers in the classroom and how their mentors helped them implement effective strategies that enabled order and discipline in the classroom. Classroom management and discipline involves multifaceted activities that occur in the classroom (Gordon 2019). Hence, the participants of this study view the concept classroom management and discipline in terms of behaviour management, measures implemented to discipline misbehaviour and setting of classroom rules.

Thabo shares the skills and knowledge he learned from his mentor about classroom management. He states:

> *When faced with an unruly learner, my mentor emphasised that I should not nurse the feelings of unruly children. He said that I should be decisive and call for judgement on what should happen next, that a child should never feel like they oversee my class. I learned that you handle the misbehaviour, not deal with the child and that the child needs to know that they cannot behave like that.*

Simphiwe, a foundation phase teacher, states that she too experienced challenges when it comes to classroom management and discipline. Further, she states that when faced with an unruly learner, her mentor encouraged her to look for the root cause of the conduct and she explains the following:

> *Now and again I would find myself with unruly learners, yes, even in the Foundation phase. My mentor noticed this and emphasised that whenever I am faced with unruly learners, I must deal with the child's behaviour and not the child. She furtherly pointed out that learner misbehaviour is sometimes a cry for attention and that maybe those learners do not get that attention from home.*

Like Simphiwe, Bongi too had this to say:

She would say to me: "start with cleanliness and have class rules". She encouraged me to involve learners more during teaching and learning, that the lesson should not only be about the teacher. When faced with a naughty learner, she taught me that I should not show emotions to the learner, no matter how much angry they might make me. She encouraged me that I should learn their behaviour, I should use proximity, I should try and engage the learner on a personal level.

Cebile highlights the following:

My mentor encouraged me to draw class rules with my learners. I also learned about having that "serious face" so that teaching and learning can take place.". When faced with an unruly learner, my mentor emphasised that I should take charge of my class. She said that when a learner misbehaves, I manage the behaviour not the child. She taught me that when I find myself with an attention seeker or an unruly learner, I should find out the main cause of such behaviour. She said that there should be consistency in the way I deal with unruly learners.

Omphile narrates:

She encouraged me to always try and look for the deeper cause of the learner behaviour. She encouraged me to learn to understand why learners behave in a certain way, to build a relationship with the learner and learn to communicate better on what is acceptable and not acceptable in the class.

Moreover, TK states the following:

She taught me to properly communicate with learners, tell them what I expect of them and the type of behaviour I expect in my class. My mentor taught me that sometimes unruly learners behave the way they do because it is a cry for attention. So, she advised me to know my learners in a deeper level, find out what is really frustrating them.

Tebogo had another suggestion that helped her with classroom management and discipline. Tebogo talks about a record book for naughty learners:

My mentor told me that I should communicate with my learners what I want and consider unruly. He advised me to keep a book where I record unruly learners and make them aware of that. My mentor added that for effective teaching and learning to take place, I must know the learners I teach and interact with every day.

Like Tebogo, Jabulile states the following:

> *She also taught me that when I see that a learner is out of line, I reprimand that learner behaviour immediately. She said that I should call the learner, explain that whatever they did was not acceptable and will not be tolerated. She taught me that I should have a record book where I record any misconduct, let the learners know about it and that If they appear whatever times then I will call their parents.*

The literature reviewed earlier in this study highlighted that the majority of early-career teachers struggle with classroom management during their early years of teaching. So, in such a case, the ONSIDE mentoring framework suggests that the mentor's role is to help mentees manage the classroom effectively (Hobson 2016; Edwards & Collison 1996). According to Chandra (2015), teaching is not all about giving orders, instead it is about collaborating with learners to promote learnacy, prosperity and growth for both learner and teacher. Chandra (2015) explains that this is possible through effective classroom management. Effective classroom management is aimed at ensuring learner self-control by means of encouraging learner achievement and positive behaviour (Chandra 2015). This is possible when a teacher creates a nurturing environment where a learner feels cared for and supported (Chandra 2015). One of the roles for educators that are stipulated in the Government Gazette (2000: 17) is that a teacher is a leader, administrator, and manager. Teachers in their roles as leaders, administrators and managers are expected to manage the classroom and have a classroom environment that is not only democratic but also orderly and disciplined. From the findings of this study, we learn that early-career teachers gain a depth of skills and tips regarding classroom management and discipline from their mentors. The findings reveal that early-career teachers, through their mentor's guidance, have learned how to develop a thoughtful and supportive relationship with their learners rather than jumping into disciplining the learner. For instance, first and foremost, majority of the participants (Bongi, Cebile, Omphile, TK and Tebogo) are encouraged to know the learners they interact with every day. This includes knowing the learners' names, who misbehaves when sitting where and with whom, and who get easily distracted. The participants (Thabo, Bongi, Cebile, Omphile, TK, Tebogo and Jabulile) were also encouraged to communicate what they expect from their classrooms, whether verbally or in a form of written class rules. Lastly, the participants

(Simphiwe, Bongi, Cebile, Omphile and Tebogo) learned the value of having a relationship with their learners and to look for a deeper cause of the misbehaviour before taking appropriate measures. This include looking at the background of the learner, who they live with and how their family structure is, and getting to know why they behave the way they do. It is for such reasons that Lindgren (2005), Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) deem mentoring as beneficial for early-career teachers.

5.3.3 Learning about subject matter

According to the Government Gazette (2000:14), teachers are expected to carry out seven roles, one of the roles stated is that educators should be "learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist". Earlier, it was reported that early-career teachers were associated with good characteristics, however research of (Khalfan 2017; McCollum 2014; Dlani 2012) points out that they find it difficult to translate their knowledge into a practical classroom, hence mentoring. Mentors play various roles that ensure that early-career teachers effectively carry out their roles as stipulated by the Government Gazette's norms and standards for educators. The findings in this study suggests that, through mentoring, early-career teachers learn more about ways to conduct and implement effective ways for teaching and learning. The narratives below detail the participant's experiences regarding to what they have learned regarding the subjects.

