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MENTOR TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR MENTORING ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHER IDENTITY

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Dr Annelize du Plessis-de Beer

DECEMBER 2020

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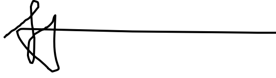
Declaration

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



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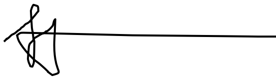
The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed ethical standards required in terms of the **University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for research and the Policy guidelines for reasonable research**.



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Dedication

I dedicate this research to all the special people in my life who have given me the strength to walk this road with confidence.

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Acknowledgements

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

- My Heavenly Father, who provided me the strength, knowledge and perseverance to complete this study;
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Abstract

Work integrated learning (WIL) has been identified as a critical period for student teachers' teacher identity development. Within the South African context mentorship of student teachers by mentor teachers is in some cases lacking. Reasons for this include lack of mentor teacher training and uncertain role expectations. In light of this the descriptive case study of limited scope sought to explore mentor teachers' perspectives of their mentoring role in the development of student-teachers' teacher identity during WIL. In depth interviews were conducted with four experienced mentor teachers at a private school in Johannesburg. The participants' responses were analysed interpretatively using inductive thematic analysis. Findings revealed that participants perceive their role to include interrogating pedagogical knowledge, system requirements, modelling, feedback, personal attributes and a safe and nurturing relationship into their mentoring practice. The findings are in line with the adapted Model for Effective mentoring by Hudson, and other relevant research on the topic of student teacher mentorship. In addition to this the current study revealed that student teacher attitude plays an important part of the mentorship process and that authentic teachers are developed through authentic mentorship in which mistakes are welcomed as part of the learning process. The implication is that mentor teachers and student teachers need to work together during Work Integrated Learning to ensure that mentorship is mutually beneficial for the positive development of teacher identity.

Keywords: Mentorship, Student teachers, Teacher identity, Teacher education, Work Integrated Learning,

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Language Editors

DECLARATION

12 October 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I herewith declare that I did the language editing of Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the research report on Mentor teachers' perspectives on their mentoring role in the development student teachers' teacher identity, of Lucy Hathorn, student number: 19247372. The track changes function was used for corrections, comments and recommendations, and the student was responsible for accepting/rejecting the changes and recommendations, and for finalising the mentioned chapters.

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To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that chapters 4 and 5 of the report detailed below was edited by the undersigned editor. It was edited for proper language, grammar, spelling, punctuation and overall style.

The editor endeavoured to ensure that the author's intended meaning was not altered during the editing process. All changes were tracked using the Microsoft Word track changes feature.

Author: Lucy Hathorn
Title: Mentor teachers' perspectives of their mentoring role in the development of student teachers' teacher identity

Sincerely,

Chantelle Hough Louw

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List of abbreviations

DBE	Department of Basic Education
MRTEQ	Minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has been identified as a crucial part of student teacher education (Wetzel, Hoffman & Maloch, 2017). During WIL mentor teachers guide student teachers in a real school context with the primary aim of assisting student teachers with the development of their teacher identity (Nguyen, 2009). Teacher identity is a multifaceted construct, which starts developing during teacher training (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). This identity incorporates pedagogical as well as emotional elements and is strongly linked to a teacher's connection to and attitude towards the profession (Hong, 2010). According to Hong (2010), mentor teachers are important contributors to the development of teacher identity in student teachers.

Student teachers have their own preconceived ideas of what it means to be a teacher when they start WIL (Mena, Hennissen & Loughran, 2017). These unrealistic and sometimes naïve expectations are often disrupted during WIL, and many student teachers find themselves in a state of disequilibrium as they are forced to reimagine what it means to be a teacher (Hong, Greene & Lowery, 2017; Zhu & Zhu, 2018). Mentor teachers play a critical supportive role in helping student teachers manage this state of disequilibrium and ensuring that student teachers complete WIL with a positive view of themselves as teachers (Mena et al., 2017; Hong et al., 2017; Izadinia, 2016; Beijaard et al., 2004). When mentor teachers lack support, are too domineering, or are disengaged, student teachers are not able to successfully realise their own potential as teachers and are at risk of dropping out of the profession as a result of their poorly established teacher identities (Hong, 2010; Izadinia, 2015a).

In the light of mentor teachers playing such a significant role in the teacher identity development of student teachers, it is source of concern that research on the mentorship of student teachers in South Africa often has negative findings (Mokoena, 2017, Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017; Sosibo, 2013). Research has revealed that student teachers in South Africa often feel unsupported, underappreciated, and burdensome, and in some instances even exploited by their mentor teachers (Mokoena, 2017; Sedibe, 2014; Du Plessis & Marais, 2013). Thus, there seems to be

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a misapprehension between intention and action during mentoring, as research suggests that while mentor teachers in South Africa do not have bad intentions, they need clarity on what their role should be, and the necessary support from universities also is lacking (Mukeredzi, 2017; Maphalala, 2013). In addition to this, mentor teachers often are forced into the role of mentor without them having the desire or skill to fulfil that role (Mukeredzi, 2017).

Hudson (2016) suggests that in order for mentorship to be effective, it is important that the mentor teachers are fully invested in the holistic development of student teachers. This requires passion and dedication which are not easily fostered in situations where teachers are forced into the role of mentor (Mukeredzi, 2017). In addition to this, the general lack of descriptions of mentorship roles means that many mentor teachers underestimate the important role that they play in the emotional development of student teachers' teacher identities (Du Plessis & Marais, 2013; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). WIL is a hugely anxiety-provoking experience for student teachers and therefore is a time in which they require a great deal of support, not only pedagogically, but emotionally as well (Sedibe, 2014). When student teachers do not receive adequate emotional support from their mentor teachers, they may develop a negative impression of the teaching profession and are at higher risk of dropping out (Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens & Zijlstra, 2019). In addition to this, student teacher's self-esteem and confidence may be jeopardised by poor mentorship during WIL (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009).

In an effort to understand the needs of mentor teachers within South Africa a variety of studies have sought to explore mentor teachers' needs and expectations (Mukeredzi, 2017; Maphalala, 2013; Singh & Mahomed, 2013). However, no studies could be found that sought to explore mentor teachers' perspectives on the importance of mentoring in relation to teacher identity development. Therefore, the rational for this study of limited scope was to explore and describe mentor teachers' perspectives on their mentoring role in the teacher identity development of student teachers during WIL through the use of in-depth interviews, within the South African context. It is anticipated that the findings will contribute to the body of research in this area and provide insight into the state of student teacher mentorship in South Africa.

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1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION

The study of limited scope was guided by the following primary research question:

What are mentor teachers' perspectives on their mentoring role in the teacher identity development of student teachers during WIL?

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this descriptive case study of limited scope was to explore and describe mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL within the South African context.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were pursued in the study:

- To conduct a literature review to explore how mentor teachers can contribute to teacher identity development.
- To conduct in-depth interviews with experienced mentor teachers to explore the perspectives of mentor teachers on their role and responsibilities in contributing to student teachers' teacher identity development during WIL.
- To contribute to the literature on role of mentor teachers in student teacher's identity development

1.4 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

In this section I will clarify the important concepts underlying this study.

1.4.1 Work-integrated learning (WIL)

According to the South African Department of Basic and Higher Education (DBE) (2011), Teaching Practice or Work-Integrated Learning is the practical component of teacher training, involving the placing of student teachers in a real school context in order to master practical skills and experience. During WIL, student teachers should be supported by a mentor teacher in order to grow in all areas of their teacher identity, which include their image as a teacher, their motivation to teach, their commitment to teaching, task perceptions and satisfaction as a teacher (Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens & Zijlstra, 2019). In addition, student teachers should grow in their pedagogical

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competence, knowledge of everyday school functioning, and classroom management (Hudson, 2007).

In South Africa WIL is a mandatory component of teacher training, requiring all student teachers to complete 20-23 weeks of classroom experience over a four-year Bachelor of Education degree course (DBE, 2015). The main emphasis of WIL in South Africa is on mentorship as the Department of Higher Education (2015) states that WIL should incorporate a well-structured mentorship programme. For the purpose of this study WIL was understood to be a period of time ranging from one week to four weeks in which a student teacher was mentored by a mentor teacher at a private school under study.

1.4.2 Teacher identity

Research suggests that teacher professional identity is difficult to define, as it is multifaceted and is constantly evolving (Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, & Nguyen, 2015; Van Putten, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). In addition, Reeves (2018) explains that the structure of teacher identity is under constant debate and varies between students, teachers and the expectations of society. Despite these challenges of defining teacher identity, Beijaard et al. (2004) and Hong (2010) assert that teacher identity is an ongoing process, which involves the interplay between personal and contextual factors, as well as the sub-identities which teachers assume. This includes knowledge and beliefs, as well as emotion, commitment, efficacy, values and micro-politics. More simplified, teacher identity can be understood to be the ever-evolving process of becoming a teacher and the adoption of characteristics, beliefs and practices of a teacher (Reeves, 2018). These beliefs, practices, experiences, and knowledge systems are formed through both personal and social aspects, which together form a holistic picture of what it means to be a teacher (Van Putten, 2011). Teacher identity, therefore, is defined in this study as the meaning that student teachers attribute to teaching in their own lives and how they see themselves as teachers, including the beliefs they hold, the experiences they have, and the practices they absorb into their own teaching practice (Hanna et al., 2019; Beijaard, 2018).

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1.4.3 Mentoring

According to Hudson (2010, 2016) mentoring is the act of building student teachers' personal and professional capacity as future educators. According to Hudson's five factor model (Hudson, 2007), important factors that play a role in the mentoring of student teachers include personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. Student teachers require emotional and pedagogical support during WIL when they navigate the teaching profession for the first time (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). In order for student teachers to come out of WIL with a positive sense of their abilities as a teacher, it is important that they receive mentorship which is direct, caring and engaging (Hudson, 2016). This study, therefore, understands mentoring to be a holistic process of care and guidance in which mentor teachers develop student teachers in all areas of their teacher identity in a way that enables them to become competent teachers.

1.4.4 Mentor teacher

Wetzel *et al.* (2017) explain that mentor teachers are educators who take on the responsibility of guiding a student teacher through WIL. Mentor teachers' roles include not only developing the student pedagogically but emotionally as well. Thus, mentor teachers are required to create a nurturing and supportive environment so that student teachers can grow in all areas of their professional identity (Hudson, 2007). For the purpose of this study four high school teachers with five years of mentoring experience participated in the study.

1.4.5 Student teacher

A student teacher is a person studying to become a teacher and who, as part of his/her training, participates in practical training (WIL) in a suitable school (Izadinia, 2016). Student teachers may have varying degrees of experience in the classroom depending on their year of study since the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) requires that student teachers receive a minimum of 20 weeks' practical training during their four-year course of study. For the purpose of this study a student teacher was viewed as a fourth-year B.Ed. student studying at a South African university.

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1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study was guided by Hudson's five-factor mentoring model, as depicted in Figure 1.1 (Hudson, 2016), with the addition of a sixth factor focusing on the mentorship environment (Jooste, 2019). Hudson's five-factor model was specifically developed for the mentoring of student teachers (Hudson, 2018), and thus it is appropriate for the context of this study. According to this model, effective mentoring comprises the following five factors: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. The sixth factor that was added, derived from the work of Jooste (2019), focusing on a safe and nurturing mentorship environment. The model proved useful when attempting to evaluate the participants' experience of mentoring student teachers and assisted with understanding participants' responses. The selected theoretical framework will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

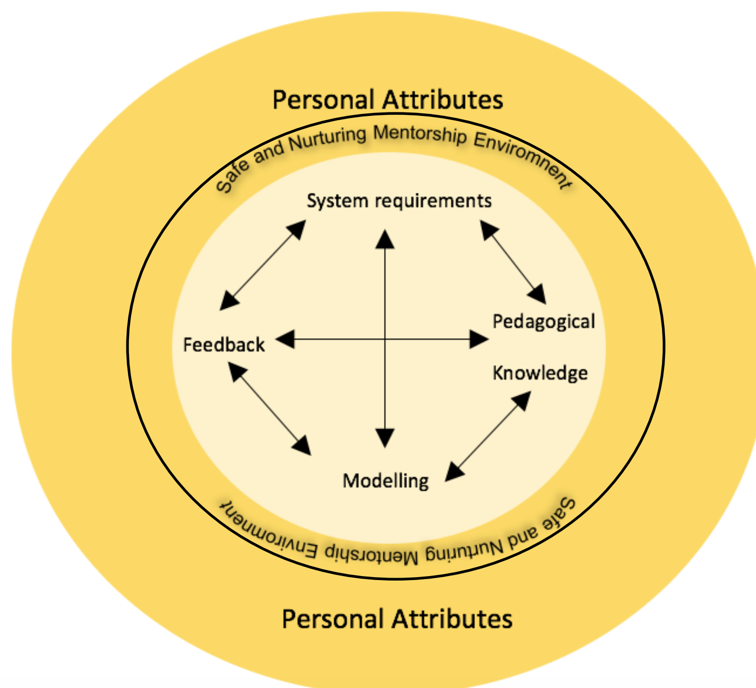

Figure 1.1: Hudson's Five-Factor Model of Mentoring (Adapted from "Examining mentors' practice for enhancing preservice teachers' pedagogical development in mathematics and science" by P. B. Hudson, 2007, Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 15(2), pp 212).

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1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

A brief overview of the epistemological and methodological approach that guided this study is provided below. A detailed discussion will follow in Chapter 3.

1.6.1 Epistemological paradigm: Interpretivism

I utilized an interpretivist paradigm as the epistemological paradigm for the study (Maree, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) explains that interpretivism is a belief in the importance of the subjective human experience in making meaning. This suited the proposed study, since I was interested in the unique perspective of mentor teachers and not in generalized assumptions based on the accumulation of mass data (*cf.* Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014). By following this paradigm, I was able to take the various facets of individual context and experience into account which added depth of meaning to the data and subsequent findings (*cf.* Ormston, et al., 2014).

In order to avoid researcher bias, which is a common concern of this paradigm, I documented my thoughts in a reflective researcher journal (*cf.* Maree, 2016). In addition to this, I also maintained open communication with my supervisor which enhanced my researcher reflexivity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These practices ensured that my study reflected a true representation of the mentor teachers' perceptions of teacher identity development (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

1.6.2 Methodological approach: Qualitative approach

I made use of a qualitative approach (Creswell and Poth, 2018) in order to make sense of mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity developed during WIL. In line with interpretivism, a qualitative approach allows for collecting data which are not necessarily driven by numbers, but rather by the subtle nuances of human experience and thought (Maree, 2016). Thus, the qualitative methodological approach does not yield large sets of data useful for making inferences, but its value rather is found in the way it enables the researcher to grapple with the complexities of any one person's story (Maree, 2016). Through using a qualitative approach, greater insight into the complexities of teacher identity development during WIL from the mentor teachers'

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perspective became more apparent than they would through a quantitative method, due to the opportunity for probing and interrogating, which qualitative methodology affords (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davies & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

To ensure that the study is carried out professionally, a researcher skills set is a common concern with this approach, I was thoroughly briefed by my supervisor (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016). In addition, I utilised my previous qualitative research experience and submerged myself in the literature pertaining to qualitative research.

1.7 METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

In this section I provide a simplified overview of the methodological strategies used in this study. A detailed discussion will follow in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Research design

The study reported here, utilised a descriptive case study design (*cf.* Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). According to Creswell (2018) a case study is a type of research design which involves the exploration of specific subject matter within a specific context or through the eyes of one particular person or group. In addition, case study research is useful when the investigator is interested in exploring one specific aspect in great detail (Yin, 2018). This suited the study since I was interested in exploring mentor teachers' perspectives on the teacher identity development of student teachers during WIL. I was thus looking at a designated issue through the eyes of a specific group of people, namely mentor teachers, who all worked at the same private school in Johannesburg. The mentor teachers, therefore, constituted the case for this study, since it was their perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL that were under investigation. Four highly experienced mentor teachers, all working at the same private school in Johannesburg, participated. Their mentoring experience ranged from five years to 25 years; thus they were able to provide rich and insightful perspectives which enabled a thorough and detailed description of the designated issue. In light of this and my interest in exploring this issue within the actual school context where mentoring of student teachers occurs, a descriptive case study was identified as the most appropriate type of case study design (*cf.* Maree, 2016).

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While case-study research affords the researcher the opportunity to make meaning from unique experiences of individuals, this does make the formation of generalisations difficult (Cohen et al., 2013). However, as propagated by Creswell and Poth (2018), generalizability is not necessarily the aim of qualitative research and it was most certainly not the aim of the study at hand. Interviewing a number of different mentor teachers (N=4) provided a variety of viewpoints which helped to counteract lack of triangulation which is another common challenge in case study research (Yin, 2018).

1.7.2 Selection of participants and research site

Purposeful and convenient sampling was utilised for this study, as this type of sampling is an important strategy for descriptive case studies (Yin, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to choose appropriate participants and an appropriate research site so that the issue under investigation can be explored adequately (Creswell, 2014). This was a requirement for the study, since I was interested in a very specific phenomenon and because I needed to select participants who had enough insight to contribute meaningfully to the research questions (*cf.* Maree, 2016).

I purposefully selected four mentor teachers who had at least five years' mentoring experience. Selecting mentor teachers at one specific school was convenient, because it was easy to identify appropriate participants within the population of teachers at the school (*cf.* Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). The school is a privileged high performing private school in Johannesburg. It is a relatively small school with an average of 28 children per class. The school is known for its excellent teaching and outstanding matric results. In order to find experienced mentor teachers, it was important to identify a school that received student teachers from many universities in the Gauteng Province. The school was chosen based on this criterion, since the school annually accommodates an influx of student teachers doing WIL from all universities.