To ensure that Bongi and the other participants were in line with the content they were supposed to teach, they narrate about their mentors teaching them to properly use the ATP (Annual Teaching Plan). Bongi states:

> *Before we left after school, she would sit down with me and say this is how I'm supposed to do a lesson plan, that I must make sure to look through my ATP and see if I'm in line with the content that I'm supposed to deliver with the kids.*

Cebile points out the following:

> *She taught me to properly prepare for my lessons using the ATP. I remember that my mentor and I would sit in the afternoons, compare our work against the ATP, count the number of hours needed and the type of activities we were going to do. She taught me how to design a proper paper that comprises of all cognitive levels.*

Tebogo goes beyond recounting about how he learned to use the ATP. He also adds his mentor encouraged him to be creative in the way her presents his lessons, she shares the following:

> *He showed me how to follow the ATP as a guide during lesson planning so that I can complete everything expected of me within the required time. He encouraged me to use what I have, to be creative in my lessons and make Maths fun for learners.*

Simphiwe shares the same sentiments as Tebogo:

> *I have learned to be creative in the way I conduct and present my lessons so that they are fun and interesting to learners. My mentor encouraged me to manage my time properly. She taught me that whenever I plan for my lessons, I should plan in a way that learners get an opportunity to learn something, write an activity and get an opportunity to ask questions.*

TK too expounds:

> *My mentor taught me that for each lesson I present, I must go to class prepared. She encouraged me not to stick on one resource. She encouraged me to be creative in the way I present my subject. She said that Maths is a practical subject, so I should make it fun for learners.*

Considering that the findings in this study reveal that mentors are veteran teachers or teachers in managerial position, the literature reviewed earlier in this study suggests that they possess a depth of knowledge and skills in "various pedagogical and professional aspects related to teaching and learning" (Nantanga 2014:10). Mansor, Eng, Rasul, Hamzah and Hamid (2012) add that such teachers can link subject knowledge with past knowledge and have creative ways of integrating lesson content with learner's prior knowledge, so that learners' needs are accommodated. Not that early-career teachers lack the necessary knowledge relating to the subject matter, because Ulvik and Langørgen (2012) highlight that their knowledge and skills in relation to the profession and their learning area are up to date, but they find it difficult to translate their knowledge and skills into a practical classroom. The norms and standards for educators stipulated in the Government Gazette (2000) reminds us that educators in their roles as learner mediator and subject specialists are expected to know and understand the content of their learning area. Furthermore, they are required to choose, order and pace content in a way that the needs of a learner are

accommodated (Government Gazette 2000). This is possible when they have the skills and knowledge of analysing lesson plans and other educational resources that are offered to them (Government Gazette 2000). The narratives of the participants reveal that early-career teachers find it difficult to order and pace the content as stipulated. However, as they interact more and more with their mentors, they learn different strategies relating to subject matter. For instance, the participants (Bongi, Cebile and Tebogo) narrate about learning how to use the ATP to ensure that they were in line with the content they were supposed to teach. The participants (Tebogo, Simphiwe and TK) point out that they were encouraged to be creative in the way they conduct their lessons and to use various resources for effective teaching and learning. Simphiwe highlights that she also learned about time management, that whenever she planned her lesson, there should be time for teaching and learning. Finally, Cebile explains that her mentor taught her to design a proper paper that addressed all cognitive levels.

5.3.4 Career-related support

From the literature reviewed earlier in this study, career-related support was defined as a type of support that is aimed at enhancing an early-career teacher's professional development (Eby et al. 2010). Here, early-career teachers are supported so that they can become familiar to their new roles, responsibilities, and school culture (Green-Powell 2012), hence career-related support is highly important. The participants of this study benefitted from career-related support and gain a depth of knowledge and skills about professionalism. The finding of this study suggests that different mentors focus on different aspects of career-related support. Thus, the findings reveal that, depending on the mentor and the type of school, the participants might find themselves in, early-career teachers learn more about how to conduct themselves professionally and about interpersonal skills.

Thabo explains that his mentor taught him to be ethical in how he should conduct himself. He states:

> *He emphasised the importance of being professional, to be gallant in how I conduct myself and to be ethical about what I do. Today I know how to use the school's code of conduct as an instrument to create understanding on how my class operates, what is acceptable and what is not without being a tyrant but*

instead using the code of conduct. I also know how to reach a mutual understanding with learners on conducive behaviour in class because my mentor stressed that there should be a difference in how learners behave in a Maths class.

Bongi reports learning about the value of interpersonal skills that one must possess in the workplace:

From my mentor, I have learned the importance of interpersonal skills and certain values that one must possess in this profession. The workplace can be very challenging because you deal with different people, expectations, and minds. So, in a way I learned to have emotional intelligence in the workplace, not only with learners but also with colleagues. I learned about how to be cooperative and work with other people.

Omphile narrates about learning to form personal and professional relationships with colleagues and learners:

My mentor taught me how to teach, build a relationship with learners, keep learners calm in the classroom and most importantly to have honest conversation with parents I became familiar with my school environment, improved relationships with teachers and staff, improved my feelings of academic competence and got greater access to other supports such as tutoring and counselling because of mentoring.

Simphiwe explains that she learned more about how to conduct herself at the workplace and communicate with parents. She states:

She told me that being a professional teacher is not only by qualification, but the way I conduct myself too. She said that the way I talk to learners and parents must be professional. She also connected me to other teachers who taught the same phase as me and have been in the field for a while. Teachers whom she thought I could benefit from. She encouraged me to join other activities that were available at my school and connected me to the relevant people for those activities.

Tebogo points out that her mentor taught her to draft a report and communicate with parents. She states:

I remember having a challenge with one learner in my classroom. She was often absent in school so, my principal wanted me to do a follow-up and write a report about that learner. My mentor assisted me on how to do a follow-up

and communicate with the parent of that learner. My principal was very happy with the manner I compiled the report.

TK highlights that his mentor showed him how things work at the school:

She is the one who introduced me to other teachers and showed me how things work at the school.

Cebile reports that her mentor was her cheerleader:

She would raise it in meetings how good I am in certain things and would recommend me to lead certain activities and competitions.

The extracts above highlight the career-related support that early-career teachers benefited from during their mentoring. Here, Kram (1985) and Coppin and Fisher (2015: 94) indicate that early-career teachers can take advantage of support such as "sponsorship, coaching, protection challenging assignment" and exposure to different practices available at the workplace. According to Ragins and Kram (2007), the mentor acts as a coach and provides an early-career teacher with guidance and necessary information about the job requirements. An early-career teacher is supported so that they learn more about the school culture and how they should conduct themselves in the profession, so that they are effective in what they do (Ragins and Kram 2007). In this study, Thabo highlights about learning more about how to use the code of conduct so that there was harmony in his class. He expounds that he learned to be calm and ethical in the workplace. Omphile highlights how she learned more about the school culture and how to conduct herself when communicating with parents, staff, and learners. Simphiwe states that, when it comes to professionalism, she learned more to be professional in the way she conducts herself and communicates with the parents. Similarly, the SACE (2016) code of conduct for educators expects teachers to be in a harmonious relationship with the parents. Simphiwe points out that she has learned to be calm and positive when communicating with the parents, even when discussing something that is negative. When Tebogo experienced challenges with a learner who was always absent from school, she points out that it is the mentor who assisted her with compiling a letter and gave her tips on how to communicate with the parents. Allen, Eby, Poteet and Lentz (2004) and Ragin and Krams (2007: 190) indicate that this type of support also puts emphasis more on the professional growth of the teacher, hence the focus is on "exposure and visibility" in the workplace. SACE (2016) expounds that teachers are expected to be cooperative with colleagues and

acknowledge their professional duties. Thus, Bongi narrates about learning to work with others (especially colleagues). TK points out that his mentor introduced him to other teachers and guided him on how things work at the school. Cebile highlights that her mentor was her cheerleader because she gave her exposure by raising in meetings how good she was in certain things and recommended to lead them. When it comes to exposure and visibility in the mentoring, Ragin and Kram (2007) adds that the mentor uses his/her connections to link an early-career teacher to other members who can help. In relation to this study, Simphiwe points out that her mentor introduced her to other people whom she thought she could benefit from.