1.7.3 Data generation and documentation

Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, observations and a reflective researcher journal. The data collection process included

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member checking via e-mail a few weeks after the interviews had been conducted. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using Google Meets due the COVID-19 pandemic. The semi-structured interviews involved exploring participants' perspectives through the presentation of open-ended questions (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The interviews were guided by questions contained in an interview guide. The interview guide was self-constructed and refined after a pilot interview. Conducting the pilot interview provided me with an opportunity to gain feedback on the questions so that they could be adjusted where necessary, in order to be more relevant and clear (*cf.* Galletta, 2013). The value of a semi-structured approach is that I was able to adjust and probe certain aspects when applicable during the interviews (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). Member checking, which was conducted a few weeks after the interviews when the data had been analysed, allowed for greater insight and increased the trustworthiness of the study by allowing participants to validate the findings (*cf.* Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016). In addition to this, recoding my own personal thoughts in my reflective researcher journal became an important part of the process (*cf.* Creswell & Poth, 2018). This reflexivity assisted me to ensure the methodological rigour of my research (*cf.* Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). I will elaborate further on the data generation and documentation in Chapter 3.

1.7.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Once the data had been captured and manually transcribed, inductive thematic analysis was used in order to find themes and make meaning (*cf.* Braun & Clarke, 2013). Inductive thematic analysis offers the researcher the opportunity to move from the specific, individual experience, to the general through merging individual responses into themes (Rule & John, 2011). This was a suitable strategy for the proposed study, since I wanted to gain an appreciation for each individual's contribution, but I also wanted to be able to gain a broader sense of the collective experience through the identification of recurring themes (*cf.* Creswell, 2014). In order to accomplish this, Braun and Clark (2013) recommend the following six steps:

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Figure 1.2: Steps for conducting inductive thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clark, 2013)

In order to achieve the steps proposed by Braun and Clark (2013), I fully immersed myself in the data. I did this by transcribing the interviews myself as this allowed for familiarity to develop. Through the process of reading and organizing the data, I was able to start the coding process and to establish themes, which ultimately guided my findings and the discussion (Creswell, 2014). This approach facilitated comparing and contrasting, which, assisted to ensure that the findings were representative of the participants' responses and useful for helping in the improvement of the mentorship process of student teachers. A detailed discussion of inductive thematic analysis proceeds in Chapter 3.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the ethical implications of the research is essential so as to avoid causing any harm through the research process (Maree, 2016). In light of this, the ethical considerations which guided this study included informed consent, voluntary

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participation, respect for the dignity and privacy of participants, no harm or risk to participants and nonmaleficence (*cf.* Miller, Birch, Mauthner & Jessop, 2012).

The first step in ensuring that my study adhered to ethical guidelines was applying to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria for ethical clearance. Once ethical clearance had been granted (ethics reference number: EDU049/19), I proceeded to collect data and interpreted the data under strict ethical guidelines as proposed by Maree (2016).

Adhering to strict ethical guidelines, various steps were taken to ensure that the rights of participants in the study were protected. This included ensuring that the participants and the participating school signed informed consent forms to confirm that their autonomy was being respected (*cf.* Miller & Bell, 2012). Participants were granted the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time and their participation was voluntary (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016). I respected confidentiality and the participants' anonymity at all times by using pseudonyms and kept audio recordings confidential (*cf.* Flick, 2018b). Participants were protected from non-maleficence or harm by making all information pertaining to the study clear (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016). Participants and the data that were generated from their contributions were treated with fairness and dignity to ensure a sense of justice and beneficence throughout the study (*cf.* Maree, 2016).

1.9 QUALITY CRITERIA

In order to safeguard the trustworthiness of the study, the following criteria were adhered to: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity (Liamputtong, 2016). I endeavoured to comply with these criteria by incorporating specific processes in this study. First, I made use of triangulation by applying a variety of data capturing methods, semi-structured interviews and a reflective researcher journal. According to Creswell (2018), such steps increase the credibility of research findings. Furthermore, transferability, which describes the suitability of findings of one study to be transferred to another context (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014), was made possible through the provision of rich and thick descriptions. The rich and thick descriptions assisted in making the context of the study clear, which should aid others in determining whether or not this study and/or its findings would be applicable in their specific context (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). In order to ensure that the study is

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dependable, which speaks to the ability of findings to be replicated if the study were repeated, I reflected throughout the process and kept record of all data gathered (*cf.* Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Finally, to ensure that this study maintains confirmability, which speaks to issues of research bias, I had regular feedback sessions with my supervisor and made sure that I was constantly evaluating my own biases by reflecting in my reflective researcher journal (*cf.* Creswell and Poth, 2018). A more detailed discussion on quality criteria can be found in Chapter 3.

1.10 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

According to Flick (2018b), the researcher cannot assume a neutral stance in qualitative research because the researcher, just like the participants, is a part of the data collection process. This means that the researcher needs to assume an active and clearly defined role whilst in the field (Flick, 2018b). It is important for the researcher to determine this role and to make it clear to participants to avoid confusion within the research relationship (Corlett & Mavin, 2017). I did this by maintaining professionalism and coming into the field with clear aims and objectives. This allowed me to effectively engage in the data and perform the role of interviewer and data analyst.

In addition to this, through the use of a reflective researcher journal, I constantly evaluated my own biases linked to my personal history and perceptions (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This was important as it prevented biases from tainting the findings of the study and helped me to remain as subjective as possible throughout the research process (Corlett & Mavin, 2017).

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study reported on mentor teachers' perspectives on the roles they play in the teacher identity development of student teachers. The objective was to contribute to the existing knowledge on mentor teachers' roles in student teacher identity development. The results of the study aimed to enhance the mentoring of student

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teachers and to develop a greater understanding of the mentoring of student teachers from the perspective of the mentor teacher within the South African context.

1.12 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

A brief overview of the purpose and contents of each chapter of this research report is provided to set the scene for the reader.

Chapter 1: Introduction and general orientation

In Chapter 1 I have provided a general overview of the study. This included discussing the background and rationale for the study, as well as clarifying important concepts pertaining to the study. Furthermore, I provided an outline of the theoretical framework, paradigmatic perspective, research design and research methodology. Lastly, I paid attention to ethical considerations and I highlighted central features of the quality criteria utilised during my research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 entails a review of existing literature pertaining to the focus of the study. I discuss the current conceptualisation of teacher professional identity and relate this to student teacher professional identity. I present current issues which exist within the mentor-teacher and student-teacher relationship and discuss the roles that these respective parties should maintain. Hereafter, I shall explore mentorship of student teachers within the South African context. The review of the literature revealed important gaps which this study attempted to fill. I conclude the chapter by discussing Hudson's five factor mentorship model (2010) with an added sixth factor as this provides the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In Chapter 3, I discuss and describe the research process undertaken. I expand on the epistemological paradigm (interpretivism) and the methodological approach (qualitative) which informed this study. Furthermore, I elaborate on the research design, participant selection, data generation, documentation, data analysis and interpretation strategies employed in this study. I conclude by discussing quality criteria, and ethical considerations.

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Chapter 4: Results and research findings

In Chapter 4 I present the results and findings of the study relevant to the existing literature. The results are presented in the form of themes and sub-themes in accordance with inductive thematic analyses. The themes are interpreted against the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

In Chapter 5, I conclude the study by providing an overview of the previous chapters, as well as the conclusions drawn based on the research questions. I explain the possible contribution of the study and identify the limitations of the study. Finally, I identify recommendations for future research and mentorship of student teachers.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter was devoted to an introduction to the study and a discussion of the background to the study. It became clear to me that WIL is an important part of teacher training and warrants an investigation to establish whether it succeeds in helping students developing their teacher identity. My decision to address the problem by means of a case study investigation was based on what I wanted to achieve, recommendations from literature on research methodology, and practical considerations mentioned. The decision to use a qualitative approach was made as I needed the ideas, views and opinions of informed participants to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. Against the background I gained from the literature, I was confident that the study would make a contribution to the mentoring process employed during WIL.

In Chapter 2, I shall discuss existing literature in the field of mentoring student teachers. I will also be exploring the selected theoretical framework which is based on the work of Hudson (2007) pertaining to the effective mentoring of student teachers during WIL when these student teachers develop their teacher identity.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I provided a brief overview of the study. This was achieved by presenting an introduction, background and rationale for the study as well as the formulated research questions. I briefly discussed the theoretical framework of the study and provided an overview of the selected paradigmatic approach, research methodology, quality criteria and ethical considerations which underpinned the study.

In this chapter I specifically focus on the existing literature which relates to the mentorship of student teachers and the role of the mentor teacher. I start off by exploring the concept of work integrated learning (WIL) before going on to discuss teacher professional identity development. I then focus on mentorship by considering mentor teachers' experience of mentoring and the challenges that they face. I also explain Hudson's five-factor mentorship model, as the theoretical framework for the study was built on this model. Since this study is South African, it was important to explore the state of mentoring student teachers within South Africa in order to identify the relevance of this study.

2.2 WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

WIL has been found to play a critical role in the teacher identity development of student teachers (Hong, 2010**;** Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). WIL is a specific period of time during which student teachers have the opportunity to experience teaching in a real school context under the guidance of a mentor teacher (Nguyen, 2009). During WIL the mentor teacher provides the hands-on training and day-to-day monitoring of the student teacher; thus, research has found that the relationship between the mentor teacher and student teacher is of particular significance during WIL (Azure, 2015).

Currently, the minimum requirements for teacher training in South Africa are outlined in the Teacher Education Policy (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). This policy is informed by the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher

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Education and Development in South (Department of Basic Education and Higher Education, 2011) which guides the training of student teachers. According to section 12.2 of the policy (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015), the training of student teachers should include a focus on practical learning through WIL. The policy goes on to explain that WIL should be well supervised with a strong focus on mentoring. In addition to this, section 12.3 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015) puts emphasis on the importance of a well-structured mentorship programme during WIL and for WIL to occur throughout student teacher training. This requires that full-time Bachelor of Education students should spend 20 to 32 weeks of practical experience over the four-year course (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

With a reported 33 456 student teachers being enrolled across universities in South Africa (Department of Basic and Higher Education, 2011), it is unclear how mentorship of student teachers should take place. Whilst the strategic planning framework does call for the development of professional learning communities, which would facilitate the development of mentor teachers, it is unclear if this has come to fruition. However, based on the findings of studies conducted in South Africa, it would seem that mentor teachers have not received adequate training as many teachers report being unsure of their respective roles and ask for greater support from universities (Mokoena, 2017; Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017; Maphalala, 2013).

Mentorship during WIL is important in assisting student teachers to make the most of WIL (Izadinia, 2016). During WIL student teachers are given the opportunity to observe their mentor teachers in action and to practise teaching in the classroom (Sowell, 2017). This entails student teachers applying theory in practice through developing and presenting their own lesson plans and developing their teaching style and voice (Pearson, 2016). For the purpose of this study WIL was understood to be the period of time during which student teachers learn how to teach in a school environment under the guidance of a mentor teacher as specified by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015).

WIL has a major effect on student teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching (Mukeredzi, 2017). Research suggests that this training influences students on many levels, with identity formation being one of the greatest (Timoštšuk & Ugaste,

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2010). When student teachers move from educational settings to the real school context, there is a shift in how they conceptualise teaching and how they conceptualise themselves as teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). In order for this shift to be constructive in nature, it is important that the student teachers are well supported by their mentor teachers (Sedibe, 2014; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009).

Student teachers do not only gain professional insight during their time in WIL but also develop an emotional connection with the profession, which, according to Hong (2010), forms part of the teacher identity (Mukeredzi, 2017; Sedibe, 2014). Research has proved that students do not necessarily develop positive emotional feelings towards teaching during WIL (Timoštšuk, & Ugaste, 2010**;** Mokoena, 2017; Zur & Ravid, 2018). This is concerning given the huge impact that WIL has on student teachers' professional identity development (Zur & Ravid, 2018; Hong, 2010). The negative responses elicited about WIL seem to be consistently linked to poor mentoring by the mentor teacher (Zur & Ravid, 2018; Mokoena, 2017; Timoštšuk, & Ugaste, 2010). Given the fact that mentor teachers have been found to play a crucial role in the professional identity of student teachers (Sedibe, 2014), it is imperative that the mentoring of student teachers be researched further.

During WIL the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor teacher should be of a collaborative nature, as both parties have specific roles and responsibilities (Talbot et al., 2018; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Nguyen, 2009). In order for WIL to be worthwhile, it is important that this collaborative relationship is fostered and that mentor teachers take the lead in building rapport and supporting their student teachers through, in some cases, their first time in the real school context as a teacher (Ambrosetti, Knight & Dekkers, 2014). This is of particular importance because of the role that WIL and interactions with mentor teachers have on student teachers' teacher identity development and their development of professional insight (Yuan, 2016; Izadinia, 2014).

Research on student teachers' experience of WIL in South Africa has revealed that mentor teachers tend to take advantage of their student teachers by tasking them with their entire teaching load and even unrelated personal projects (Du Plessis & Marais, 2013; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). In other instances, mentor teachers have been found to treat student teachers as a nuisance by not allowing them to teach for fear of

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falling behind the syllabus (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). These kinds of experiences have been found to decrease student teachers' self-esteem, lower their confidence and make them feel inferior, all of which negatively affects the development of their teacher identities (Beltman et al., 2015; Chong, Low & Goh, 2011).

Findings such as these cause the extent to which mentor teachers in the South African context perceive themselves to have a role in student teachers' teacher identity development to be in question (Beijaard, 2018). It is anticipated that this study will help to shed light on this issue and in so doing helps to improve the mentorship of student teachers in South Africa. There seem to be only a few studies which have specifically investigated the mentorship of student teachers in South Africa from the mentor's perspective. Given the seeming lack of sound mentorship which is occurring within the South African context, it is warranted necessary to gain greater insight in the matter from South African mentor teachers' perspective (Heerala, 2014; Mukeredzi & Mandrona, 2013; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). A focus on mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development is particularly important, given the strong relationship between mentorship and student teacher identity development (Sowell, 2017).

2.3 TEACHER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

The identity of teachers is critical to his/her success and competence in the classroom (Reeves, 2018), but develops over time and with experience. According to Wetzel, Hoffman and Maloch (2017), teacher identity starts to take shape during the formative years of teacher training. This development is complex and multidimensional in nature and thus it is important that increased attention is paid to how teacher identity, particularly amongst student teachers, develops (Zur & Ravid, 2018).

2.3.1 Components that make up teacher identity

In order to gain an understanding of how teacher identity develops, it is important to identify the components that make up teacher identity (Hanna et al., 2019). Research into teacher identity has shown that the very nature of teacher identity is complex and difficult to define (Beijaard, 2018; Beltman et al., 2015; Van Putten, 2011). However,

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to put it simply, teacher identity is understood to be the ongoing process of becoming a teacher (Reeves, 2018). This ongoing developmental process involves the interplay of a variety of components (Hong, 2010). Different components of teacher identity are maintained by a student teachers' interaction with environmental factors, as well as their unique inner world (Hong et al., 2017).

The teacher's inner world forms an important part of teacher identity as it speaks of personal experiences and context (Hong et al., 2017). Student teachers' personal stories and experiences linked to their lived experience thus play a crucial role in teacher identity conception and development (Bukor, 2014). Beijaard (2018) further emphasises this conclusion by highlighting the importance of personal stories, personal schooling history, and personal vision in the development of teacher identity. In the light of this, it is crucial that teacher identity is not just understood on the basis of pedologic and skills development, but that there is a focus on engaging with student teachers on a personal level (Beltman et al., 2015).

In addition to personal experience, Hong (2010) identified the following components as important in teacher identity: commitment: emotion, knowledge and beliefs, micro-politics, efficacy, and values. According to Hong (2010), it is the interplay between these factors that shape the identity of teachers. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) touched on similar factors pertaining to teacher identity, such as the role of context, sub-identities, and agency. Beijaard *et al.* (2004) also acknowledged the different continuums which encapsulate this identity from public to private and individual to collective, all of which point to the complexity of trying to understand teacher professional identity from a singular perspective.

When looking at other definitions of teacher identity, it would seem that they all, in one way or another, include one or more of the factors identified above; for example, definitions provided by Timostsuk and Ugaste (2010) propagate similar ideas about beliefs being an important part of teacher identity. These may be the beliefs about how teachers see themselves (Luehmann, 2007), or beliefs about the knowledge that teachers hold (Timostusk & Ugaste, 2010), or a combination of both (Lasky, 2005). Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens and Zijlstra (2019) further emphasise the importance of self-belief in teacher identity by recognizing self-efficacy as an important construct of teacher identity. In addition to this, the teachers' self-image, their motivation to teach,

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commitment to the profession and job satisfaction have been identified as important (Hanna et al., 2019).

Elements such as self-image, motivation and job satisfaction are conclusive proof of the importance of emotions in teacher identity which, in some cases, are not considered important (Van Putten, 2011). This seems to be the case in South Africa too, as teacher identity development focuses much more on systematic and pedagogical elements than on emotional and social aspects of teacher identity (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2015). Hong (2010), however, purports that emotions form an important part of a teacher's identity. This is supported by Yuan (2016), who found that negative emotions play an important role in shaping student teachers' identities. Similarly, Izadinia (2014) after having analysed 52 research papers, found that the emotional experiences of teachers have a profound impact on their identities, and often these experiences are negative. This holds significance, particularly when considering student teachers, because when negative emotions form part of teacher identity, there is an increased chance of dropping out of the profession (Chong et al., 2011). This is of concern in countries like South Africa due to a teacher shortage crisis and high rates of teacher attrition (Richter, 2016; Pitsoe, 2013). This study sought to provide more insight into the mentor teachers' perspective in an attempt to improve the current situation.

2.3.2 Teacher identity development during WIL

Mentor teachers play an important role in nurturing student teacher and in motivating student teachers to stay in the profession (Wolhuter, Van der Walt, Potgieter, Meyer & Mamiala, 2012). Student teachers enter WIL with their own set of beliefs about teaching, as well as their own motives for becoming a teacher (Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017; Yuan, 2016). These beliefs often are naïve in nature and are not grounded in experience, but rather idealized images of teaching (Zhu & Zhu, 2018). Essentially, these beliefs and motives shape student teachers' initial identities (Beltman et al., 2015). These beliefs are subject to change during WIL as they do not always align with reality (Hong et al., 2017; Lamote & Engels, 2010). Through the kind of mentorship student teachers receive and the experiences they have during WIL, student teachers' beliefs about teaching can either change in a positive or a negative

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way (Izadinia, 2015b). Mentor teachers play a crucial role in the process of positive teacher identity development (Yuan & Zhang, 2017; Yuan, 2016).