5.4 Improving mentoring of ECTs

This section provides answers to the third research question, namely*: how can mentoring of early-career teachers in public schools be improved?* Mentoring, although deemed to be beneficial for early-career teachers, can still be improved. Upon analysis of the re-storied narratives of the participants, four suggestions for improving mentoring were identified. In this study, the participants feel that one mentor is just not enough, hence they suggest the use of multiple mentors for early career teachers. The participants also feel that mentoring is not monitored by schools, hence a strong need for monitoring mentoring to improve mentoring. Because the participants of this study do not want to be passive participants in their mentoring, they suggest that mentoring should create space for independence. Last, the participants suggest that constructive feedback should be done in private, not in front of the learners.

5.4.1 Allocation of multiple mentors

Considering that all the participants of this study had only one mentor who was either a veteran teacher or an HOD, the participants felt that one mentor was not enough. The findings of this study suggest that early-career teachers need more people to learn from in their mentoring. Dobrow, Chandler, Murphy and Kram (2012) highlight that the developmental networks of early-career teachers can comprise numerous people, within and outside their teaching environment, hence a strong need for multiple mentors. Below are the narratives of the participants regarding to what led to their suggesting the use of multiple mentors during mentoring.

Simphiwe suggests that it is important that early-career teachers learn different strategies from different people, hence she suggests that the early-career teachers should have more than one mentor:

> *To improve mentoring, I would suggest that ECTs have more than one mentor, not only one mentor because it is important to learn different strategies from different people. I feel that if you are having one mentor, it is like this person is feeding you how to do things. Sometimes you might not even agree with what the mentor suggest because you are your own person, you are not incapable, you just do not know how to utilise the theory you have learned at university into practice. So, it is better if you learn from different people so that you can select whatever you want to use, whatever is comfortable, and you think might work for you.*

Tebogo feels that mentoring is effective when one learns from multiple mentors. She believes that each mentor will come with their unique set of strengths that can benefit early-career teachers:

> *I would suggest that ECTs have multiple mentors. Not have one mentor. I will relate this to my experience. My mentor was good at Maths, made me love it too and be good at it, but then the challenge was that he was not an expert in everything. I feel that if he was not the only one mentoring me, things were going to be easier. So, to improve mentoring I think that newly qualified teachers must have four or five mentors. I think in that way it can be effective because if I'm good at something, I would love to share what I'm good at, but then now if I must share even what I'm not good at then the mentoring is not going to be effective.*

Cebile expounds that having multiple mentors means having more people to rely on and learn from. She explains:

> *I think that one can never have enough mentors, one mentor is just not enough. So, I would suggest that mentees have more than one mentor. I think that if you are having more mentors then you have more people to rely on and to help you tackle your challenges. Each person comes with their own strengths, experiences, and ways of doing things. So, you can pick and choose what will work for you better. Multiple mentors bring a variety of qualities that I think when combined can make a big difference to us new teachers.*

In this study, the literature reviewed earlier indicates that scholars (Dlani 2012; McCollum 2014; Mukeredzi et al. 2015; Schacter, Gilbert & Wegner 2011; Hugo 2018; Gross 2016; Mukeredzi et al.2015; Schacter et al. 2011; DoE 2008; Kempen 2010) view mentoring as a relationship between two people (a mentor and a mentee), which is similar to mentoring as experienced by the participants of this study. Fullick (2012) however, points out that the dynamics of the workplace have changed in such a way that one mentor can no longer cater for all the needs of an early-career teacher. Hence, Dobrow et al. (2012) state that during mentoring, one mentor may not be enough. Fullick (2012) highlights that this is because it is not easy to find a mentor with all the skills and knowledge that a mentee might need for professional growth and development. Like Fullick (2012) and Dobrow et al. (2012), the mentoring experiences of the participants of this study reveal that early-career teachers need more than what one mentor can offer them during mentoring, hence they highlight the use of multiple mentors. Simphiwe expounds that, with her mentor, sometimes she felt pressure to do things her mentor's way. Whereas, if she had more mentors, she would have learned from different people and would have been able to choose what she thinks might have worked for her., hence her strong need for multiple mentors. Tebogo points out that one mentor cannot be good with everything, so she suggests multiple mentors. Tebogo suggests that with multiple mentors, each comes with their own strengths that would be of benefit to early-career teachers. Cebile expresses that, with multiple mentors, early-career teachers have a flood of options to choose from when it comes to mentoring and more people to rely on, hence she suggests the use of multiple mentors. According to Baugh and Scandura (1999), instead of having a single mentor, early-career teachers could have multiple mentors consisting of co-workers, family members, community members and other professional associates. With multiple mentors, a mentee gets to take advantage of different skills and knowledge because each mentor possesses different viewpoints, skills and knowledge that might benefit a mentee (Fullick 2012). Furthermore, early-career teachers get to learn and develop through a variety of perspectives from different mentors (Gosh, Haynes & Kram 2013). As a result, Scandura and Pellegrini (2007) and Baugh and Scandura (1999) believe that this kind of mentoring may result in better work commitment and improved job satisfaction, and may eliminate feelings of self-doubt.

5.4.2 Monitoring of mentoring

According to the Department of Education (2008), during mentoring, the principal is accountable for monitoring mentoring and where necessary, take appropriate measures for the effectiveness of the mentoring. The findings of this study put emphasis on the value of monitoring mentoring to track the progress made by the mentor and mentee. The participants highlight that monitoring can help really ensure that mentees are assigned to mentor, can help assign mentors with good qualities and can help check if early-career teachers are really mentored.