The main channel through which the student teachers are able to evaluate their preconceived ideas about what it means to be a teacher, is through their mentor teacher (Izadinia, 2016). Yuan (2016) found that when student teachers start WIL, they have an idealized image in their minds of what it means to be a teacher and the kind of teacher they want to become. Through the mentorship process this idealized image is often disrupted and student teachers may be left feeling demotivated (Lamote & Engles, 2010). This, particularly, is the case when mentor teachers are too controlling and do not give student teachers the opportunity to explore their own identity (Lindqvist, Weurlander, Wernerson & Thornberg, 2017; Izadinia, 2016). Yuan (2016) found that student teachers under the supervision of controlling mentor teachers felt like puppets who were forced to take on the identity of their mentor teacher, instead of being able to develop their own teacher identity. This had detrimental effects on the student teachers' identities. Similarly, Izadinia (2015a) found that a negative relationship between student teacher and mentor results in lowered student-teacher confidence.

The negative emotions experienced during WIL mostly are due to lack of support and poor mentoring (Yuan, 2016; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). Research has also shown that challenging experiences during WIL, such as feeling responsible for pupils' wellbeing and academic results, as well as dealing with the various social issues that arise among pupils, may leave student teachers feeling inadequate if they do not receive sound social support (Lindqvist et al., 2017). Izadinia (2016) earlier found that support was one of the key factors that led to change in student teachers' professional identities during WIL. In addition to support, feedback from mentor teachers and the kind of relationship they had with the mentor teacher were identified as important (Izadinia, 2016). Similarly, Yuan and Zhang (2017) found that when student teachers were able to engage with their mentor teachers and when they were given the opportunities to explore their own teaching styles, their beliefs about the importance of teaching grew and they felt more empowered as teachers. In addition to this, Kaldi and Xafakos (2017) found that when support from a mentor teacher is high, student teachers internalize the importance of teaching and view teaching in a positive way.

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In the light of this, this study was geared to explore mentor teachers' perspectives on their role in teacher identity development to ensure that their mentorship is meaningful.

2.4 MENTORING AND THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR TEACHER DURING WIL

Student teachers have been found to see their mentor teachers as role models (Singh & Mahomed, 2013). Mentor teachers are identified as important, not only because they can impart valuable knowledge but also because of the encouragement and support that they offer, more often than not, nervous student teachers (Sedibe, 2014). Thus, mentoring is not only about knowledge development, but also about the emotional development of the student teacher (Wexler 2020; George & Robinson, 2011). Furthermore, Butler and Cuenca (2012) contend that mentoring is socially constructed, and mentor teachers need to take on the role of instructional coach, socialising agent and emotional support provider. When mentor teachers are able to embrace these roles, mentorship is meaningful, both for the student teacher and the mentor teacher; however, this does not come without challenges (Goodwin, Roegman & Reagan, 2016).

2.4.1 Challenges faced by mentor teachers during WIL

Mentoring student teachers is a challenging task, because it often pushes mentor teachers out of their comfort zone as they have to accommodate student teachers in their teaching space (Wexler, 2020). In addition to this, heavy demands are placed on mentor teachers by their school and teaching, which may ensue in mentoring becoming an additional burden (Goodwin et al., 2016). Over and above this, Mukeredzi (2017) found that mentor teachers struggled to communicate effectively, to model lessons and to provide honest feedback to student teachers. The struggle to mentor effectively was attributed to issues in understanding the role of a mentor and the involuntary nature of mentorship practice. In South Africa mentors are selected by the school and do not necessarily have a choice in the matter (Mukeredzi, 2017).

Not only is the role of mentor often thrust upon teachers in South Africa but communication from universities on expectations is often not clear (Maphalala, 2013; Singh & Mahomed, 2013). In addition to this, research in the South African context

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suggests that mentors desire and require training from universities in order to improve their practice (Mokoena, 2017; Mukeredzi, 2017; Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017). This seems important, given that Maphalala (2013) found that the majority of mentor teachers in their study did not feel confident about their own abilities to mentor effectively and that this lack of confidence stemmed from lack of clear communication from universities.

This lack of communication is also reflected by poor collaboration between mentor teacher and supervising lecturer during WIL (Mokoena, 2017; Sosibo, 2013). A case study in China, which followed the WIL experience of two student teachers, concluded that in order for student teachers to be better supported, mentor teachers and mentor lectures needed to work together (Yuan, 2016). The positives or advantages of collaboration between mentor teacher and mentor lecturer were highlighted by the research of Nguyen (2009), who found that through ongoing engagement between student teacher, mentor teacher and mentor lecturer, all parties' professional teacher identities grew positively.

One of the key features of Nguyens' (2009) investigation was the exploration of who owns knowledge. The contention around this issue was highlighted by Kwenda, Adendorff and Mosito (2017) who found that mentor teachers often had a negative attitude towards the knowledge propagated by mentor lecturers and universities. Similarly, Sosibo (2013) found that the conflicting ideas held by mentor teachers and mentor lecturers caused confusion in the minds of the student teachers. A negative attitude and a lack of congeniality between school and university serve to damage student teachers' understanding of the profession and thus negatively impact on their professional teacher identities (Sosibo, 2013; Hong, 2010).

This contention may well be due to the hierarchical issues which exist between mentor teacher and supervising lecturer, as it would seem that mentor teachers often feel inferior to their mentor lecturer counterparts (Portelance, Caron & Martineau, 2016). This sense of inferiority results in mentor teachers doubting their ability to mentor, as they feel out of touch with modern techniques taught at universities (Sowell, 2017). An ethnographic study conducted in mid-western United States further highlighted the relational issues which exist between mentor lecturers and mentor teachers, and the role of hierarchy (Katz & Isik-Ercan, 2015). It was found that even after intervention

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between the respective parties, mentor lecturers and their respective universities failed to incorporate the beliefs and ideas of mentor teachers suggesting a potential lack of respect for the mentor teachers' knowledge and insight.

Despite these challenges, it is apparent that when mentor teacher, mentor lecturer and student teacher are given the opportunity to collaborate in a constructive manner, the triad relationship becomes valuable (Zur & Ravid, 2018; Nguyen, 2009). Talbot, Denny and Henderson (2018) found that through open discussion in the form of a dialogic relationship student teachers felt more empowered in their roles as teachers. The relationship can also be strengthened through more clearly defined roles and the creation of collaborative spaces (Talbot et al., 2018**;** Zur & Ravid, 2018).

Role confusion becomes evident when scrutinising mentor teachers' perceptions on mentoring (Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough, 2008; Mphalala, 2013). There seems to be a lack of clarity on the very concept of mentoring, as some mentor teachers struggled to separate the role of facilitator from the role of mentor (Hall et al., 2008). Poor training of mentor teachers seems to be a global challenge, as many teachers are assumed to be able to mentor just by virtue of being teachers (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). As a result of this, some mentor teachers feel out of their depth, as they do not know how to instruct or guide adults (Sowell, 2017). This may result in mentor teachers dominating the relationship and not allowing the student teachers to express their own views (Mena, Hennissen & Loughran, 2017). This role confusion is attributed to a lack of clear communication from the side of universities (Hall et al., 2008). However, even when the role of mentor teacher is clear, it would seem that many mentor teachers are not sure what universities expect from them (Maphalala, 2013).

The lack of clear expectations from universities may also account for why research, focusing on the challenges experienced by mentor teachers, found that mentor teachers see teaching their own students as their primary role and the mentorship of student teachers as secondary (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins & Wubbels, 2014). Jasper et al. (2014) found that mentor teachers often perceive mentoring as burdensome and believe that looking after their own students takes priority over supporting their student teacher. A result of this is that the development of the student teacher is not a focus of the mentor teacher (Jaspers et al., 2014). This may account for student teachers often reporting to have controlling mentor teachers who lack flexibility (Heeralal, 2014;

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Du Plessis, 2013; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012). The balancing act of taking care of school children and a student teacher is amplified in South Africa, due to large class sizes and under-resourced schools (Wilson & Nel, 2019).

It would seem that mentor teachers often underestimate the complexities mentoring student teachers have to bear with (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017; Ambrosetti, 2014). Ambrosetti (2014) found that mentor teachers were unaware of all the roles that mentoring required, and that learning about these roles in a mentorship training programme helped mentor teachers to improve their practice as mentors. Furthermore, Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017), after having surveyed 170 mentor teachers, concluded that mentor teachers underestimated the important emotional component linked to mentoring, and how to link theory to practice in a meaningful way. In addition to this, mentor teachers did not understand how to navigate the complexities of being both support system and assessor within the mentor-mentee relationship.

Hudson (2016) explains that the mentor-mentee relationship is complex, due to the hierarchical nature of the relationship. After gaining insight from 200 mentor teachers, as well as paired mentors and mentees, Hudson (2016) found that a mentor-mentee relationship built on respect and trust requires an interplay between factors such as collaborative problem solving, sharing of resources and knowledge, enthusiasm and professionalism. This is supported by Schwartz and Dori (2016) who, after exploring the perceptions of six mentors and six mentor teachers, found that sound mentorship requires trust, respect and role-modelling. It would seem, however, that mentor teachers often miss out on the opportunity to build relationships because they do not take the time to get to know their student teachers (Van Ginkel, Van Drie & Verloop, 2018). Mentor teachers do not get to know the history of their student teachers, but rather judge them according to traits and dispositions. This results in a lack of empathy towards student teachers and less time spent assisting student teachers to develop in areas specific to each individual (Van Ginkel et al., 2018). However, even when mentor teachers are aware of the individual nature of each student teacher, they seem to doubt their own ability to mentor, because they do not know how to cater for the individual needs of each student teacher (Sowell, 2017). In particular, dealing with student teachers' emotional needs is challenging for mentor teachers (Goodwin et al., 2015).

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Regardless of the challenges experienced during mentorship, mentor teachers do report positive perceptions on mentoring (Mukeredzi, 2017; George & Robinson, 2011). After seeking the perspectives of seven mentor teachers, whom they observed mentoring, Cavanagh and Prescott (2011) concluded that mentoring was a means to directly influence the future of the teaching profession. In addition to this, mentoring student teachers also contributes to the professional development of mentor teachers, as they are challenged in their own teaching practices and have the opportunity to learn new things from their student teachers (Mukeredzi, 2017). This was supported by a survey of 726 Dutch mentor teachers who conceded that the professional development opportunities presented by mentoring was a major motivation to agree to mentor (Van Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen, 2016). In the light of this, Yuan (2016) argues that making mentor teachers more aware of the professional development opportunities of mentoring may help to motivate more teachers to engage in the mentorship process. Seeking mentor teachers' perspectives, in the current study, may assist in understanding how to motivate and engage mentor teachers in the mentorship process. This is critical if mentor teachers are to provide the kind of emotional support necessary during WIL (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003).

2.4.2 The role of the mentor teacher during WIL

It is important that mentor teachers be conscious of the emotionally taxing nature of WIL (Beltman et al., 2015; Heeralal, 2014; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). Research consistently points out the need for greater support and, more specifically, emotional support from mentor teachers (Abongdi et al., 2015; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013; Du Plessis et al., 2010). Data collected from 111 student teachers indicated that the majority of participants felt scared during WIL and in some cases that fear was due, in part, to an unaccommodating mentor teacher (Du Plessis & Marais, 2013). Another study, which investigated anxiety among student teachers during WIL, concluded that sound guidance and mentoring have the potential to reduce student teachers' anxiety during WIL (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). In addition to this, sound mentorship helps student teachers deal with the frustration and disappointments experienced during WIL linked to feelings of inadequacy and time constraints (Zhu & Zhu, 2018; Chong et al., 2011).

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This is significant in the light of the emotional connections made with teaching forming an important part of a teacher's professional identity (Hong, 2010).

Du Plessis and Marais (2013) found that when mentor teachers are supportive of their mentees, student teachers experience positive emotions during WIL. However, when mentor teachers are inflexible, unfriendly, exploitive and unsupportive, student teachers experience negative emotions towards teaching. After analysing 389 student teachers' experiences of their mentor teachers, Sayeski and Paulsen (2013) concluded that through a supportive relationship, mentor teachers are able to challenge their student teachers to explore new ways of thinking and to reflect upon their own beliefs and practices as a new teacher. This requires of mentor teachers to be flexible and provide their student teachers with the opportunity to explore teaching practices (Wexler, 2020; Heeralal, 2014; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). This flexibility involves mentor teachers giving student teachers the freedom to explore innovative ideas they have learnt at university (Heeralal, 2014). It seems that giving student teachers this kind of freedom often is a challenge for mentor teachers, as they do not trust their student teachers' abilities (Yuan, 2016; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Mentor teachers' lack of confidence in their student teachers serves to lower the confidence of student teachers and may leave student teachers feeling disheartened about teaching (Yuan, 2016; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). In contrast, research shows that flexible mentor teachers boost their student teachers' self-esteem and support the positive development of their professional teacher identities (Heeralal, 2014).

In addition to flexibility, Hudson (2010) suggests that modelling and feedback are important. Modelling pertains to the mentor teacher's ability to demonstrate how to teach, whereas feedback involves giving student teachers guidance and advice on their performance during WIL (Hudson, 2007). Both these mentor teacher roles are mentioned consistently as important in research reports (Mukeredzi, 2017; Heeralal, 2014; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). It also was found that when student teachers have the opportunity to view their mentor teachers in the classroom it reduced their anxiety about teaching (Ngidi and Sibaya, 2003). In addition to this, Steenekamp, Van der Merwe and Mehmedova (2018) found that modelling through vicarious learning improved student teachers' motivation to teach. This does require that mentor teachers are experienced so that they can fill the gaps which exist between theory and practice (Heeralal, 2014). Experience may also be necessary for in depth feedback

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which student teachers desire (Heeralal, 2014; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013). Student teachers report needing feedback, which is honest so that they can learn from their mistakes and grow in competence as a teacher (Heeralal, 2014). This feedback should be given on a regular basis and provide student teachers with challenges to facilitate the growth of student teachers' professional identities (Du Plessis, 2013; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013).

In addition to being experienced as mentor teachers, research also highlights the importance of mentor teachers being professional and opening up all areas of their teaching practice to their student teachers (Heeralal, 2014; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013). This includes allowing student teachers to attend departmental meetings and to be a part of other integral activities of being a teacher which do not include being in the classroom (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). Student teachers report the desire to be seen as colleagues by their mentor teachers and the school at large (Du Plessis et al., 2010). Regrettably, this does not always happen, as cases were reported where student teachers felt exploited by their mentor teacher and the school. This, in turn, negatively impacts on the development of student teachers' professional identity (Wilson & Nel, 2019; Du Plessis et al., 2010; Kiggundu, 2007).

It is imperative that student teachers experience positive identity development during WIL to ensure that they stay in the profession (Hanna et al., 2019; Hong, 2010). This requires that more time be spent evaluating mentor teachers' perspectives on how they can contribute to the development of student teachers during WIL (George & Robinson, 2011). Furthermore, it has been suggested that future research needs to focus on mentor teachers' role perceptions in relation to the environment in which student teachers learn and that there needs to be a greater focus on the needs of mentor teachers in becoming successful mentors (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Jaspers et al., 2014). In addition to this, research suggests that the relationship between mentor teacher and student teacher needs to be re-evaluated to prevent mentor teachers dominating the relationship (Mena et al., 2017). In order to address some of these concerns, this study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL. The insight provided by mentor teachers in this study was evaluated using Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring.

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2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I relied on Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring as theoretical framework for this study. Research indicates that Hudson's five-factor mentoring model is empirically sound for the effective mentoring of student teachers (Bird & Hudson, 2015; Hudson, 2007). The model outlines the mentorship requirements for effectivity developing student teachers' teacher identity during WIL (Hudson, 2016). This requires of mentor teachers to take cognizance of five important mentorship factors, depicted in diagram 2.1, namely: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. An additional sixth factor has been added, based on the research conducted by Jooste (2019). The sixth factor refers to a safe and nurturing mentorship environment.

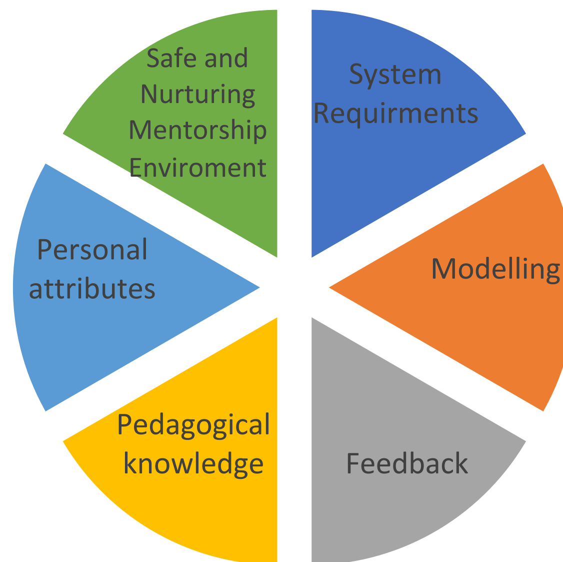

Figure 2.1: Hudson's Five-Factor Model of Mentoring
(Adapted from Hudson, 2007 and Jooste 2019)

In the light of this, the model was useful for evaluating mentor teachers' perspectives on the teacher identity development of student teachers during WIL. By evaluating the participants' responses against the criteria set out by Hudson, I was able to ascertain which mentorship factors are deemed valuable for mentor teachers. Thus, this study provides insight in the application of Hudson's five-factor mentorship model in the context of this study. The factors that make up the model will now be elaborated on.

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2.5.1 Personal attributes

According to Hudson (2010), personal attributes play an important role in mentoring, which speaks to the need for a mentor to serve as support to the student teacher. Personal attributes include factors such as empathy, interpersonal skills, and attitudes (Bird & Hudson, 2015). In order for mentor teachers to be effective in their role, it is critical that they must be able to make use of these attributes in order to build a trusting and supportive relationship with their student teachers (Hudson & Hudson, 2017). A trusting relationship is achieved when mentor teachers show support by listening attentively to their student teachers, instilling a sense of confidence in their student teachers, facilitating the acquisition of a positive attitude towards teaching, and promoting reflection on their teaching practice (Hudson, 2007).

Bird and Hudson (2015) explain that personal attributes have a direct impact on the performance of student teachers. In order to have a positive influence in this area it is critical that mentor teachers are attuned to the needs of their student teachers and that they have confidence in their own teaching ability and content knowledge (Carrosa, Rosas-Maldonado, & Martin, 2019). In addition to this, it is important that mentor teachers, from their position of power, actively build a professional relationship with their student teachers to enable open communication (Hudson & Hudson, 2017). This report building is facilitated by supportive comments and other efforts to build the student teachers’ confidence (Hudson, 2010). This, in turn, ensures that mentor teachers successfully contribute to the positive development of student teachers’ teacher identity (Hanna et al., 2019). Therefore, by developing a trusting relationship through personal attributes, such as empathy and interpersonal skills, mentor teachers can build student teachers’ teacher identities by increasing their confidence and self-efficacy (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017; Heeralal, 2014).

2.5.2 System requirements

System requirements entail the direct communication of school policies, aims and the curriculum by the mentor teacher to the student teacher (Hudson, 2016). By including student teachers in all areas of school functioning, student teachers feel part of the school system and have less anxiety during WIL (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). In order

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to achieve this, it is important for mentor teachers to maintain open communications with their student teachers (Hudson & Millwater, 2008).

Hudson (2007) suggests that system requirements are often the most underutilised factor in mentorship of student teachers. As a result, many student teachers entering the profession have very little insight in the aims, policies and curriculum which govern school life (Hudson, 2010). In order to improve this, mentor teachers should spend time explaining policies and school practices to their student teachers (Hudson, 2007). This is important since system requirements are foundational blocks which create a cohesive learning environment and which guide sound teaching practice (Bird & Hudson, 2015). In addition to this, having a firm grasp of this information forms an important part of teacher identity and thus mentor teachers must share important school and policy information with student teachers in order to assist in developing their teacher identities (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013).

2.5.3 Pedagogical knowledge

To be an effective mentor, it is essential that mentor teachers have a sound grasp of their subject's pedagogy and that they are able to communicate this knowledge to their student teachers (Hudson, 2016). This includes guidance on lesson planning, content knowledge, questioning techniques, teaching strategies and classroom management strategies (Hudson, 2010). Focusing on these elements during mentorship has been found to help develop student teachers critical thinking skills and to support the development of their teacher identities (Izadinia, 2012; Hong, 2010). This occurs because pedagogy has a far-reaching influence on teacher practice and also provides useful opportunities for mentor teachers to probe and challenge student teachers in order to facilitate growth and the development of greater self-awareness as a teacher (Izadinia, 2012). Mentor teachers, therefore, should use their pedagogical knowledge to develop student teachers' teacher identity (Wetzel et al., 2017).

It is important to remember that student teachers do not come into WIL with no pedagogical knowledge. Mentor teachers thus should take a collaborative approach to pedagogical knowledge acquisition in which they are also open to learn from their student teacher (Mukeredzi, 2017). When mentor teachers are approachable and accessible to the thoughts and opinions of their student teachers, they grow in their

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own professional learning (Maphalala, 2013). Furthermore, student teachers develop confidence as they are provided the opportunity to exercise their own pedagogical knowledge in practice (Heeralal, 2014).

2.5.4. Modelling

Modelling teaching, in the form of visual and auditory observations, helps to reduce student teachers' anxiety and provides valuable learning opportunities for student teachers (Sowell, 2017; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). In order to model effectively, it is important that mentor teachers are enthusiastic and that they utilize an interactive teaching approach, which gives student teachers the opportunity to see classroom management in action (Hudson, 2016). In addition to this, modelling needs to be in line with system requirements in order to convey an accurate depiction of teaching in action (Hudson, 2010). Hudson (2007) suggests that this is more effective when mentors are experienced teachers who are confident in the classroom.

In addition to lesson observations, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) propose that more strategies be adopted, such as observing peers, video case studies, and exploring lesson plans. The primary aim, regardless of technique, should be to assist the student teacher in grasping the complexities of classroom practice and management (Hudson, 2016). When this is done effectively, student teachers grow in confidence and feel more empowered to teach (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Thus, mentor teachers should harness their own teaching experience and give student teachers the opportunity to observe them in order to develop student teacher's teacher identity (Steenekamp et al., 2018).

2.5.5 Feedback

Feedback is an important part of mentoring, as it involves the active engagement of mentor teachers in guiding student teachers in their teaching practice (Hudson, 2016). Furthermore, feedback assists in relationship building and helps with the development of student teachers' professional identities (Izadinia, 2016). In order for feedback to be valuable, it should be consistent and focused on both teaching practice and lesson

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planning (Hudson, 2016). In addition to this, feedback should take on both oral and written forms, depending on the circumstances (Hudson, 2010).

Knowing how to provide helpful and effective feedback is an important and complex skill (Hudson, 2014). Despite its importance, there is no clear indication from the literature as to what this entails (Matsko et al., 2018). It would seem, however, that the balance between support and autonomy in feedback is important, as well as its level of concreteness (Stanulis et al., 2018; Heeralal, 2014; Hudson, 2010). Mentor teachers who have acquired the skill of providing meaningful feedback are able to ask the correct questions, point their student teachers in the right direction, and focus on areas of improvement in an effective manner (Stanulis et al., 2018). This seems to be a challenge for many mentor teachers, while research suggests a general lack in this area of mentorship (Matsko et al., 2018; Mukeredzi, 2017; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013).

2.5.6. Safe and Nurturing Mentorship Environment

Based on the findings of an investigation exploring student teachers' expectations of their mentor lecturers, Jooste (2019) discovered that the importance of a safe and nurturing mentorship environment should be added to Hudson's five-factor mentoring model. This factor emerged on the premise that for student teachers to grow in their teacher identity, they need guidance built on mutual care and personal interest, instead of harsh criticism (Jooste, 2019).

Mentor teachers, therefore, should take the time to get to know their mentees in order for them to create an environment in which student teachers can flourish (Beijaard, 2018). Mentor teachers also should guide their mentees in an empathetic manner which shows positive regard and genuine interest (Beltman et al., 2015). This should help student teachers feel more comfortable to ask for help and to explore their teacher voice without fear of judgment or harsh criticism (Izadinia, 2016). When student teachers are afforded this opportunity, they are more likely to grow in confidence, knowledge and respect for the teaching profession (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). This is essential for the development of a positive teacher identity to develop in student teachers (Hong et al., 2017).

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2.6 SYNTHESIS

The aim of this chapter was to explore current literature which relates to the topic of this study. In order to contextualise the importance of the study, I investigated teacher identity in relation to WIL, mentorship, and the role of the mentor teacher. I also provided a detailed elucidation of Hudson's five-factor mentoring model, with an added sixth factor, which formed the theoretical framework for this study. From the literature studied, it became clear that mentorship is a complex and often underutilized component of student teacher development, and particularly so in the South African context (Hudson, 2014**;** Du Plessis & Marais, 2013; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009).

Mentorship assists student teachers in the development of their teaching practice and their teacher identities (Hudson, 2010; Hong, 2010). In order for mentorship to be effective, it is important that mentor teachers are fully invested in the development of their student teachers by displaying personal attributes linked to support, exposing their student teachers to system requirements of teaching, developing pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and providing constructive feedback (Hudson, 2016). When mentor teachers are committed to this process and have the required experience and enthusiasm their student teachers are able to fully benefit from WIL (Hudson, 2010; Du Plessis, 2013).

Research suggests that mentor teachers may not always be fully invested in this process and as a result student teacher are not fully benefiting (Van Ginkel et al., 2018). Mentor teachers report finding it difficult to balance developing their students and student teachers (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins & Wubbels, 2014), other mentor teachers report a lack of training in and an understanding of their role as problematic; some mentor teachers see student teachers as a burden and feel forced into the role of mentor (Ambrosetti, 2014; Maphalala, 2013; Hall et al., 2008). Experiencing student teachers as a burden is particularly relevant in the South African context, as the South African schooling system is based on a regimented curriculum and standardized testing which put teachers under immense pressure (Wilson & Nel, 2019). This is problematic, because when student teachers are not effectively mentored their confidence, self-esteem and sense of competence as a teacher are jeopardized, which in turn has an overall negative effect on their teacher identity development (Yuan, 2016; Izadinia, 2015; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Gaining greater insight from the

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perspective of the mentor teacher may help to rectify some of these tensions and ensure that mentorship meaningfully develops student teachers' teacher identity (Sowell, 2017). In the light of this, with the current study, although of limited scope, I aimed to gain an understanding of mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL in order to improve mentorship practice in South Africa.

Figure 2.2 provides a synthesis of the research in relation to the mentorship of student teachers and student teacher identity. It illustrates the roles that mentor teachers should fulfil, the challenges they face during WIL and the areas of student teacher identity that are influenced.

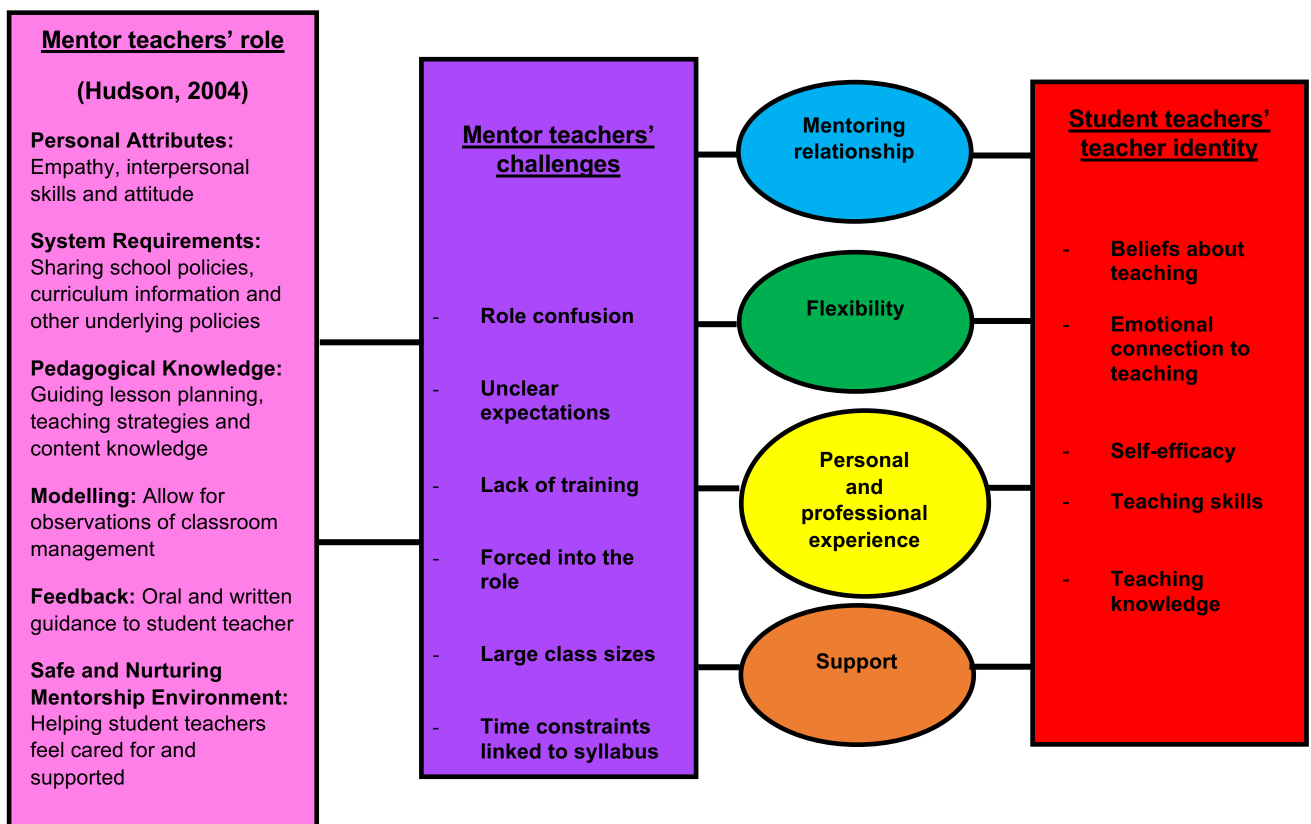

Figure 2.2: A conceptualisation of mentoring and its impact on teacher identity development during WIL

In Chapter 3 I shall explain the research methodology used for this study. An in-depth explanation of the paradigms and research design of this study is provided, and I shall also discuss the data generation, data documentation and data analysis strategies employed. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the quality criteria and ethical considerations which guided the study, as well as a discussion on my role as researcher.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 I discussed Hudson's five-factor mentorship model with an added sixth factor, namely a safe and nurturing mentoring environment. This mentorship model served as the theoretical framework for this study (*cf.* Hudson, 2007). I discussed existing literature pertaining to the focus of this study, highlighting gaps in the literature. I did so by focusing on existing literature on the role of mentorship in teacher identity development, mentor teachers' perceptions and the mentorship of student teachers within the South African context. I also explored the concept of teacher professional identity in detail in order to contextualise the study.

In this chapter, Chapter 3, I provide a detailed description of the research process undertaken in this study. I elaborate on the paradigmatic and methodological choices which I made and provide justification for these choices. I also focus on quality criteria taken into consideration during this study, and the ethical considerations which informed the study. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the research methodology employed in this study.

Table 3.1: Overview of the research methodology

PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE	
Epistemological paradigm	Interpretivism
Methodological approach	Qualitative approach
METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES	
Research design	Descriptive case study
Selection of the case	Convenient sampling
Selection of participants	Purposeful sampling
DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION	

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Data generation techniques	Data documentation techniques
Semi-structured interviews Observations	Audio recordings Reflective researcher journal
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
Inductive thematic analysis and interpretation	
QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY	
Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity	
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Informed consent, voluntary participation, respect for the dignity and privacy of participants, no harm or risk to participants, and non-maleficence	

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

In this section the epistemological paradigm and methodological approach are discussed. From a research perspective, a paradigm refers to a set of beliefs or principles which the researcher employs to make sense of and interpret the world around him/her (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In essence, then, a paradigm is the lens through which the researcher arrives at making meaning; in many respects it is the very nature of knowledge (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explain that the choice of paradigm in research is very important because of its influence on all areas of research methodology. Paradigms serve to guide researchers in their choice of sampling strategies, data generation, documentation, and data analysis, and thus it is important in research to explore chosen paradigms in detail (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

3.2.1 Epistemological paradigm: Interpretivism

I selected interpretivism (Maree, 2016) as the epistemological paradigm to underpin my study. I chose this paradigm because of the importance that it attaches to

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subjective human experience (Creswell, 2014). Since the focus of this study was on perspectives which, by nature, are subjective, it was important to utilise the interpretivist paradigm (Schacter, 2011; Maree, 2016). This gave me the opportunity to make meaning from participants' perceptions and to authentically reflect on participants' views and experiences within the study (*cf.* Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014). This was essential in the context of the study, since the aim was to describe and explore mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development of student teachers during WIL.

By engaging with the participants' perspectives through an interpretivist lens, I was able, firstly, to express findings which reflected the participants' points of view and, secondly, I was able to enter the personal worlds of the participants (*cf.* Maree, 2016). The depth of insight that participants brought through their own experience as mentor teachers was a key to uncovering rich and valuable findings. This value may have very well been missed had I not used interpretivism which acknowledges that reality is socially contracted and not based on a single worldview or truth (*cf.* Husserl, 1965, Maree, 2016).

People's perceptions about their own actions are best explored within their own social setting (Maree, 2016). Thus, researchers should explore people's perspectives within the context that has elicited those perceptions. By seeking out mentor teachers' perspectives within the school context, I was able to meaningfully engage with participants on issues pertaining to their role in mentoring student teachers. The genuine regard and respect for participants' perspectives, created by interpretivism, elicited in-depth insight which was invaluable to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

While interpretivism is valuable for the depth of insight it provides, Creswell and Poth (2018) points out that a certain conflict exists between turning something subjective, like a human experience, into something objective, like research findings. In fact, the subjective nature of this approach in its entirety is seen as problematic when attempting to conduct empirically sound scientific research (Liamputtong, 2016). The legitimate nature of this research is called into question when considering issues such as generalisability of findings and issues of researcher bias (*cf.* Flick, 2018a). With regard to the issue of generalisability, it is important to acknowledge that the aim of this study was not to make inferences regarding an entire population, but rather to gain

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an in-depth understanding within a specific context. Therefore, it is believed that the subjective nature of this approach is advantageous for the purposes of this study (Maree, 2016).

In order to navigate the complex terrain which is synonymous with the role of the researcher within the interpretivist paradigm, I continuously reflected on my role as the researcher (*cf.* Creswell, 2014). I did so by maintaining a reflective journal in which I explored my personal perspectives, experiences and beliefs. This approach enabled me to identify personal biases so that they would not unintentionally skew the findings or research process (*cf.* Silverman, 2016). Consistent meetings with my supervisor also assisted in muting my personal narrative in the research (Creswell, 2007). Through this process I also came to appreciate that, as the researcher, I became part of the research process and that my role as research tool had merit for the study (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020).