Bongi narrates about using criteria to monitor mentoring:

> *If there were some criteria that a school could use and always refer to, I think that would ensure that the newly appointed teacher is fully aware of what is supposed to be done and must happen. I think that criteria as a monitoring tool can help in selecting good mentors and checking the progress made by the mentor and mentee during mentoring. I think it can help really ensure that mentors and mentees are allocated enough time to meet and complete activities they have set out to achieve.*

Tebogo feels that most schools say they mentor early-career teacher when in actual sense they do not. So, she recommends that schools monitor mentoring by doing a follow up to check the progress made by both the mentor and mentee during this mentoring. She states:

> *For mentoring to work, I think that principals or management of the school really need to look deep into it, ensure that new career teachers are really mentored. I think that managers must monitor mentoring and do a follow up to see if really ECTs are being mentored, unlike giving you a mentor and say, "okay, here's your mentor" and that is it.*

Cebile suggests a record book to monitor mentoring. She states:

> *Mentoring should really be supervised, especially in our public schools. It should be supervised in a way that maybe there is a book of record to say indeed the mentor and mentee have met .At the end of the mentoring, I think that the mentee can be given some sort of an evaluation sheet to rate their mentoring, their mentor and give suggestions on how to improve it.*

Omphile point out that mentoring should be made compulsory to all schools. She expounds:

I wish that mentoring can be made compulsory in all schools. Not only be made to be compulsory but for schools to implement it and record everything that happens during this mentoring.

TK suggests that mentoring be monitored by means of a timetable. He says:

To improve mentoring, I would suggest that it is included in the school timetable somewhere. There should be specific activities that must be done per week or per month by both mentor and mentee, something like a lesson plan. Then the report should be submitted to whoever will be responsible for mentoring these ECTs.

To improve mentoring, the comments of the participants above suggest that early-career teachers feel a strong need for mentoring to be monitored. For effective mentoring, Hobson (2017) recommends a mentor coordinator. According to Hobson (2017), a mentor coordinator is important because he/she can monitor mentoring, can intervene, and support a mentor where necessary. The Department of Education (2008) avers that the principal as a leader is accountable for monitoring and evaluating mentoring. The principal as a leader, even if he/she has delegated other members of the school management team, needs to track and have a record of the activities that take place in the mentoring programme. However, Tebogo expresses that she feels like schools do not monitor mentoring, hence she suggests that principals should do a follow up to check if early-career teachers are in fact being mentored and check the progress made during mentoring. Like Tebogo, Omphile too feels like mentoring is not monitored, hence she suggests that is made compulsory in schools. Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) suggests that mentoring works when mentors are selected based on specific criteria. Similarly, Bongi identifies criteria that could be used to monitor mentoring. Bongi feels that such criteria can help in selecting good mentors and checking the progress made during motoring, hence she recommends that they are included in the school policy. Bongi's recommendation, like Tebogo, suggest that schools do not really monitor mentoring as defined by the Department of Education (2008). Cebile feels that mentoring should be monitored because it is not all the early-career teachers who enjoy the luxury of being mentored. Cebile highlights how some departments in the same school are active when it comes to mentoring as compared to others. So, she suggests a book of record to monitor mentoring, to check the nature of interaction and to identify where mentoring needs to be improved. TK on the other

hand suggests that mentoring be included in the school timetable. In that way, he expresses that there will be time to complete activities that must be done during mentoring and time to compile and submit report of progress made during mentoring. According to the Department of Education (2008), monitoring mentoring is important because it allows the manager to determine what still needs to be improved, to check the progress made in the programme, to check the degree of success made in the programme and to ensure that the mentoring is carried in a way that is ethical and accommodative of the mentees' needs. All the activities stated above are consistent with the recommendations made by the participants of this study.

5.4.3 Creating space for independence

The Department of Education (2008) argues that it is important that mentors understand their mentees as independent people who can make their own decisions and come to different conclusions on themselves. Similarly, the findings of this study highlight that early-career teachers do not want to be passive passengers during their mentoring. Rather, they want to be involved and work together with their mentors. Also, some of the participants point out that mentoring should allow room for independent learning where early-career teachers are not dependent on their mentors. As a result, the participants of this study suggest that mentoring should be an exchange of ideas, being more of class visits than a mentor being with the mentee in class all the time, and that the mentor should not expect mentees to be perfect, so that there should be room for learning during mentoring.

In an extract from Thabo, he suggests that mentoring should not be one-sided; rather there should be sharing of ideas and experiences. He narrates:

> *Mentoring should be more of an exchange of ideas, experience, interface between the more senior teachers and the junior teachers. There should be sharing of power. More like passing the baton and trusting that whoever you are passing it to is able and capable too. There are a lot of things that senior teachers can learn from young teachers and there are a lot of things that young teachers can learn from the older teachers too.*

Omphile points out that her mentor did not involve her much with lesson planning, so she suggests that mentoring should be more of a teamwork and working together. She states:

I think that mentors should involve us when it comes to lesson planning and selecting resources that must be used to assist learners. That is what I want like it is nobody's business, I do not want to be a passive passenger who always follows. I want to be involved when it comes to the resources that must be used in class.

Simphiwe points out that it was not good that the mentor was always with her in class, hence she suggests class visits so that mentees can learn to be independent: She explains:

For me, it was not good that my mentor was always in class with me. It made me feel uncomfortable in my own space and dependent on her. So, to improve mentoring, I think that mentors should do class visits rather than be with mentees in class all the time. I think being visited in class will be better because one can do self-reflections on what they have done right or wrong and basically what works in their class. While teaching, you can see where learners understand and do not understand, hence you are able to see where you need to improve so that the learners understand.

Jabulile suggests that mentees be provided with a time to learn during their mentoring. She states:

I also believe that as a human being it is only fair to give others time so that they can learn, do not expect them to be perfect. I suggest that mentors should give us time to learn and not expect us to be perfect. Sometimes I felt like my mentor expected me to be perfect, like if she showed me something, she wanted me to do it exactly and if ever I made a mistake it was a problem. I think that during mentoring, mentors should give us room and time to learn, not expect us to be perfect.