3.2.2 Methodological approach: Qualitative approach

I utilized a qualitative research approach for this study. In line with interpretivism, qualitative methodology allows for the collection of data, which was not driven by numbers, but rather by the subtle nuances of human experience and thought (Ormston et al., 2014). Thus, this study did not yield large sets of data, useful for making inferences, but rather it yielded value in the way it enabled the researcher to grapple with the complexities of each participant's story (Creswell, 2014). This was an appropriate approach because I was mainly interested in the unique experiences of mentor teachers from their own perspectives. Through using a qualitative approach, I was able to probe and seek deeper for clarity from participants, which helped to uncover thick and rich data (*cf.* Maree, 2016).

Importantly, qualitative research is not only advantageous because it allows for the exploration of a unique individual experience, but also because it offers opportunities for the identification of broader themes across these experiences (Creswell, 2016). Thus, the researcher gains a sense of the larger contextual factors through this process (Ormston et al., 2014). This was important in this study as the aim was to

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build an understanding of mentor teachers' perspectives, both individually and collectively. The opportunity that qualitative research offers the researcher to reflect on the process was another advantage of using a qualitative approach (*Ormston* et al., 2014).

While reflexivity of the researcher is an advantage, a common challenge in qualitative research is researcher bias (Creswell, 2014). In an attempt to address this challenge, I worked collaboratively with my supervisor and participated in an ongoing reflective process through the use of a reflective researcher journal (*cf.* Kelliher, 2005). This is one way to increase the rigour of a qualitative approach, as validity or rigour often is a concern in qualitative research because of a seeming lack of overt scientific control, which often exists in quantitative research (Kelliher, 2005; Ormston et al., 2014). Engaging directly with participants, while it holds an advantage within the qualitative approach, does raise issues of confidentiality (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In order to protect the identity of participants, encryptions were used and all data were stored securely on a password-protected computer to which only I had access.

Practical concerns regarding the qualitative approach also exist, such as cost and time constraints, as well as inadequate training of the researcher (Khankeh, Ranjbar, Khorasani-Zavareh, Zargham-Boroujeni, & Johansson, 2015). In order to ensure that this research took place in a timeous manner, the process was carefully planned and executed accordingly. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, I was able to collect rich data in a timeous manner such that participants were not overburdened and so that the data collection did not become too costly. In order to guard against insufficient experience in qualitative research, I attempted to learn as much as possible from leading textbooks and my expert supervisor. I also relied on my own experience gained during a previously conducted qualitative research project.

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

This section focuses on the research process undertaken in this study. I will discuss the selection of participants and how data were generated, documented, analysed and interpreted.

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3.3.1 Research design

To conduct the study, I utilized a descriptive case study design (*cf.* Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). According to Creswell and Poth (2018) a case study is a type of research design which involves the exploration of specific subject matter within a specific context or through the eyes of one particular person or group. Case studies are valuable within the social sciences, because of the value attached to understanding a specific context or phenomenon. In addition to this, case studies are valuable, due to the way in which they inform all aspects of the research process from data collection to data analysis and report writing (Yin, 2018). Descriptive case studies seek to create meaning through a deep and meaningful description of the specific case under study (Cohen et al., 2013). Due to my interest in describing the perceptions of mentor teachers' roles within the actual school context where mentoring of student teachers occurs, a descriptive case study was identified as the most appropriate type of case study design (*cf.* Maree, 2016).

Case study research affords the researcher the opportunity to make meaning of unique experiences of individuals; however, this makes the formation of generalisations difficult (Cohen et al., 2013). However, although a lack of generalisability possibilities may be a major setback to this approach, generalisability is not necessarily the aim of qualitative research and is most certainly not the aim of the study at hand (*cf.* Creswell and Poth, 2018). Therefore, findings of this study cannot be generalised; however, it is anticipated that the findings will still hold value beyond the context of the study itself. Even though one may not be able to make inferences from case study research, if the case study resonates with people of a different context then the findings can still hold value across different contexts (Hennink & Hutter, 2020). Thus, the findings from this study still will add to the broader body of knowledge on mentor teachers' role in the mentorship of student teachers through utilising a case study design, assuming that the research is relatable to other contexts.

3.3.2 Selection of participants and research site

The participants in the study were four (n=4) high school mentor teachers from a conveniently selected private school. Participants were purposefully selected (*cf.*

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Creswell, 2014), based on the number of years of mentoring experience. Purposeful sampling has been identified as a useful form of sampling for descriptive case studies (Yin, 2018). Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on their ability to meaningfully contribute to the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014). Thus, I purposefully selected the participants for this study based on the criterion that all participants had to have a minimum of five years' mentorship experience. I relied on the expertise of the principal in identifying the most appropriate participants for the study. Participants were also selected based on their voluntary participation in the study, as this also ensured meaningful contributions from participants (Rule & John, 2011). Table 3.1 provides the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3.2: Participant information

Participant	Years' experience	Gender
Participant 1	10 years	Female
Participant 2	20 years	Female
Participant 3	6 years	Female
Participant 4	10 years	Female

I used convenient sampling (*cf.* Creswell, 2018) to select a private school in Johannesburg, South Africa, as the research site. The school has a constant flow of student teachers from training institutions across Gauteng and, therefore, was considered to be an appropriate research site. Convenient sampling is a form of sampling that involves selecting a research site that is easily accessible to the researcher and participants (Etikan et al, 2016). The only criterion for selecting participants according to convenience sampling is that the participants must be available and willing to participate using convenient sampling thus means that participants would not be inconvenienced by participating, usually due to the interviews being conducted at their place of work. The interviews took place via Google Meets due to Covid-19. The participants chose the time of the interview according to their schedules. This approach was useful because it took participants' time into consideration (Etikan et al., 2016). One potential problem with convenience sampling,

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is the risk that the quality of the data might be jeopardised in an attempt to save time and money (Etikan et al., 2016). This was not the case in this study, as I selected a school that is committed to the training of student teachers and employs expert teachers in all fields.

3.4 DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION

In order to increase the rigour of the study, I utilized a variety of data collection techniques (*cf.* Creswell, 2016). Thus, the data collection process was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, observations, and a reflective researcher journal (Flick, 2018a). I also included member checking as part of the research process in order to maintain the rigour of the study (*cf.* Pandey & Patnaik, 2014).

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with participants in order to generate meaningful data for this study. Semi-structured interviews are considered to be a valuable form of data generation within qualitative research (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2018). Interviews provide the unique opportunity to explore a set of circumstances from multiple perspectives by engaging with individual narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In particular, semi-structured interviews are useful because they present the opportunity to ask pre-planned questions whilst also engaging in unanticipated discussions with participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). This ensures that there is some kind of standardisation across interviews, while also accounting for pertinent issues with each individual participant to be explored further (Galletta, 2013).

Interviews also are a useful form of data collection because they offer the opportunity for comparisons to be drawn between individual's responses, which in turn helps to generate a comprehensive set of findings (Flick, 2018b). This was useful in the study because it offered the opportunity to evaluate participants' responses against each other in order to identify prominent ideas and perceptions. Since the aim of the study was to explore mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL, semi-structured interviews provided a meaningful way of accessing mentor

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teachers' perspectives through open dialogue and discussion, steered by an interview guide (Galletta, 2013).

In order to ensure that questions asked in the interview were related to the research question and aim of the study, an interview guide was carefully constructed (Hennink & Hutter, 2020). I specifically considered gaps in the research, the conceptual framework of the study, and the aims of the study when I compiled the research guide. This allowed for a constructive and interactive interview process in which the aims of the study were addressed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once the interview guide was finalised, I conducted a pilot interview with one individual matching the criterion set for the participants. Conducting a pilot interview is a useful strategy for refining interview questions and increasing the overall quality of the study (Galletta, 2013). The interview guide was not adhered to in a regimented fashion during interviews in order to allow for deeper exploration on specific and unanticipated ideas that emerged during the individual interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The interview guide was adapted based on the findings of the pilot interview, which was conducted before data collection commenced.

Despite the immense value of interviews, they are not used as data collection instruments without challenges (Flick, 2018b). In order for interviews to be carried out successfully, it is important that the interviewer is aware of the potential power dynamics at play during an interview and his/her own biases (King et al., 2018). Use of tools like a reflexive researcher journal helped me to maintain a neutral position during the interviews. Time management also may be a challenge, as in-depth interviews can take as long as 90 minutes (Flick, 2018b). In order not to inconvenience participants, a set time session of no longer than 90 minutes was planned beforehand. The interview guide was developed to accommodate the time frame in order not to be rushed (Hennink & Hutter, 2020).

3.4.2 Audio recordings

In order to capture the information yielded by the interviews, audio recordings were made of the Google Meets interviews. The main advantage of audio recordings is that they are free from researcher bias. They represent the participants' perspectives in

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the purest sense as they come directly from participants (Flick, 2018b). Audio recordings also are useful for data checking and thus increase the overall credibility of qualitative research (Lindegger, 2006). Through audio recordings important detail is captured, which might be lost to the researcher who only relies on pure observation, notes and memory of the interview. Thus, it is considered an essential component of qualitative research (Arthur et al., 2013). However, in order for audio recordings to be used, it is essential that consent be obtained from participants first (Flick, 2018b). For this reason, participants were informed about the audio recordings, and consent was acquired by means of an informed consent form (Arthur et al., 2013).

In keeping with the importance of informed consent, is the concern that audio recordings may prevent participants from acting naturally (Flick, 2018b). In order to prevent participants from feeling uncomfortable, I explained the use of the audio recordings carefully and placed the recording devices in an unobtrusive way with the hope that this would put the participants at ease (*cf.* Flick, 2018b). Another issue regarding audio recordings is to ensure that recordings are of a good quality. To achieve this, Finch, Lewis and Turley (2013) recommend that researchers use good quality equipment and that they familiarise themselves with operating the equipment prior to using it in the field. I followed this advice in order to avoid any disappointments and to ensure that I made good quality recordings (Finch et al., 2013).

3.4.3 Observations

Creswell and Poth (2018) identify observations as a central feature of qualitative research. Observations may take a variety of forms, depending on the aims and objectives of the study, and can involve any of the five senses, from smell to sight (Flick, 2018a). Generally speaking, observations can either be structured or unstructured. Unstructured observations are associated with interpretivist research as they involve taking note of the natural and unplanned things that occur during the research process (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The main advantage of unstructured observations is that these observations provide researchers with an opportunity to match the behaviour of participants with what they are saying verbally (Spradley, 2016). In addition to this, observations give the researcher insight into

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group dynamics, context, and the role of the environment (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Through observations, I was able to gain a sense of participants' emotional connection with their roles as mentors through observing their behavioural responses and body language. This involved selective observation, as I specifically chose what to focus on in my observations in order to fulfil the aims of the study (*cf.* Spradley, 2016). These observations, not only of the participants but also of the environment, helped to me to gain a deeper understanding of what was naturally occurring during the data collection process (*cf.* Flick, 2018a).

Observations, particularly within the interpretivist approach, are highly subjective as they are purely based on the researcher's interpretation (Nicholls, Mills & Kotecha, 2013). In addition, it is important for researchers to acknowledge that their presence may alter or have an effect on the way that participants naturally interact with each other (Silverman, 2016). However, Nicholls et al. (2013) argue that the process undertaken by researchers in evaluating the observations and questioning their own responses to the observable phenomena is what makes observations so valuable. Thus, in order to make the observations in this study as valuable as possible, I consistently reflected on my motives for choosing one observable feature over another. I paid attention to my emotional responses and consistently considered how my observations related to my own assumptions and the assumptions of the research. Approaching observations in this way enabled me to develop rich and meaningful insights into the mentor teachers' perspectives of their roles and responsibilities in the professional identity development of student teachers (*cf.* Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4.4 Reflective researcher journal

The reflective researcher journal forms part of the reflexive process of a study (Corlett & Mavin, 2017). Reflexivity in research speaks to the reflective process involved, which serves to make all influences known, to which any given study is subjected (Corlett & Mavin, 2017). Thus, reflexivity in the form of a reflective journal is a key tool in maintaining the overall credibility of qualitative research, particularly because it helps to address issues of researcher bias, which can influence a study negatively (Liamputtong, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2017) discuss the importance of

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researcher transparency in qualitative research. From this perspective it is important that the researcher makes known all of their own experiences, biases and preconceptions that could in some way have influenced the findings of the study through a reflexive process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In order to be as reflexive as possible during the research process, I used my reflective journal to record my thoughts throughout the research process and to reflect upon the feelings which the research process elicited (*cf.* Corlett & Mavin, 2017). This helped me to be aware of how my own thoughts and feelings were influencing the study and helped me to be as objective as possible (*cf.* Morrow, 2005). In order to ensure that the reflective researcher journal did not become too time consuming or demanding, I planned time in advance for reflection, such that it became a natural part of the research process (*cf.* Corlett & Mavin, 2017). It was particularly important to reflect before and after the data collection and during data analyses (*cf.* Flick, 2018a). By being mindful of my role as the researcher and investing time in reflection, I was able to address my own biases and misconceptions about the study and to formulate a rigorous study which truly reflected the phenomenon under study (*cf.* Corlett & Mavin, 2017).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis involves examination of the data in order to draw conclusions and answer the research question (Yin, 2018). In order for this do be done successfully, it is important to select a data analysis strategy (Yin, 2018). I selected inductive thematic analysis (Rule & John, 2011) as the data analysis strategy for this study. Inductive thematic analysis offers the researcher the opportunity to move from the specific, individual experience to the general in the form of merging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). An inductive approach was chosen over a deductive approach, because I did not approach the research as a blank slate and made use of the research questions and aims to guide the analysis. This allowed for themes to be linked to the data in contrast to a more deductive approach in which theory would have driven the themes identified (Armat, Assarroudi, Rad, Sharifi, & Heydari, 2018). Since the aim of this study was to gain an overall sense of mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL, inductive thematic analysis was identified as a useful

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strategy. This approach was utilised because it enabled individual experiences to be explored, but also allowed for a broader sense of the collective experience to be identified through the identification of recurring themes (Creswell, 2014).

Braun and Clarke (2013) explain that whilst one of the main advantages of thematic analysis is its flexible nature, it is important to still carefully follow protocol when conducting thematic analysis to ensure credible findings. The first step, which is common among all qualitative data analysis techniques, entails researchers fully immersing themselves in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This involves becoming familiar with all facets of the data to ensure that nothing is negated in the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In order to achieve full data immersion, I transcribed all audio-recorded data myself. Through the process of reading and organizing the data, I was able to start the coding process which ultimately guided the findings of this study (*cf.* Creswell, 2014). Braun and Clarke (2013) identify this step as the initial coding process. In order to ensure that my initial codes were representative of the data, I spent time going carefully though all the different forms of data collected (*cf.* Braun & Clarke, 2013). Once I was sure that I had developed an inclusive set of initial codes, I went on to the third phase of the thematic analysis, which involved finding themes. This involved identifying relationships between codes, and comparing and contrasting (Creswell, 2014).

Once I had organized the themes and sub-themes in table form, I was able to review the themes which, according to Braun and Clarke (2013), is the fourth phase of thematic analysis. This involved searching for patterns in the themes and assessing the validity of the themes by going back and comparing themes with the original data set (*cf.* Braun & Clarke, 2013). Through this process I was able to move on to naming and defining each theme, which is the fifth phase of data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This was an important phase because it challenged me to ensure that themes were distinctive in nature and that each theme had significance to the study (*cf.* Creswell, 2014). Following these steps enabled me to complete the final phase of thematic analysis, which is writing a report of the findings (*cf.* Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The comparing and contrasting which this approach facilitated, helped to ensure that the findings were representative of the participants' views and useful for helping in the improvement of the mentorship process of student teachers at the University of

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Pretoria (*cf.* Rule & John, 2011). However, thematic data analysis does not occur without challenges (Creswell, 2014). Given the fact that the researcher is in many respects a research tool in qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to acknowledge his/her role in this process (Rule & John, 2011). I attempted to remain as neutral as possible throughout the data analysis process by being mindful of my own experiences throughout the data analysis process (*cf.* Creswell, 2016). This was achieved by using my reflective researcher journal and having regular consultations with my supervisor. Taking these steps helped with issues of transferability in the research (Creswell, 2014).

3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, I considered quality criteria. In order for a study to be trustworthy, it must be credible, transferable, confirmable, dependable and authentic (Liamputtong, 2016).

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility speaks to the plausibility and trustworthiness of the research (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Credibility can be understood to be the extent to which an external person will believe what the study asserts, and, therefore, is an essential component of sound academic research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In order for a study to be credible, it should accurately reflect the perspectives and perceptions of the participants and thus it should be void of external influences such as researcher bias (Liamputtong, 2016). Given the importance of credibility, in qualitative research, numerous credibility strategies have been identified, such as triangulation, ongoing observation, peer debriefing, member checking, and thick and rich descriptions (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014).

Creswell and Miller (2000) assert that member checking is the most important strategy for ensuring the credibility of a study. This involves checking the findings of a study with the participants of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This was achieved by consulting participants after data the analysis to make sure that I had understood and

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recorded their point of view correctly. Taking this approach helped to improve the triangulation of the study (*cf.* Finch et al., 2013). Triangulation involves the inclusion of more than one data capturing technique (Finch et al*.,* 2013). The theory behind triangulation of data is that a phenomenon can never be adequately captured through a singular data capturing method (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). By including semi-structured interviews, observations, and a reflective journal, I was able to capture the phenomenon holistically and thus build a credible study (*cf.* Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). The thick description ensuing from the audio recordings also helped to give an honest account of the participants' perceptions and thus helped to conduct a study which rendered findings that are representative of the participants' perspectives (Flick, 2018a).

Using a number of data-capturing techniques also means that the study left a well-established audit trail (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016). By documenting every part of the research process the study is accountable which further assists in assessing its credibility (Silverman, 2016). Thus, I kept a detailed record of all steps taken during the research process and stored all data securely. I also kept an audit of my own thoughts and feelings in my reflective journal (*cf.* Corlett & Mavin, 2017). The reflective journal played an important part in assuring credibility as it helped me to address my own biases (*cf.* Silverman, 2016). In addition to this, I met with my supervisor for debriefing sessions. The feedback and constructive criticism provided by the supervisor helped to secure the credibility of the study.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the study in question can be transferred to another context (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). While this is a valuable quality, the nature of qualitative research makes transferability challenging because qualitative research often focuses on a very specific phenomenon or context (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). To this end, Kuper, Lingard and Levinson (2008) suggest that the assessment of transferability should be left in the hands of the person who is seeking to use the given study in another context. However, in order to help other concerned parties determine if a study can be applied to their context, it has been recommended that

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thick descriptions be present in the research report (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Thick and rich descriptions should include detailed accounts of both the participants' perceptions of the phenomena under study, as well as the context which has elicited those perceptions (Silverman, 2016). Thus, thick and rich descriptions should make the readers feel as if they have been a part of the research process by painting a picture of all elements pertaining to the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Therefore, I endeavoured to create a well-documented and descriptive research report which highlights all the important elements of the study. This was done so that others might be able to evaluate the extent to which this study relates to their investigation and not for the purposes of generalisability, since generalisability was not the aim of this study (*cf.* Creswell, 2016).

3.6.3 Dependability

The issue of dependability has a bearing on the extent to which findings of a study would be identical or similar if the study were repeated with the same or similar participants and context (Tracy, 2019). This can be a challenging criterion in qualitative research, due to the shifting nature of perceptiveness and perception; however, despite this challenge there still are important strategies that a researcher can put in place to attain results that are stable over time and are replicable to some extent (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). In order to maintain the dependability of a study, the researcher must use all research methods correctly so that they can be replicated (Flick, 2018a). Thus, I made sure that I adhered to the correct protocol for all data collection methods. In addition to this, I kept a careful record of exactly what the research process entailed in order to increase the dependability of the study (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). This included keeping record of timing and important decisions that were made, and using thick descriptions to ensure that a thorough explanation of the study exists for further analyses (*cf.* Silverman, 2016). In addition to this, I also provide a detailed explanation of the methods used, so that readers can grasp exactly how I came to the conclusions that I made. By following this approach other researchers are enabled to grasp the reliability of the findings relevant to the specific contextual background of the study, and thus I ensured that the findings of this study are

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dependable, even if they cannot be exactly replicated due to the nature of the study (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016).

3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability deals directly with the role of the researcher in shaping the findings of the study and thus is the acknowledgment of the subjective nature of the researcher (Tracy, 2019). Through acknowledging the subjective nature of the researcher, the researcher is able to take precautions to guard against a lack of objectivity in the study (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). The main tools used to counteract my own biases and influence were the reflective journal and supervisor feedback (*cf.* Creswell & Poth, 2018). By acknowledging how my own thoughts and experiences were shaped by understanding of the subject matter, I was able to work through my prejudices and expectations and thus came to findings that were as objective as possible (*cf.* Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition, I made sure that the data collected always, first and foremost, were included in the study. I tried to the best of my ability to allow the data to speak for itself (*cf.* Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). I did this by including the raw data, in the form of excerpts from the data, in the research report. By being transparent about all data collected, as well as my own biases, it is anticipated that this study will reflect a confirmable study (*cf.* Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pandey & Patnaik, 2014).

3.6.5 Authenticity

Authenticity and credibility are closely related (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Thus, authenticity aims to reflect research which is truly representative of the population and phenomenon under study (Connelly, 2016). This includes considering issues of fairness, such that different perceptions are considered in the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, in order to increase the authenticity of the study, I used a number of data collection techniques and a variety of mentor teachers participated in

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the study. By having numerous voices, the data were more likely to be balanced and representative of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Balancing opinions and perceptions was achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews which gave all participants a voice (*cf.* Chambers, 2012). I also continuously made reference to the raw data in the research report, which further authenticated the study as it provided an opportunity to share what had been authentically shared by the mentor teachers themselves (Connelly, 2016). Finally, through the reflexive processes I was able to ensure that my voice was not the leading voice in the study, but rather that the participants' perspectives led and created the final results of this study (*cf.* Corlett & Mavin, 2017).

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Conducting any form of research requires ethical considerations such as that no-one will be harmed during the process (Maree, 2016). Qualitative research within the field of psychology is particularly ethically complex, because it often deals directly with humans' perceptions and experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). Thus, ethical considerations formed a large part of this study, from conceptualisation to writing the final report (*cf.* Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). Before data collection took place, ethical approval was acquired from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education. This served to verify that the study adhered to the ethical guidelines enforced by the University of Pretoria. Adhering to these guidelines requires that participants sign consent forms, which includes their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The consent forms also gave a detailed elucidation of the study to participants for them to be well informed (Appendix B).

In complying with the ethical guidelines of the University of Pretoria, participants' autonomy and dignity were respected at all times throughout the study. In addition to this, the ethical guidelines set out by Liamputtong (2016) framed every decision made within the study. Thus, respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice to a large extent guided this study (Liamputtong, 2016). This meant that participation was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any given point, confidentiality was

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enforced, and no harm or deception was present in the study. This applied to the report writing and captured data too. Therefore, all data generated were carefully stored and only accessible to myself and my supervisor, and, in addition to this, the final report contains a true reflection of the data collected, and is a just and fair account of mentor teachers' perceived roles in the professional identity development of student teachers (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016).

3.7.1 Informed consent

Informed consent involves making participants aware of all information pertaining to the study (Brinkmann & Kaval, 2008). This includes the aims of the study as well as what participation will entail. Furthermore, informed consent requires that participation is voluntary and that participants are made aware of advantages and disadvantages of participating (Brinkmann & Kaval, 2008). In addition to this, participants should have the capacity to choose whether or not to participate and their consent to participate must be in writing.

Informed consent was acquired via an informed consent form (*cf.* Hennink & Hutter, 2020) (Appendix B). This form was sent with a letter containing the aims and objective of the study, as well as what participation would entail. The letter explained how the collected data would be handled and who would have access to the data. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions prior to signing the form and they also were made aware of the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants consented to the use of an audio recorder. In addition to gaining informed consent from the participants, the participating school also signed an informed consent from (Appendix A). This consent form, similar to the participants' letter, explained the purpose of the study and highlighted the importance of confidentiality and the opportunity to withdraw from the study (*cf.* Forester & Sullivan, 2018).

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3.7.2 Respect for the dignity and privacy of participants

In essence, human dignity can be understood as the respect and appreciation for human beings' capacity to navigate life complexities as independent beings and the recognition of each and every person's innate value and ability to make choices (Sensen, 2011). Thus, researchers who compel or manipulate people to participate in a study, or research that questions their value is entirely unethical, because it has negated the importance of human dignity (Hennink & Hutter, 2020; Forester & Sullivan, 2018). The main way in which human dignity is respected in research is through informed consent, because it shows respect for the participants' innate ability to make choices according to their own free will (Liamputtong, 2016). In order for this to occur, participants have to be informed thoroughly to make the decision; the extent of the information provided is at the discretion of the researcher (Liamputtong, 2016). To this end, I endeavoured to make aims and objectives of the study clear to participants as well as what participation would entail (Appendix B).

In addition to informed consent, respect for human dignity involves acknowledging the value of the participants, that is, causing them no harm and respecting them as people (Forrester & Sullivan, 2018). Thus, respecting participants' identity in the form of anonymity was of uttermost importance during this study (Green & Thorogood, 2018). In order to protect the identity of the participants, and the school, limited information pertaining to their identities was discussed in this study. Therefore, it is not possible to identify the school or the exact identities of the participants by reading this study (*cf.* Flick, 2018a). While anonymity was guaranteed, confidentially could not be guaranteed due to the nature of qualitative research (Green & Thorogood, 2018). However, strategies were adopted to maximise confidentiality such as keeping audio recordings private (Tracy, 2019). Issues of confidentiality were clearly explained to participants in an attempt to foster an attitude of respect between us. In addition to this, respect for the school and participants was shown by providing them with the findings of this study so that they could use them to better themselves and their community (Forrester & Sullivan, 2018). Fostering this approach, ensured that participants' right to dignity and privacy, as enforced by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), was clearly and carefully respected.

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3.7.3 No harm or risk to participants

A crucial ethical factor encompassing all decisions made regarding a study is that participants should not be harmed in any way by the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Thus, it is important for the researcher to take into consideration all the potential risk factors having a bearing on the participants' wellbeing (Liamputtong, 2016). This includes taking the needs of participants into consideration (Maree, 2016). In assessing these risks, it is important to ask whether the aims of the research justify the potential risk to participants, bearing in mind that harm can be both physical and psychological (Green & Thorogood, 2018). Upon reviewing the risks involved in this study, it was determined that the greatest threats to participants was a loss of time during data collection and potential financial implications. In order to nullify these risks, data collection was done after a school day, at the school, so that participants did not have to spend money on making themselves available. The data collection was done at a time that suited the participants in an attempt to make the process less burdensome for the participants.

When considering the potential harmful effects of the study, it was established that there was greater benefit than harm in this study, due to the nature of the study (*cf.* Liamputtong, 2016). This study provided participants with the opportunity to grow professionally and to contribute to the field of student teacher development. Thus, this study by nature was neither harmful, nor did it include a vulnerable population or sensitive subject matter (*cf.* Flick, 2018b). Regardless of this, every effort was made to ensure that participants' needs were taken as a priority to render the study a positive experience for them.

3.8 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

As a master's student in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria my aim was to conduct and compile a research report in the partial fulfilment of my degree. I was involved in the conceptualisation, data collection and analysis of this study. My personal interest in this study was inspired by my experience of being a student teacher, six years ago, and a mentor teacher thereafter.

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I came into this study with my own biases and expectations based on my experience of being both a mentor teacher and a student teacher. My personal story and history thus informed part of the research process and should not be ignored as part of the interpretation process (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In light of this I was conscious of my role as researcher and aware of issues pertaining to researcher bias in the current study (Flick, 2018a). My personal thoughts as well as steps taken in the research process were recorded in my reflective researcher journal as an attempt to mitigate biases and remain neutral.

3.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 focused on all methodological issues pertaining to the study. This included discussing paradigmatic approaches, as well as the selection of participants and study site, data capturing, data documentation techniques, data analysis and interpretation. The rigour of the study was discussed by specifically focusing on the quality criteria adhered to during the study; this included credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity. Finally, the role of the researcher and ethical considerations were discussed by focusing on informed consent, respect for dignity and privacy, and the importance of inflicting no harm on participants.

In Chapter 4 the results and findings of the study are discussed. In keeping with inductive thematic analysis, themes and sub-themes are used to present the results. Themes are then compared and contrasted with existing literature in order to ground the results. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the final findings of the study.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I explained the research process and described the paradigmatic approaches. I also discussed the data generation and documentation strategies used for the study. In addition to this, I detailed the data analysis and interpretation process undertaken in the study. Finally, I explored the quality criteria and ethical considerations relevant to the study and I considered my role as the researcher.

In this chapter, the results of the study are reported. Through the process of inductive thematic analyses, I identified two themes and related sub-themes from the generated data. Furthermore, to validate these themes, I present excerpts from the generated data in this chapter. In this chapter, the findings of this study, as they relate to pre-existing literature are explored to ascertain the study's usefulness and contributions to the broader understanding of student-teacher mentorship and professional identity development from the perspective of the mentor teacher.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I discuss and describe the two main themes of the study. In addition to this, I explore related sub-themes. To provide a simplified overview of the findings, Table 4.1 below lists the themes and sub-themes of the study.

Table 4.1: Overview of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1 Building favourable mentoring relationship	Sub-theme 1: Safe, nurturing and supportive relationship Sub-theme 2: Relationship that is holistic in nature

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	Sub-theme 3: A relationship which affords mutual growth and opportunities
Theme 2 Enhancing student teachers' professional identity	Sub-theme 1: Sound classroom management Sub-theme 2: Developing authentic teachers

4.3 THEME 1: BUILDING A FAVOURABLE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

This theme echoes the participants' belief that in order for student teachers' identity to develop, the mentoring relationship needs to be favourable. The participants' perspectives suggest that the mentorship relationship is important for the growth and development of student teachers during work-integrated learning (WIL). The following sub-themes, which relate to building a favourable mentorship relationship, were identified: a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship; a relationship that is holistic in nature; and relationships which afford mutual growth and opportunities. An overview of the criteria used to demarcate the identified sub-themes is provided in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for theme 1

Identified sub-theme	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 1.1 Safe, nurturing and supportive relationship	Any reference to safe, nurturing and supportive relationships which contributes to building favourable mentorship relationships	Contributions that emphasise the value of the mentorship relationship as holistic in nature or that focus on the mutual

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		growth and opportunities within the mentorship relationship
Sub-theme 1.2 Relationship that is holistic in nature	Any reference to the mentorship relationship as holistic in relation to building a favourable mentorship relationship	Contributions that discuss the mentorship relationship as safe, nurturing, and supportive that focus on the mutual growth and opportunities within the mentorship relationship
Sub-theme 1.3 Relationships which afford mutual growth and opportunities	Any reference to an aspect of the mentorship relationship which affords mutual growth and opportunities in relation to building a favourable mentorship relationship	Contributions that discuss the mentorship relationship as safe, nurturing and supportive or that emphasise the value of the mentorship relationship as holistic in nature

4.31 Sub-theme 1.1: Safe, nurturing and supportive relationship.

All participants in the study emphasised the importance of creating a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship to enable student teachers' to develop their identity during WIL. This was seen as important considering the fact that WIL is an anxious time for student teachers. Participant 1 explained that 'student teachers are often nervous and anxious'. Furthermore, Participant 4 explained: 'Remember also that standing in front of a class is intimidating'. Participant 2 empathised with the anxiety that student teachers bring to WIL by stating: '*I think that children are harsh and so I will often have student teachers who actually need personal help because they feel that it is a judgement on themselves as a person and then a whole lot of stuff happens from there.'* These contributions highlight the extent to which student teachers need support from their mentor teachers to cope with the demands of WIL so that they feel less like a 'deer in the headlights', Participant 1 concluded.

Student-teacher support can take on different forms from helping student teachers feel welcome to guiding them. On a most basic level that practical element of welcoming

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and helping student teachers settle into the school environment stood out as important to the participants. Participant 3 explained it as follows: '*We actually owe them a good attitude and welcoming them into our space because they can pick up on whether they are wanted or not.*' Similarly, Participant 2 said, *'I think how welcome a student teacher is, is also important. At our school immediately they are given a place in the staffroom and a cup of tea. So, you hope they do not feel alienated.'* This includes showing student teachers where things are as Participant 1 explained, *'Um, showing them where the toilet is. Well, I do think my responsibility is that they do not feel lost.'* Participant 1 continued to explain that assisting student teachers with practical things like administration was important too, 'I need to work on helping them administratively so that they feel less anxious.'

Practically guiding student teachers, however, was identified as only one part of the mentoring process. Participant 3 explained: '*The school environment is very difficult because of the nature of what is occurring and that is why this topic is so important because mentoring is more than just passing down knowledge and systems it is really meant to be a space where there is nurturing, sponsoring and guidance of what needs to take place as a teacher.'* The participants understood that deeper guidance included assisting student teachers in uncovering greater knowledge about themselves. Participant 4 explained this as follows: '*What I can say is that it is very important to take one step with the person and make sure that the person is feeling comfortable. Sometimes ask questions that will help that person to see things or himself or herself beyond the subject content. I think in a way you help the person to see other strengths and skills that they have. If a person started off with that positive thinking, then he or she will be confident through their teaching career.'* Furthermore, Participant 3 explained that '*Ultimately that is what teaching practice and work-integrated learning is about. It's not only about seeing teachers in action but having someone very deliberately and explicitly show you the way.'* Guidance was thus identified as an important feature of teacher identity development as emphasised by Participant 4: '*Because when you are in any university you are doing more theory and then mentoring is where you actually get to know and feel comfortable as a teacher by having someone in the school environment guiding you.'*

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In addition to guidance, nurturing in the form of encouragement was considered important for teacher identity development during WIL. Participant 2 explained: *'Some lessons are going to go beautifully, and others will fall flat on their face and as the mentor teacher you have to get student teachers through that and say, "that's okay, it still happens to me and I am 52".'* Furthermore, Participant 4 said: *'You need someone, you need someone to say, "Well done! You did so well on that one and let's improve on that one." You know, someone who can be with you every step of the way.'* In addition to this, Participant 1, when reflecting on her experience of mentoring a specific student teacher, said*: 'I think we definitely contributed to her identity as a teacher. just to toughen up a little but also be kind to herself. I think she was devastated that she made a learner cry, on prac, those things happen and it's fine.* Ultimately it is through encouragement that student teachers feel guided and supported as stated by Participant 4: *'For me, it was about helping that young person in front of me to say, "It's okay, it will be fine".'*

It would seem that often this kind of mentoring happens implicitly and in less obvious ways as evident by this example provided by Participant 4: *'He said, "I have learnt so much from you" and it was things that I did not even notice. It was things link instilling that confidence and making sure that the person is comfortable all the time and allowing the person to take one step at a time, even if a lesson was not great, that is okay, that is how we actually learn.''* Deeper and more insightful mentoring seems to emerge from empathy for the student teachers which stems from mentor teachers' own experiences of once being student teachers, as explained by Participant 3: *'That being said, it is someone who because they have that personal experience of it or a really intimate experience of what the student teacher is about to go through, they have the desire and the capacity to nurture and to allow the growth that is required for the fulfilment of that role to take place. So, there is immense nurturing that takes place and nurturing does not just mean babying, but it really means creating an environment that is conducive for the student teacher to grow.'*

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In addition to the above it seems that a deeper kind of mentorship relationship is linked to a certain personality type and not teachable mentoring skills. Participants seemed to agree that being able to create a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship was down to a specific kind of mentor. This was highlighted by Participant 4 who said: *'I have never been trained to be a mentor, but I think because of the kind of person that I am and also through my experience'.* Similarly, Participant 2 explained: *'I think that some people are singularly unsuited to that role. I think that mentoring is tough because you have got to have a little bit of personality and be outgoing. So, some people find it very hard and it's not because they are horrible but it's just because they are not a people person.'* In addition to this, Participant 3 stated, *'I think many teachers are not prepared to be mentor teachers because they are not mentors. They are experts in their field, they might have been teaching for a long time, but the aspect of nurturing and deliberately seeing where an individual is in their own journey and creating a way for them to learn is not there.'* Approaching mentoring in a nurturing way seems to require that mentor teachers gain a holistic understanding of the mentorship relationship.