The findings of this study suggest that creating space for independence fosters growth and development for early-career teachers. First and foremost, communication is very important so that mentors know the needs of the mentees. According to Edward (2013) and Collins et al. (2014), there should be communication and teamwork because, the more a mentor and mentee communicate and work together, the better chances of development for both. Although Thabo benefitted from mentoring, he feels that some senior teachers want to order early-career teachers around, hence he suggests that there should be sharing of power during mentoring. Buell (2004: 63) relates to this kind

of mentoring in his Cloning Model, as a relationship where the mentees do not grow because they are expected to follow instructions as set by the mentor, resulting in a “fear-based relationship”. Omphile points out that the mentor did not involve her much, which is an indication that the communication with her mentor was not good. As a result, Omphile points out that mentees should be involved during mentoring. Since it was earlier identified that the main role played by mentors in this study is the parental role, Buell (2004) suggest that a mentee can be too dependent on the mentor, while the mentor too might find it difficult to let go of the mentee and become overly protective. This is evident in the experience of Simphiwe regarding mentoring. Simphiwe reveals that having a mentor who was with her everyday made her dependent on the mentor, which is opposed to the aim of mentoring. So, she speaks of mentoring that encourages independence, stating that, where there is independence in mentoring, a mentee can self-reflect and see what works and does not work with their teaching. Similarly, the Department of Education (2008) highlights that the mentoring relationship should be one where a mentee does not replicate the mentor, but rather should be one which promotes independence. In the Cloning Model by Buell (2004), we learn that the mentoring relationship is one where the mentor wants to direct a mentee and expects them to replicate what they say. As a result, the Department of Education (2008) points out that the relationship should be characterised by flexibility and should be open to other suggestions in such a way that mentees feel confident in their own capabilities and can make their own judgements. Jabulile too points out that she felt as if her mentor expected her to be perfect and that was not good. Hence, she supports flexibility in mentoring and states that mentors should not expect mentees to be perfect, as there should be room for mistakes and learning. Collins, Lewis, Stracke, and Vanderheide (2014) parallel the suggestion made by Jabulile and state that the mentoring process should allow for mistakes to be made. Early-career teachers should not feel like they will be penalised if they make mistakes during the mentoring process (Collins et al., 2014).

5.4.4 Constructive feedback and guidance

Balu and James (2017) argue that everyone can benefit from constructive criticism, including early-career teachers. Balu and James (2017) adds that failure to offer such feedback to an early-career teacher reflects on the mentor as being incompetent and afraid of experiencing conflict. Although constructive feedback is vital for the growth

and development of an early-career teacher, the findings of this study recommends that this should be done in such a way that an early-career teacher does not feel undermined. Balu and James (2017) support this by stating that a mentor should be sympathetic and not confrontational, so that a mentee does not feel threatened. In this study, however, the participants narrate that their mentors used to rectify them in front of the learners and that brought negative experiences to their mentoring. So, to improve mentoring, they suggest that constructive feedback should be done in private.

TK narrates:

> *I think that the thing of correcting/rectifying mentees in front of the learners is a terrible habit that a lot of experienced teachers do when they say they are helping. I will relate this to my experience during mentoring. Sometimes I would be in class, maybe busy with the lesson, then my mentor realises that I have taught something incorrectly. Her immediate action would be to rectify me in front of the learners. That made me feel uncomfortable and embarrassed that it happened in front of the learners. It also made me feel like even the kids in class were now not taking me seriously. So, I think that maybe when mentors see us do or say something wrong, they should rectify us in private and not while we are busy teaching.*

Like TK, Jabulile states that to improve mentoring, it will be good that correction is done in private. She states:

> *What needs to be improved is that if maybe I have done something wrong it will be better for my mentor to tell me that I was wrong in private, rather than telling me in front of the learners. That was my challenge because the learners now would listen to her and not to me, that made the learners to lose respect for me. So, I think that corrections should be made in private.*

Balu and James (2017: 41) argue that good mentors provides mentees with “critical but constructive appraisal” and highlight methods of corrections. According to the National Treasury (2017) and Meyer and Fourie (2004), mentors should take this into consideration and reflect on the mentee’s conduct by providing constructive criticism that will enable the mentee to self-reflect on their limitations and strengths. So, Balu and James (2017) state that constructive criticism should be accompanied by support

and cheering. There should be a safe and non-judgemental environment in the way that the mentor conveys the feedback (National Treasury 2017; Meyer & Fourie 2004). From the extracts above however, it is evident that some mentors do not create a safe and non-judgemental environment in the way they convey their feedback. For instance, TK and Jabulile highlight that their mentors used to rectify them in front of the learners and that was not good. TK explains that his mentor would rectify him in class in front of the learners and expresses that it made him feel like the learners will not take him seriously. Jabulile too narrates about being rectified in front of the learners and how that made the learners to lose respect for her. As a result, they highlight a strong emphasis that constructive feedback should be made in private, not in front of the learners. The framework that guided this study is also sympathetic to the suggestion made by the participants of this study regarding mentoring because Hobson (2016) states that judge-mentoring should be combatted, that is, mentoring where a mentor reveals his/her judgement/evaluations on mentees' planning. and provides tense feedback on the mentee (Hobson 2017). It should be avoided because it can bring anxiety and stress, and contributes to mentees' decision to leaving teaching (Hobson 2017), which is against the aim of mentoring as identified in literature reviewed in this study.

5.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools were explored. This chapter made use of the second level of analysis, identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as the analysis of narratives. Analysis of narratives was used to analyse and interpret the research findings of this study. The findings responded to the sub-questions of this study and were presented in themes and subthemes. The next chapter provides a conclusion of this research study. A summary of the conclusions is drawn, and recommendations are made.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I engaged in the analysis of narratives in order to answer the research questions of this study. In this chapter, the summary of the whole study and summary of the findings are presented. From the findings, conclusions are drawn, and I then use the conclusions to present recommendations from and implications of this study. The recommendations cover two aspects, recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research.

6.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one presented the background and discussed the problem statement of this study. In chapter one I argued for need to mentor early-career teachers. Through the scrutiny of literature, it became evident that early-career teachers do receive some sort of mentoring. However, not all early-career teachers get to enjoy the same luxury when it comes to mentoring. I highlighted in the chapter that some schools, especially high-income schools, tend to be more proactive when it comes to the mentoring of their early-career teachers, as compared to other schools (Kardos & Johnson 2010). Therefore, this gives rise to a support gap between different schools (Johnson et al. 2004). Having considered the points given by the international scholars above, there was a need to understand the same phenomenon in our South African schools' context, however, focusing on public schools. This chapter also detailed the rationale and the contributions this study will make to the body of knowledge relating to my field. Following this was the purpose of this study and research questions. Last, this chapter deliberated on the key concepts of this study.

In **Chapter two,** the review of literature concerning this research study was presented. Here local and international scholarship on mentoring of early-career teachers was interrogated. In the interrogation of literature, it appeared that there was no agreement or single way in which an early-career teacher could be defined. Hence, debates on

conceptualising early-career teachers were discussed. This was followed by a discussion of the concept of mentoring. Through scrutiny of various literature sources, it became evident that some literature has not made a clear distinction between mentoring and induction. As a result, the two concepts were discussed to clarify the distinction. I then presented formal and informal mentoring as types of mentoring. What emerged is that, in the South Africa context, many early-career teachers are just thrown to the deep end and mentoring only occurs during in-service training. I then looked at debates around what makes good mentoring, with the aim to respond to one question of this study about how mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved. Last, ONSIDE Mentoring Framework, the theoretical framework of this study this study was discussed.

Chapter three presented a detailed discussion on the research design and methodology that was used in this study. This study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm and adopted a qualitative research approach. This study utilised narrative inquiry to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Narrative inquiry proved suitable for this study because I wanted to understand peoples' experiences by making their stories a central focus of the research (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). Purposive sampling was used to select participants in this study. Eight (8) participants were selected based on specific qualities they possessed that were relevant to this study (Etikan et al. 2016). To generate the data, narrative interviews and letter writing were used. The data was then analysed using narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. In conclusion, this chapter focused on limitations, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations that relates to this study.

Chapter four focused on the first level of analysis, identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as narrative analysis. The reader was introduced to each participant individually by providing profiles of each of them. Next was a presentation of the participants' re-storied narratives that were collected from the narrative interviews and letter-writing. To gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of events that have occurred, how and when they have occurred, as experienced by the participants of this study, a plot system (Polkinghorne 1995) was then utilised.

Chapter five presented the second level of analysis identified by Polkinghorne (1995) as analysis of narratives. The re-storied narratives from Chapter four were thus analysed using themes. The themes were used to gain insights into the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. From exploring the themes, I was then able to reach the findings of this study.

6.3 Summarising the key findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. This study focused on how early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools construct their mentoring experiences and what meanings are deduced from these experiences about the nature of mentoring, the benefits of a mentoring programme and how this mentoring could be improved. Below, a summary of the findings are discussed.

6.3.1 The nature of mentoring for early-career teachers

The findings of this study show that early-career teachers are fortunate enough to have a mentor who is in the same school and teaching the same grade and subject as them. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that senior teachers and HODs are usually the people who are preferred by schools to mentor early-career teachers. Senior teachers and HOD's are regarded as people with a teaching experience of more than five years. Because of their extensive experience in the field, the ONSIDE mentoring framework suggests that it is generally an advantage for an early-career teacher to be mentored by an expert or experienced person. As to how early-career teachers get these mentors, the framework of this study stresses that, during the selection and matching process, mentees are paired with their mentors. However, the findings of this study revealed that it is not every early-career teacher who will be fortunate enough to be assigned to a mentor, hence other early-career teachers opt for informal mentoring. Despite this, the ONSIDE mentoring framework stresses that mentees should be formally assigned to mentors. The findings of this study highlight that whether early-career teachers have formal or informal mentors, there is no clear direction as to the number of interactions that should take place. Some mentors tend to be interactive and meet with their mentees on a regular basis while others do not. Regardless of the irregularities in the interactions, what is apparent from all the mentors is that the qualities they displayed during mentoring indicate that the major

role played by the mentors during mentoring is the role of a parent. The findings portray mentors as nurturing beings in the sense that the early-career teachers feel a sense of comfort, support and encouragement that they would usually get from their parents, hence they regard their mentors as motherly or fatherly. Based on these findings, I conclude that schools know that early-career teachers should be mentored, however, they do not prioritize and monitor this mentoring. I also conclude that mentor teachers and principals do not receive any mentoring training. Hence, they have no systematic knowledge of what should be done during mentoring and this remains an individualised process with no guiding policies on the entire process.

6.3.2 Benefits of mentoring for early-career teachers

The findings of this study reveal that, in the relationships that early-career teachers have developed with their mentors, the participants benefit from psychosocial support. In addition, they learn more about classroom management and discipline, and about the subject matter, and benefit from career-related support.

Because the literature reviewed in this study highlighted that some early-career teachers feel alone and isolated if not supported, we can conclude that participants of this study did not experience the same feelings as identified in the literature review. The participants of this study are mentored and point out that they get to benefit from psychosocial support. The findings of this study suggest that the emotional needs of the participants are catered for through “friendship, role modelling, counselling, acceptance and confirmation” portrayed by the mentor. As a result, the participants of this study indicate that psychosocial support from their mentors helped boost their self-confidence and feelings of isolation are eliminated. Second, the participants report learning significantly about classroom management and discipline. Classroom management and discipline pose a challenge for early-career teachers in this study and in the literature reviewed. So, through mentoring, the participants presented evidence that they gained new skills and knowledge of how to implement classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning. The findings reveal that early-career teachers, through their mentor’s guidance, have learned how to develop a thoughtful and supportive relationship with their learners. Early-career teachers highlight learning about the value of classroom rules, communicating what they expect in their classrooms, learning to build relations with learners and looking for a deeper

cause of a misbehaviour so that appropriate measures are taken. Third, the participants of this study teach us that, through mentoring, they learn more about their subject matter. The literature reviewed in this study highlighted that early-career teachers' knowledge and skills in relation to the profession are up to date, however, the problem is in disseminating this information. The findings show that mentors help early-career teachers learn more on how to disseminate this information. The participants narrate about learning to use the ATP as a tool for teaching and learning, to being creative and using time effectively during teaching and learning. Lastly, the findings reveal that the participants benefited from career-related support. The findings of this study suggest that the participants gain a depth of knowledge regarding how they should conduct themselves professionally, learn more about the school culture and what is expected of them. Based on the findings above, and taking into consideration that mentoring of early-career teachers can be formal or informal, I conclude that early-career teachers from both informal and formal mentoring benefit the same mentoring support.

6.3.3 Improving mentoring of early-career teachers

While mentoring is accompanied by so many benefits for early-career teachers, the suggestions of early-career teachers highlight that no mentoring programme is perfect and that there is always room for improvement. These suggestions are based on their experiences regarding mentoring. The findings of this study reveal that, to improve mentoring, early-career teachers should be mentored by multiple mentors, mentoring should be monitored, and there should be space for independence and constructive feedback during mentoring.