Sub-theme 1.1 (safe, supportive and nurturing relationship) was developed from the importance that mentor teachers' place on nurturing and guiding student teachers.

Notes from my Reflective Journal
I appreciated participants' responses that pointed to the need for mentor teachers to walk with student teachers as they grapple with the difficulties and unexpected obstacles that emerge during WIL. This made me reflect on my own time as a student teacher many years ago. There was a time that I felt overwhelmed and my mentor teacher sat with me in a private room while I cried. She held me in that moment and enabled me to learn through a difficult experience. This had an important impact on my own identity as a teacher and in many ways modelled to me the caring nature of a teacher. Being caring is something that I have built into my own teaching practice partly because of the care that my mentor teacher showed me.

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4.3.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Relationship that is holistic in nature

Based on the participants' responses it became evident that they perceive their role as a mentor to extend beyond merely helping a student teacher learn how to teach. The mentor teachers perceived the mentoring relationship as a holistic one. This was succinctly explained by Participant 2: *'if you use the word mentor it has a personal aspect to it. That aspect that says you are responsible for the whole person and not just one area.'* This was further elaborate on by Participant 3 who said: *'Remember also that teaching is not only about the subject matter as such there are many other things that you need to learn especially in the times that we are living in. Sharing how to handle things and situations, like that, is very important. For me, I will say that really it is so important for new teachers to get that mentoring.'* This contribution speaks to the importance of personal attributes in mentoring student teachers (Hudson, 2004). In particular, the need for empathy stands out as important. When reflecting on her own experience of being a student teacher the Participant 3 went on to say: *'I had an excellent mentor when I started my teaching career. She established such a great foundation for me in my first few years of teaching from an emotional perspective, from an actual teaching perspective and teaching strategy perspective, from a friendship perspective and all aspects that form part of the teaching environment.'* This was supported by Participant 4 who said that: *'Sometimes as a mentor teacher you need to go beyond and be a parent or a leader whatever that person needs at that time.'*

It seems, therefore, that a holistic mentoring relationship comprise many different elements which feed into different aspects of teacher identity. According to the participants, part of establishing this kind of relationship involves recognising that student teachers come into WIL with their own unique experiences and insight. Participant 1: *'I think it is an effort to find common ground professionally between you and another person. No matter how many years of experience you have, you need to respect that person that is coming in and their context and circumstances.'* When considering the identity of student teachers Participant 4 explained: *'So in other words combining the subject matter, who you are as a teacher and where you are coming from, and also remember that the who I am is being shaped by all of my experiences, you know. Where I am coming from and all of the challenges and the good things that*

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have happened in my life. How are they actually shaping the who I am now?' Having this understanding of people enabled this mentor teacher to build a holistic relationship with her student teachers that considered their content and needs. As Participant 4 explained, reflecting on one particular student teacher who was a second language English teacher doing his WIL at an English private school: 'Also asking how he was even on days when he was not in a language lesson. It helped him a lot because I could see that he was feeling frustrated because of the language barrier and also because of where he was coming from this type of school environment was also intimidating'.

Notes from my Reflective Journal
Participant 4 is an elderly black isiZulu teacher. I found her description of the student teacher grappling with the private school context interesting in light of her own personal journey. There seemed to be a shared empathy with that student teacher that enabled her to truly meet his needs. The study site is an affluent school with a large number of white, first language English speaking students. One cannot ignore the pressure that the school environment places on teachers and student alike. Considering this, student teachers might face unanticipated pressure in private schools and mentor teachers need to be sensitive to that.

It seems that building a holistic relationship takes time and requires that mentor teachers truly invest in the process. This provides a challenge as Participant 3 explained: *'I will say one of the major difficulties is finding time to actually connect… I think it is about relationships and time is crucial and a challenge.'* This was reiterated by Participant 4 who said: *'I know that it is time consuming but remember we need to build the student teacher who is in front of us'.* Furthermore, Participant 2 explained that despite the time issue, she continues with mentoring because of the value that it holds for education: *'At the beginning years it was not so bad but now I find it very stressful and it has nothing to do with the individual and everything to do with time. So, I still like having student teachers because I like to see young people come into education, but I am busy when I am at school and then I feel like I am doing a half job which I don't like. I think that is the major challenge for me.'* This statement suggests

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that despite the demands of developing a holistic relationship mentor teacher continue to engage in the process because of the mutual benefits which seem to be an important part of mentoring.

4.3.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Relationships which afford mutual growth and opportunities

Participants' responses suggest that they see student-teacher mentorship as a reciprocal relationship in which both parties stand to benefit and grow. Participant 1 explained it as follows: '*Dare I use a biology term. I think it should be a symbiotic relationship where there is no fear to tell the other person how it is. Where you respect my years of experience and I respect your energy.*' In particular, participants understood this reciprocal relationship to be one of mutual learning. This viewpoint is captured by the following response from Participant 1: '*But also, we have to acknowledge we as teachers can also take something away from the mentoring experience. We can learn from the students and what they bring to the party.*' Participant 4 supported the opportunity for mutual growth and learning: '*You know, to be honest with you, even as an experienced teacher you can learn a lot from a new teacher. I remember in a previous time when I had a student teacher and technology was still new to me as an older teacher, the student teacher taught me a lot. There is so much that you can learn from new teachers coming out of university that can uplift you and keep you abreast with the changes and new ways of looking at things. So, for me, I think there is a lot you can learn as an experienced teacher from a student teacher.*' Furthermore, another Participant 2 described the following experience in support of this notion: '*I remember a wonderful student teacher that I had a few years ago. I ended up with five student teachers that year. She was a young black woman, I was teaching real beauty at the time with the grade 9's, she had such a wonderful connection with the black girls around issues that we had not even considered. Since then the way we approach it has expended because obviously, it needed too.*' In addition to this, Participant 1 who teaches drama described the following experience: '*Especially if their ideas are local, often drama exercise are Eurocentric or American. So, it is so lovely when student teachers create something that is in an African language or that appeals to the South African context and culture… if I get a student that has come through with a professional drama degree prior then that is an absolute*

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gift. They really energise the learners and they come with various resources fresh out of university. Then that for me is a real privilege.'

In exchange for this unique opportunity to learn from young teachers, mentor teachers believed that they contribute to the relationship by sharing resources which goes towards developing the student teacher and the profession as a whole. With regard to sharing resources, Participant 2 explained: *'I think another role is the sharing of resources because when you are a young teacher you start off with nothing. Your first year of teaching is a nightmare and so I think that one should share resources to help bridge that initial gap. Hopefully, student teachers will then take those resources and make it their own or fall back on it in a crisis'.* This was supported by Participant 3 who said: *'Access to resources as well is important. In a space where you don't have access to resources if there is a mentorship relationship then there is a sharing of recourse which you would not otherwise have as a newly qualified teacher who has just entered the system. Knowing how to make the most of what you have and working around it is an important skill to develop as a teacher.'* Furthermore, Participant 4 explained that being an experienced teacher helps with the sharing process: *"As I said its more than just the subject matter, it is generational and there are so many things that you can share as an experienced teacher to help the younger generation of teachers.'* This contribution speaks to a shared teacher identity in which what it means to be a teacher is passed down from one generation to the next. It is through this process that the teaching profession is upheld as Participant 2 explained: '*I have always thought that I want to have people to teach my children and they will want to have people to teach their children, so it is counterproductive to exclude a student teacher. What you are doing, when you mentor student teachers, is ensuring the continuation of the profession at a high standard.'* In relation to this point, Participant 4 explained: *'Remember we are also doing this for ourselves because once the student teachers complete their degrees, they are coming to us. Even though we will still mentor in house, but it will be easier if a lot of things are already coved at university.'.* It would seem that this sharing then results in shared success as explained by Participant 3 when describing her experience of being mentored: *'That is why mentors are important because they will establish the trajectory and the direction that student teachers will take in their careers. I have had great mentors and sponsors in*

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my journey and that is why I have been able to accomplish and go for the things that I have gone for. Not because it is just solely me but because there have been people there, pushing me, nurturing me, showing me the way. Those people have been there for me. I have not done anything on my own'. Participant 3 went onto explain that through mentorship, opportunities are created for student teachers: *'Mentor teachers really should be invested in the growth of student teachers and know their strengths and weaknesses and know where the possibilities lie. They should be the one who creates paths for student teachers to access opportunities.'*

Importantly, it seems that creating opportunities that allow for mutual growth is not solely up to the mentor teacher. The student teacher's attitude plays an important role as this contribution from Participant 3 shows: *'That was also because they came to the party and expressed how they felt there was such a disconnect between what they were learning at university and then seeing in the classroom'.* Participant 1 added that: *'I think it is very much up to the individual to really suck the marrow out of the experience or just to cruise through because it is a tick box that they have to tick.'* Therefore, it seems that that student teachers need to be willing to learn and engage with the process as can be seen by this contribution from Participant 1 who was refection on a past student teacher: *'She was passionate and confident but humble and keen to learn. While she still had a lot to learn, um you know like her first attempt at marking was the shambles and she needed to learn about deadlines. So, I think, what I appreciate about a student teacher is maybe humility and respect for what we do.'* This requires that student teachers take an interest and show initiative as this Participant 4 explained: *'I can remember one of the students was challenging because she was waiting for me to say, "Do this"'.* Furthermore, Participant 4 contributed by saying: *'We had two girls last year during project-based learning and I think for them it was a waste of time but it could have been the most wonderful opportunity if they had engaged more but because they had been thrown in they did not flourish but were rather rendered helpless.'.* A Lack of trust and respect seems to also play a role as this contribution from Participant 2 highlights: *'Even over the years we have had student teachers that have stolen. It happened in the science department and since then they have been very wary of student teachers. I know you cannot judge all people based on one, but you cannot blame the science department for being burnt'.* A contribution from Participant 1 emphasises the importance of respect: *'Sho! I have had*

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some horrible, horrible experiences. Especially when the kids come in, and I think it's often a façade, but that they know it all… There was a level of arrogance that came across, but I think it was a façade'. Thus, it seems that for mentor teachers to play a role in enhancing student teachers' professional identities the student teacher needs to play an active role in the relationship.

Notes from my Reflective Journal
The role of student teacher attitude in mentoring was not something that I was anticipating. I was taken aback by the stories that participants shared about the frustrations that they had with student teachers. Upon reflection, I started to wonder how well student teachers are prepared to enter the school environment. I also started to wonder what role student-teacher anxiety plays in their attitudes and presentation. Perhaps this speaks to the importance of greater communication between mentor teacher and mentor lecturers in making sure that student teachers are well prepared in every respect.

4.4 THEME 2: ENHANCING STUDENT TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

This theme describes the aspects of mentoring that mentor teachers see as important in building student teachers' professional identities. Two sub-themes were identified that relate to enhancing student teachers' professional identities, namely: Sound classroom management and developing authentic teachers. Table 4.3 indicates the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to identify the designated sub-themes.

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for theme 2

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 2.1: Sound classroom management	Any reference to assisting student teachers with developing their classroom management	Contributions that explore helping student teachers develop an authentic

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		understanding of what it means to be a teacher
Sub-theme 2.2: Developing authentic teachers	Any reference to helping student teachers develop an authentic understanding of what it means to be a teacher	Contributions that emphasise helping student teachers with their classroom management

4.4.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Sound classroom management

Participants believed that helping student teachers learn how to manage a classroom is one of their primary roles. This was emphasised by the contribution from Participant 3 which suggests that developing an environment that facilitates learning is an important part of being a teacher: *'For me as a teacher what is very important is that the children I teach are in a space where they have a desire to learn that when I teach they are inspired to learn and develop a curiosity to learn. What is important to me as a teacher, or my identity as a teacher, is to have an environment or a space where I can facilitate a development of loving to learn.'* Due to the importance of creating a sound learning environment, participants deemed classroom management as important as highlighted by the following contribution from Participant 1: *'So for me mentoring is so important in terms of managing the class dynamic and for students to be immersed in that'*. In addition, Participant 3 further emphasised this point by stating: *'So that is a role in their development in digital age pedagogy and opening up their minds to be curious and doing things differently in the classroom space.'* Similarly, Participant 4 explained: *'you can be comfortable with the subject matter but, you know, all the things like planning, introduction to your lesson and classroom management are very important. That is where the role of the mentor kicks in.'*

Developing sound classroom management was seen as particularly important because it is only really learnt through practice in the real classroom setting as this contribution from Participant 3: *'I think it is important that we help them understand the things that are not written in a textbook so things like relationships in the classroom and reading in-between the lines with children. We need to have those conversations*

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after they have taught a lesson and ask them questions like: "did you see that child? Was he engaged? How do you know he was engaged?"'. Furthermore, Participant 3 explained: '*I think it is important for student teachers to come into the environment and be part of the institution and learn a lot of things before going on their own. So, I think it is very important for me I would love to see it happen at many schools because it helps a lot. Even in developing leadership because remember as a young teacher you are in charge of your classroom. Those small things are very important and that is where you can learn from the experienced teacher.'* In addition to this, the excerpt from Participant 3 helps to describe the importance of that practical element: '*We need to point out the little things that we have picked up on through our teaching practice that was never explicitly taught to us. Point out the things that they will not learn in a book or through the system, we need to point those things out.'*

Responses from participants suggest that developing sound classroom management happens through actively engaging with student teachers in the classroom, as this contribution from Participant 1 highlights: '*I can remember one lass that came in, gosh she was a mouse, and I just remember her watching me jump around in class and she said to me, "Gosh! I had no idea that you could have so much energy in the classroom!". And I can only hope, I have no idea, but I can only hope that she let go a little bit of her own insecurities in her own body that she was clearly very stuck in, and I can only hope that by watching me, because I don't think you can teach drama behind a desk, being practical and looser and freer; that it introduced her to something different.'* Similarly, this contribution from Participant 4 points to the importance that mentor teachers place on feedback when developing student teachers' classroom management: '*As I said, as a teacher when it comes to time and punctuality, all those things go with classroom management and very important. At one point she was late and unprepared. I did the observation for a week or two and then I wanted her to come up with a lesson to teach and I told her what to focus to on and she didn't. That was a frustration because that was where I was going to be able to help her. On the day of her first lesson, she came so late that there was no time for me to see her planning and give input into her lesson. Even though I was there, I did not want to interrupt her lesson it would have been better if she had met me prior to the lesson so that we could have had a discussion to make sure that she is confident and that she knows the*

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subject matter and that she chose the part that she was comfortable with. So that was the part that I was frustrated with.' Furthermore, Participant 2 said: *'I think that you have got to let student teachers teach otherwise they will not ever be able to say okay, "this lesson was an absolute disaster, I have another class coming in three hours' time, I am doing the same lesson, what can I change." So, in order for them to develop their identity they have got to be allowed to participate.'*

Sub-theme 2.1 encapsulated the importance of developing classroom management through modelling and feedback. The responses affirmed the importance of WIL by emphasising that certain things can only be learnt through practice.

Notes from my Reflective Journal

I appreciate the importance placed on developing the unsaid things or the less obvious parts of teaching when mentoring student teachers. In particular, I felt inspired by Participant 3 who displayed a true energy and love for education and teaching. Her compassionate and sincere passion was tangible during the interview process and truly highlighted to me the importance of WIL and student-teacher identity development through sound mentorship.

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Developing authentic teachers

Authenticity stood out as important to mentor teachers when evaluating teacher identity and student-teacher development. Participants linked being an authentic teacher knowing themselves as explained by Participant 4: *'I think as a teacher it is very important to know who you are because that is what you have to transmit to your students or learners.'* Knowing who you are as a teacher was also identified as important by Participant 3: *'So teacher identity really speaks to who you are and who you see yourself as in the role that you fulfil'.* In order to transfer authenticity to student teachers mentor teachers felt that it was important that they were authentic themselves when mentoring, as explained by Participant 1: *'Um, I am wondering if maybe as a*

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mentor it's not actually to just show them who you are. They can walk away from that thinking that is who I want to be as a teacher of that is not who I want to be.'

It seems that an important part of allowing student teachers to see the authentic side of teaching was to be unashamed of making mistakes as a mentor teacher as this contribution from Participant 1explains: *'To try and be as authentic as I can. Some days I have to put on a brave face and I actually find that often in very difficult times this is your salvation to put on a brave face to throw yourself in front of the class and if you have a bad day then apologies for it … That for me is very important. For students to see you stuff up and make mistakes.'* Furthermore, Participant 4 said: *'You know, and allow the mistakes so that people can learn because if you are expecting perfection that is not helpful'.* In addition, the following contribution from Participant 2 was made: *'There is time even as an experienced teacher that you can teach and afterwards think that the lesson did not go very well. Those times require you to think about what can be improved while also considering the learners in front of you. A new teacher might not be able to do that and that is where you as a mentor teacher need to step in'.*

Showing student teachers, the authentic part of being a teacher subsequently helps student teachers determine the kind of teacher they want to become as this Participant 1 explained: *'It's like going to the zoo and seeing us as teachers in our natural environment. I guess that the different prac experiences that they have and being with different teachers, I must not forget that they are with three or four other teachers, is giving them an overall sense of the different styles and approaches and that can help them find their own authentic.'* Seeing teaching in action might also help student teachers decide whether they even want to teach at all. As this participant explained: *'We had a young woman, a few years ago, where her life had not gone according to plan and she was there because this was really all she could do. She wasn't totally reluctant, but she was not totally, um committed either. The whole experience for he was an absolute nightmare. She realised that she could never be in a classroom and she felt like she had wasted five years of her life.'* It seems that an important part of allowing student teachers to find the teacher they want to become, involves exposing student teachers to all aspects of the teaching profession and not being limited to

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content knowledge only as explained by Participant 1: *'When a student teacher arrives, they need to be exposed to all aspects of school life so that they can see what a professional look like in each of those spaces.'* This point is further emphasised by Participant 3 who made the following contribution: *'I think to a large extent not all aspects of teacher identity are met through that process apart from the subject expert. That is what it seems to be all about. This is important, don't get me wrong, but if we are developing really impactful teachers and superb teachers, who are in tune with the idea of teaching and identity, we are not meeting that, no'.*

Notes from my Reflective Journal

Participant 3's insight has had a profound impact on me. I admire her passion about education innovation and moving education forward into the 21st century. In many ways, an overemphasis on content knowledge speaks to the old and traditional form of education in which the teacher is the all-knowing expert and the learner is a blank slate. It is concerning that Participant 3's perception of university expectations is that we develop student teachers who are subject experts before we develop student teachers who are able to think critically or challenge traditional educational pedagogy. If a change in education is going to come from the bottom up, then surely we need to be developing student teachers with a passion for educational innovation.'