All the participants of this study were mentored by a single mentor, and although they have benefited from the mentoring, the findings suggest that one mentor is not enough, hence early-career teachers recommend the use of multiple mentors. The participants highlight that one mentor cannot possess all the qualities, skills, and knowledge they might need to grow and develop in the profession. On the other hand, with multiple mentors, each mentor comes with their unique experiences and ways of doing things. So, an early-career teacher gets to benefit from diverse skills and knowledge from various mentors. Second, most of the participants narratives suggests that the mentoring of early-career teachers is not properly monitored. As a result, the

findings show that early-career teachers need mentoring to be monitored for it to be effective. The participants suggest that mentors be selected based on criteria and that the criteria should consist activities that must be executed by the mentor and mentee to ensure that mentoring do take place in schools. Also, the participants suggest that mentoring should be included in the school timetable, then doing a follow up to check the progress made by the mentor and mentee during mentoring. Third, the findings suggest that early-career teachers do not want to be passive passengers during their mentoring, hence, to improve mentoring, they recommend that mentoring should allow space for independence. The participants suggest that mentors should give them space to do things on their own. Because the participants want to be actively involved, they suggest that mentoring should be more of sharing of ideas and should allow mentees to create their own identities rather than to replicate the mentor. Last, to improve mentoring, the findings show that mentees need mentors who can convey constructive feedback in a sympathetic and supporting manner. The participants highlight that sometimes their mentors would correct them in front of the learners, which was not a good experience. This type of mentoring is regarded by the ONSIDE mentoring framework as judge-mentoring and it is known to be coupled with stress and anxiety for mentees, hence this framework is against it. So, to improve mentoring, the participants of this study suggests that corrections be done in private, not in front of the learners. Based on these findings, I conclude that the mentoring support available for early-career teachers in schools is not enough. There is still a lot that schools need to consider and improve so that early-career teachers can fully benefit from mentoring programmes.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions made above, the following recommendations are made regarding the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in Gauteng public schools:

6.4.1 Recommendations to the Department of Education

Considering that the findings of this study suggests that the mentoring of early-career teachers is poorly monitored, and that more still needs to be done so that early-career teachers can fully enjoy being part of a mentoring programme, I recommend that the Department of Education monitor schools to establish if they do mentor early-career

teachers. This might be done through school visits, just to see if mentoring of early-career teachers take place. The Department should provide schools with necessary resources for mentoring, where needed, so that early-career teachers are better served. Since the findings suggest a strong need for multiple mentors, sometimes it might be impossible to find such in one school. Therefore, I recommend that the Department of Education link schools with mentor teachers from other schools, teachers with relevant skills and knowledge who can cater for the needs of individuals mentees. This might be done through e-mentoring. Since e-mentoring makes use of the Internet, it is not limited by any form of geographic constraints or time, so it can be used as a flexible strategy to support early-career teachers.

6.4.2 Recommendations to school principals and mentors

It is important that school principals and mentors understand the process of mentoring and how to implement it effectively. Hence, I recommend that mentors and principals should undergo some sort of mentoring training so that they gain relevant skills and knowledge of what is expected of them when it comes to mentoring. This might even help in ensuring effective mentoring of early-career teachers and selecting good mentors. For mentoring to truly take place in schools, I recommend that schools have a mentoring committee that deals with the selection, matching and monitoring of mentoring of early-career teachers. Furthermore, in this mentoring committee, there should be a mentoring policy that can be used by schools to help them set goals and activities that should be conducted during mentoring. In that way, I think it will ease the load for the principals as they will be having people to work with and help in monitoring the mentoring of early-career teachers. The policy will also give schools direction on what is expected of them during mentoring and how they should go about implementing this mentoring. Considering that the findings of this study highlighted that senior teachers and HODs are preferred by schools to mentor early-career teachers, mentors tend to play the parental role and spoon-feed mentees. As a result, the mentees become overly dependent on the mentor. Early-career teachers want to feel useful and be involved in their mentoring. So, I recommend that mentoring be more of a teamwork and working together rather than being one sided. This can be done through a mentoring template that stipulates the roles for the mentor and mentee in the mentoring programme. I am also of the view that having taught for many years

is not necessarily the same as being a good mentor. Hence, I recommend that young teachers too be utilised as mentors.

6.5 Implications for further research

Considering that the sample size of this study was kept at a small scale, the findings cannot be generalised to a broader population. The findings of this study do not portray the mentoring experiences of all early-career teachers in the Gauteng Province. Therefore, there is a need to explore the same phenomena in other kinds of schools in Gauteng, such as private and former Model C schools, with an aim of exploring the mentoring that is best suited and beneficial for early-career teachers. Such studies can employ quantitative means to create a possibility for generalising. Furthermore, because, as is found in this study, mentoring is typically restricted to two people (a mentor and mentee), future research can be conducted to explore alternative forms of mentoring such as group mentoring and e-mentoring and how these forms of mentoring might benefit early-career teachers. Considering that some early-career teachers were formally mentored, while others were informally mentored, it is essential that we understand how these differences in how mentoring is offered for early-career teachers impact their growth and development in the profession.

6.6 Final remarks

This study explored the lived mentoring experiences of early-career teachers in selected Gauteng public schools. Three research questions were formulated as a guide to this study. An interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research approach were used. To generate and analyse narrative interviews and letter writing, a narrative inquiry approach was utilised. It emerged from the study that senior teachers and HODs are the people that are preferred by schools as mentors. Furthermore, mentoring can take the formal or informal route depending on the school. Early-career teachers get to benefit from psychosocial support, learn more about classroom management and discipline, deepen their understanding of subject matters and benefit from career-related support. While mentoring is accompanied by various benefits, what is apparent is that mentoring is not fixed and there are still some things that can be improved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission letter to the GDE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear Sir/Madam

Application for conducting research in Gauteng Province

My name is Zinhle Maseko. I am a student at the University of Pretoria, in the faculty of Education. As part of the degree, I am required to conduct research and write a report on my findings. I would like to apply for permission to conduct research in Ekurhuleni North District schools. My research project involves 8 early-career teachers. My research topic is **"The experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring: A narrative inquiry".**

In this study, narrative interviews and letter-writing will be used to collect data. Early - career teachers will be asked to participate in a narrative interview, where they will be requested to narrate their experiences regarding mentoring. Furthermore, early-career teachers will be requested to write reflection letters regarding their experiences of mentoring.

The information generated with each data collection event will be kept confidentially and only be used for the purpose of this study. The findings of this study will be used to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring. These findings may be useful to early-career teachers, mentor teachers and principals. The findings may be used by the stakeholders to explore the nature of mentoring available for early-career teachers in various schools, the benefits of mentoring early-career teachers and how mentoring can be improved.

Yours Sincerely
Zinhle Maseko

Appendix B: GDE research approval letter

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**21 August 2019**
Validity of Research Approval:	**04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019** **2019/238**
Name of Researcher:	**Maseko V.Z**
Address of Researcher:	**988 Hospital Hill**
	Liberation Street
	Tembisa, 1632
Telephone Number:	**083 240 1203**
Email address:	**masekozinhle@yahoo.com**
Research Topic:	**Lived experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring: A narrative inquiry.**
Type of qualification	**Masters' in Education**
Number and type of schools:	**Four Primary schools and Four Secondary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Ekurhuleni North and Tshwane South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

22/08/2019

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix C: Permission letter to the principal

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

To the principal

Date: _____

Informed consent for participation in a research study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Zinhle Maseko. I am a student at the University of Pretoria, in the faculty of Education. As part of the degree, I am required to conduct research and write a report on my findings.

The title of my study is **"Lived experiences of early-career teachers in schools regarding mentoring: A narrative inquiry".** The purpose of my study is to explore the experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring. This information is envisaged to identify the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers, the benefits of a mentoring programme and how mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved. I therefore request your permission to involve your early-career teachers in this study. Early-career teachers participating will be requested to participate in a 30-40-minute narrative interview, where they will be requested to narrate their experiences regarding mentoring. Also, early-career teachers will be asked to write unsent letters at their convenient time regarding their experiences of mentoring. The narrative interviews will be tape-recorded, and written letters will be collected so that I can be able to capture the participants views and opinions precisely.

If you allow your educators to participate in this study, the information provided by the participants will be handled with strict anonymity and confidentiality. The school and participants will not be identifiable in this study. Your educators will not be asked information that will disclose your identity of your school. Participation is completely voluntary. Principals and teachers have the right to withdraw and decline this invitation

without penalties. The results of this study will be utilised only for academic purposes and the summary of the findings will be provided to you on request.

If you allow your educators to partake in this study, you are kindly requested to sign the attached consent form, declaring that you are willing to participate in this project and that you understand your right and your educators' right to withdraw from participation without any penalties. If you have any questions regarding this study, you can contact me or my supervisor on the following:

Zinhle Maseko
083 240 1203
Email: masekozinhle@yahoo.com

Appendix D: Permission letter to the early-career teacher

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

To the participant

Date: _____

Informed consent for participation in a research study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Zinhle Maseko. I am a student at the University of Pretoria, in the faculty of Education. As part of the degree, I am required to conduct research and write a report on my findings. The title of my study is **"Lived experiences of early-career teachers in schools regarding mentoring: A narrative inquiry".** The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring.

Narrative interviews and letter-writing will be used to collect data. If you agree to partake in this research, you will be requested to participate in a narrative interview for 30-40 minutes and write unsent letters within a week. This will be done at your convenient time and place. Narrative interviews and letter-writing will focus on exploring the experiences of early-career teachers regarding mentoring. This information is envisaged to identify the nature of mentoring for early-career teachers, the benefits of a mentoring programme and how mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved. The narrative interviews will be tape-recorded, and written letters will be collected so that I can be able to capture your views and opinions precisely.

Participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw and decline this invitation without penalties. The information you provide will be handled with strict anonymity and confidentiality. You will not be asked to information that will disclose your identity. The results of this study will be utilised only for academic purposes and the summary of the findings will be provided to you on request.

If you are agreeing to participate in this research, kindly sign the attached consent form, declaring that you are willing to participate in this project and that you understand your right to withdraw from participation without any penalties. If you have any questions regarding this study, you can contact me or my supervisor on the following:

Zinhle Maseko
083 240 1203
Email: masekozinhle@yahoo.com

Declaration of concern

I, the undersigned, willingly agree to participate in the above described research. I have carefully read the information contained in this letter. I agree to completing letters as part of the researcher and to be narrate my experiences during the interview.

Educator	signature	date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	signature	date
_____	_____	_____

Appendix E: Letter writing schedule

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Letter-writing instrument for early-career teachers

Date: _____

Name of early-career teacher: _____

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this discussion about mentoring of early-career teachers. My name is Zinhle Maseko and I am a student at the University of Pretoria, in the faculty of Education.

You have been chosen as one of the early-career teachers who could shed some light regarding mentoring. Therefore, I would like to know your experiences regarding mentoring. The information that you will provide might contribute to the nature of mentoring that must be made available for early-career teachers, the benefits that comes with being mentored and how mentoring can be improved.

Please note that there are no wrong or right answers so feel free to state your views and thoughts in detail as much as you can. Narrating your lived experience in a form of a letter is sometimes easier than a face to face interview, hence letters are used in this study. The information you provide in the letters will be treated with confidence and will remain anonymous at all times. Participation is completely voluntary; you can withdraw and decline from participating without being penalised.

Activity

You are requested to write a letter to your mentor expressing your experiences regarding mentoring. Writing the letter will require you to recall past events that have influenced your thoughts and views regarding mentoring.

In this letter, you are required to tell your mentor about how you have experienced the nature of mentoring. Furthermore, you must briefly explain how you have benefited from a mentoring programme. If there were challenges you have encountered during the mentoring programme, please include them. Last explain how you think mentoring of early-career teachers can be improved. The letter will be used as a data collection instrument. It will then be analysed and safely filed by me.

Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Appendix F: Interview schedule

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Interview instrument for early-career teacher

Interview schedule

Interview date: _____

Name of teacher: _____

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this discussion about mentoring of early-career teachers. My name is Zinhle Maseko and I am a student at the University of Pretoria, in the faculty of Education.

You have been chosen as one of the early-career teachers who could shed some light regarding mentoring. Therefore, I would like to know your experiences regarding mentoring. The information that you will provide might contribute to the nature of mentoring that must be made available for early-career teachers, the benefits that comes with being mentored and how mentoring can be improved.

Please note that there are no wrong or right answers so feel free during the interview. If you need clarity regarding the questions, you are allowed to do so. Any information you provide will be treated with confidence and will remain anonymous at all times. Participation is completely voluntary; you can withdraw and decline from participating or answering a particular question without being penalised.

The interview will take 30-40 minutes and it will be tape recorded. The interview is tape recorded so that later I can be able to listen to them and capture your view accurately when I transcribe the. Matters arising from the interview will be used for a follow up interview. At least four (4) interviews will be conducted. The information that will be tape recorded will used anywhere except in this study.

Do you have any question, or would you like to add anything before we start?

Questions

1. Please tell me about what motivated you to become a teacher?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. Can you please tell me about your first-year teaching experience, before you were assigned with a mentor, with regard to the following?
    a) Adaptation to the school context
    b) Support from colleagues and administrators
    c) Classroom management
    d) Workload
    e) Difficult parents
4. When were you assigned with a mentor?
5. Do you think that it is important for early-career teachers to be mentored? Please explain.
6. Can you briefly explain the qualities that you think makes a good mentor?
7. Please tell me about your experiences regarding mentoring with regard to the following:
    a. Mentor match
    b. Nature of interaction
    c. Type of mentoring that was used and why think it was effective.
8. Please tell me about the challenges that came with being mentored, what would you say was less effective and why?
9. How do you think the challenges you have experienced can be improved regarding mentoring?
10. What type of mentoring do you think is most effective for early-career teachers? please elaborate.
11. What is your opinion regarding the mentoring of early-career teachers and how do you think this mentoring can be improved?
12. After being mentored, would you encourage other early-career teachers to be part of mentoring? Explain.

Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you very much