This concludes my discussion on the emerging themes from the study. In the next section, I will discuss the findings in relation to the literature and theoretical farmworker of the study.

4.5 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I discuss the identified themes and sub-themes of the study in relation to the themes identified from the existing literature. This is achieved by considering correlations and contradiction that exist between the findings of the descriptive case study of limited scope and what has already been found in the literature.

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4.5.1 Building a favourable mentoring relationship

The mentorship relationship between mentor teacher and student teacher has been identified by the existing literature and the current study as an important component of student teacher identity development during WIL (Azure, 2015; Izadinia, 2016; Nguyen, 2009). Student teachers report feeling nervous during WIL and needing the support of mentor teachers in order to work through feelings of anxiousness and uncertainty (Chung et al., 2011; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003; Zhu & Zhu, 2018). The pre-existing literature suggests that having a supportive mentorship relationship helps student teachers to feel more affirmed in the classroom and also provides them with a more positive overall experience of teaching during WIL (Du Plessis & Marais, 2013; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). The importance of developing a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship for student-teacher identity development during WIL as discussed in Chapter 2, is confirmed by the data, generated from the descriptive case study.

In addition to creating a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship the existing literature and this study suggest that having a holistic relationship is important. This requires that mentor teachers invest in student teacher beyond the classroom setting (Bukor, 2014). By exploring all elements of a student teachers personal and professional story teacher identity development flourishes because the whole person is incorporated into the formation process (Beijaard, 2018; Hong et al., 2017). Building a holistic relationship as demonstrated by this study requires that mentor teachers recognise that they are responsible for the whole person when mentoring student teachers. This means that mentor teachers must conceptualise their role to include friendship, guide or parent depending on the needs of the student teacher (Beltman et al., 2015). This also requires reciprocity within the mentorship relationship and the recognition that both parties stand to benefit from fully investing in the mentorship process, this was confirmed by the data generated in this study (Hudson, 2016; Schwartz & Dori, 2016).

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4.5.1.1 Safe, nurturing and supportive relationship

For student teachers to flourish during WIL it is important that they feel supported by their mentor teacher (Jooste, 2019; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2013). This requires that mentor teachers spend time getting to know their student teachers and that they approach the relationship with empathy and understanding (Beltman et al., 2015). Approaching the mentorship relationship in this manner helps student teachers feel comfortable to explore their voice as a teacher and ultimately helps them learn about what it means to be a teacher (Izadinia, 2016). In addition to this, feeling emotionally supported during WIL helps student teachers have a positive teaching experience which in turn helps them develop a positive attitude to teaching (Hong, 2010; Timoštšuk, & Ugaste, 2010). This study confirmed that mentor teachers believe that the mentorship relationship should be appreciated from a nurturing and caring perspective. In doing so, student teachers will be able to positively develop their teacher identity during WIL.

The mentor teachers in the study identified that one of their main roles as a mentor teacher is to guide student teachers by creating a supportive and nurturing relationship. On a practical level, mentor teacher felt that helping student teachers feel welcome was an important part of the nurturing relationship. This is supported by existing literature which emphasises the importance of treating student teachers as colleagues and including them in all aspects of the school community (Du Plessis et al. 2010; Kiggundu, 2007; Wilson & Nel, 2019). The mentor teachers in this study perceived this as important because student teachers are often nervous when starting WIL. This is in line with the literature which states that student teachers enter WIL with anxiety and fear and that a supportive mentorship relationship is important in reducing these emotions in student teachers (Abongdi et al., 2015; Du Plessis et al., 2010; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013).

Based on the response from participants guidance and encouragement were identified as important roles that mentor teachers need to exhibit in order to create a safe, nurturing and supportive relationship. Guidance was seen to include a personal development aspect as data for the study suggests that mentor teachers need to help

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student teachers learn more about themselves. This enables student teachers to interrogate their strength and weaknesses and also to interrogate their own beliefs about teaching which facilities the professional identity development process (Izadinia, 2016; Yuan, 2016). Through encouragement student teachers are affirmed in their teaching ability which builds their confidence as teachers, this further helps to develop sound professional teacher identities in student teachers (Heeralal, 2014; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Yuan, 2016).

Data from this study suggests that creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing relationship is not something that can be taught to mentor teachers through training. The mentor teachers in the study perceived this to be a skill inherent to a personality trait. Thus, findings from this suggest that mentorship is an innate skill that is not easily developed through training. This is contradictory to the existing literature which emphasises mentor-teacher training in order to improve student-teacher mentorship (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hall, 2008; Maphalala, 2013).

4.5.1.2 Relationship that is holistic in nature

In order to fully develop student teachers, the literature suggests that mentor teachers need to get to know their student teachers and focus on them as individuals (Beltman et al., 2015; Geroge & Robinson, 2011; Wexler 2020;). This requires that mentor teachers do not only focus on student teachers teaching capabilities but also explore their personal stories and experiences (Beijaard, 2018; Cross & Ndofirepi, 2013; Yuan, 2016). Data from the study supports this notion as participants recognised that their role extends beyond developing their student teachers as teachers; they should be developed as individuals too. Participants believed that knowing yourself is an important part of being a teacher and thus they needed to develop student teachers holistically by engaging with the whole person. This is supported by literature that explains that the personal element of an individual's lived experience plays an important role in teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Hong, 2010).

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Despite participants recognising the importance of developing a holistic mentorship relationship, they identified lack of time as being a major setback. Mentor teachers in the study felt they did not always have enough time to holistically develop their student teachers because of the demands of teaching. This is reflected in the literature as a challenge for mentor teachers (Jasper et al, 2014; Ginkel, Van Drie & Verloop, 2018; Maphalala, 2013). The lack of time available to a mentor is particularly relevant in the South African context as teachers have to meet many demands (Du Plessis & Marais, 2013; Wilson & Nel, 2019). This is problematic as it can leave student teachers feeling like they are a burden and prevent them from fully benefit from WIL (Jaspers, et al., 2014).

4.5.1.3 Relationships which afford mutual growth and opportunities

The existing literature suggests that the mentorship relationship must be collaborative in nature (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Nguyen, 2009; Mukeredzi, 2017). This requires that mentor teachers and student teachers share resources, knowledge, and ideas such that both parties benefit from the experience (Hudson, 2016). Findings from this study support the literature as participants emphasised the importance of sharing resources and mutual learning. Mentor teachers believed that it was important for them to share their resources with student teachers and that they also learnt new ideas and ways of teaching from their student teachers. This correlates with existing studies which found that mentor teachers benefit from mentoring student teachers because of the learning opportunities that it affords (Mukeredzi, 2017; Van Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen, 2015). Thus, mentoring student teachers facilitate the professional development of mentor teachers and in so doing contributes to their teacher identity development too (Yuan, 2016; Hong, 2010).

Hudson (2016) highlights the importance of trust in the development of a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship. Participants in the study reflected on past experiences with student teachers that had made them wary of the mentorship relationship. The data in this study highlights the issues that emerge when student teachers are untrustworthy, arrogant and lacking in initiative. Participants emphasised that student teachers need to be actively involved in the mentoring relationship in order

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for the relationship to be beneficial and for opportunities to emerge from the relationship. This is supported by Ambrosetti, Knight and Dekker (2014) who emphasised the need for a collaborative relationship in which both mentor teacher and student teacher participate.

4.5.2 Enhancing student teachers' professional identity

The development of student teachers' professional identities is one of the primary aims of WIL (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The mentor teacher plays an important role in this process as they serve to guide the student teacher in the classroom setting (Azure, 2015). Helping student teachers feel competent in the classroom is important as this affirms student teachers in their professional identities and helps them to see themselves as teachers (Izadinia, 2015; Wentzel et al., 2017). This study confirmed that mentor teachers understand that they play a vital role in student teachers professional identity development. In particular, mentor teachers from the study believed that they have an important role in developing student teachers' classroom management and developing authentic student teachers. These roles correlate with Hudson's five-factor mentoring model for effective teaching (Hudson, 2004) with the inclusion of a sixth factor (Jooste, 2019) as discussed below.

4.5.2.1 Classroom management

Hudson (2010) explains that classroom management and developing teaching strategies forms part of pedagogical knowledge. Mentor teachers must take time to help student teachers learn about creating a constructive learning environment for the children under their care such that the student teachers effectively develop into teachers (Hong, 2010; Izadinia, 2012). This is achieved by probing student teachers and inviting student teachers to think critically about their own teaching practice (Izadinia, 2012).

The study confirmed that mentor teachers perceive developing classroom management as one of their primary roles. They perceived their responsibilities to extend beyond developing content knowledge to developing teachers that can teach effectively. In order for this to be achieved mentor teachers explained that it is

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important to develop the elements of teaching practice that cannot easily be found in a textbook. The study found that these elements are developed through experience and then passed on through mentorship to student teachers. Through providing this rich generational knowledge mentor teachers anticipated that their student teachers would develop into competent teachers with a sound sense of who they are as teachers (Wentzel et al., 2017).

Modelling is an important strategy for achieving the transfer of knowledge pertaining to classroom management because student teachers get to see classroom management in action through observation of their mentor teacher (Hudson, 2016). This study confirmed that this an important and valuable component of student-teacher mentorship. In particular, this study confirmed that modelling is valuable because it challenges student teachers to reimagine their own ideas around classroom management and it also allows for mentor teachers experience to be passed down to student teachers. When mentor teachers effectively harness their own teaching expertise and energetically portray them, student teacher stand to grow (Hudson, 2016; Steenkamp et al, 2018).

In order to facilitate student-teacher growth Hudson (2016) explains that providing student teachers with feedback is an important mentor teacher role. This study confirmed that mentor teachers perceive their engagement with the student teacher before and after lessons as an important part of classroom management development. Participants believed it was important to give input into the lessons that student teachers hand planned and then to facilitate a discussion about the lesson after it had occurred. This is important because it develops student teachers' professional identities and also helps with the development of rapport between student teacher and mentor teacher (Izadinia, 2016; Hudson, 2010).

4.5.2.2. Developing authentic teachers

The literature suggests that student teachers come into WIL with their own preconceived ideas on what it means to be a teacher (Lamote & Engles, 2010; Yuan,

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2016). Through the mentorship process student teachers have the opportunity to interrogate their preconceived ideas and hopefully come to a more genuine and authentic understanding of what teaching means to them (Yuan & Zhang, 2017; Kaldi & Xafakos, 2017). This requires that mentor teachers are open, flexible and supportive of their student teachers and that they harness personal attributes linked to teaching (Hudson, 2004; Lindqvist et al., 2017). This study confirms that mentor teachers perceive this to be an important part of their responsibility as a mentor teacher.

Mentor teachers in this study believed that an important part of developing authentic teachers required them to be authentic themselves and not perfectionistic or idealistic. Thus, participants identified making mistakes as an important opportunity for growth and learning. Approaching mentorship in this way supports the existing literate that speaks about the importance of a flexible mentor teacher (Heeralal, 2014; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Yuan, 2016). When mentor teachers are flexible student teachers can explore their own professional identity and establish their own authentic teaching style through exploration (Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013; Wexler, 2020). This was important to mentor teachers in the study because they want their student teachers to be able to uncover the kind of teacher they want to become of if they even want to be teachers.

Findings from this study also suggest that mentor teachers consider it important for student teachers to be exposed to all areas of school life so that they develop an authentic understanding of what teaching means. This speaks to the importance of exposing student teachers to system requirements as specified by Hudson's five-factor mentoring model for effective teaching (Hudson, 2004). Giving student teachers insight into policies, curriculum planning and daily school running they are more able to understand what is required of them and the kind of teacher they want to become (Bird & Hudon, 2015; Sayeski, & Paulsen, 2013).

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4.6 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4, I reported on the findings of the study in the form of two main themes and their corresponding sub-themes. The results were presented by including supporting exerts from the data. I then contextualised the findings by discussing them in relation to existing literature and Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring (Hudson, 2004). This was achieved by specifically considering the correlations and contraction that exists between the findings of this descriptive case study of limited scope and what already exists in the literature.

In Chapter 5, I conclude the study by addressing the findings of the study in relation to the research question of the study found in Chapter 1. The value that this study holds and its limitations are also explored. Finally, I bring the chapter to a close by discussing recommendations that emerged as a result of the findings and closing remarks.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 I presented the findings of the descriptive case study of limited scope. This was achieved by discussing the findings concerning pre-existing literature. The discussion included ways in which the findings compared and contrast with what was already known from the literature. In addition, new information provided by the study's findings were discussed where applicable.

This chapter concludes the study by drawing it to a close. An overview of the previous chapters is provided followed by a discussion on how the findings answer the research question of the study. The contributions that this study has made and the limitations of the study are also addressed. The chapter then concludes by considering the recommendations for future student-teacher mentorship and research based on the findings of the study and my concluding remarks.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

Chapter 1 introduced the study by considering its rationale, aim and objectives and clarified the important key concepts. The purpose of the study was explored at length and the research question was discussed. In addition, the epistemological paradigm and methodological approaches were considered in summary. The theoretical framework underpinning the study and ethical considerations were also touched on briefly. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the significance of the study which was followed by an overview of the proceeding chapters.

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Chapter 2: Literature review

In Chapter 2, I provided a detailed review of the existing literature relevant to the study. This included an exploration of work integrated learning (WIL), teacher identity development, the role of mentor teachers during WIL and the Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring with an additional sixth factor (Jooste, 2019), which was the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter concluded with a synthesis aimed at bringing the existing literature and the theoretical framework of the study together in the form of a comprehensive diagram and discussion.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 elaborated on the research methodology undertaken for the study. This was achieved by elaborating on the paradigmatic perspectives of the study, the methodological strategies utilised in the study, the data generation and documentation strategies of the study and the data analysis and interpretation approach that was undertaken. A detailed discussion on the quality criteria and ethical considerations underpinning the study was also provided. I concluded the chapter by exploring my role as the researcher.

Chapter 4: Results and findings

In Chapter 4, the results and findings of the study were expanded on by referring to excerpts from the data. The themes and sub-themes generated through the data analysis process where provided. The chapter was concluded with an interpretation of the results which considered existing literature and the theoretical framework of the study.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In the following section, I draw the study to a close using the findings of the study to answer the research question set out in Chapter 1.

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5.3.1 Research question

What are mentor teachers' perspectives on their mentoring role in the teacher identity development of student teachers?

Based on the findings of the study I can conclude that mentor teachers understood their role in student teacher identity development to correlate with Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring (Hudson, 2004). All five factors postulated by Hudson (2016) were found in the data including the sixth more recent factor developed by Jooste (2019). These findings, therefore, confirm that mentor teachers have a variety of roles to play in student-teacher identity development during WIL. I elaborated on these roles as established by Hudson (2004) as well as the additional role developed by Jooste (2019) called a 'nurturing and supportive relationship' in the following sections.

5.3.1.1 Personal attributes

Mentor teachers believed that it is important to be welcoming and accommodating towards student teachers. This requires of them to have empathy for their student teachers and have well developed interpersonal skills including the ability to share, listen and be supportive. By displaying such interpersonal skills mentor teachers can guide student teachers throughout WIL and create greater opportunities for student-teacher growth and teacher identity development. Being conscious of the needs of student teachers also helps to foster a holistic relationship with student teachers. Developing a holistic relationship is important because it moves mentoring beyond teacher development to whole-person development. When student teachers can share their stories and the different parts of their identities, they are more likely to develop into authentic teachers.

Mentor teachers expected that their student teachers also display certain personal attributes during the mentorship process. In particular, mentor teachers appreciated student teachers who were respectful, honest, engaged and humble. Student teachers must encapsulate these skills so that they can make the most out of WIL and a relationship of trust can be built between student teacher and mentor teacher. Without trust, mentor teachers may resent student teachers and be less likely to mentor in the

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future. The development of a trusting and holistic relationship is time-consuming which can be stressful for mentor teachers who already have heavy teaching loads. However, despite the demands of mentoring, mentor teachers are still committed to the process because they recognised that mentoring was important for the development of student teachers' identities and the profession as a whole.

5.3.1.2 System requirements

Mentor teachers considered it important to open up all areas of school life to student teachers. They understood that being in the classroom is only one part of being a teacher and that student teachers need to see and develop an understanding of all aspects of school life. By exposing student teachers to the different building blocks that make up a school, mentor teachers believe that student teachers will develop into more authentic teachers. Although mentor teachers identified this as important, similar to the findings of Hudson (2007), this is an underutilised factor in mentoring. Mentor teachers do not naturally consider exposing student teachers to policy development and curriculum planning as part of their role. However, it does appear that through practice elements of curriculum and school policy are shared even if this is not intentional.

5.3.1.3 Pedagogical knowledge

Mentor teachers considered developing pedagogy in the form of sound classroom management to be one of their most important roles. They recognised that student teachers often enter WIL with little to no experience of managing a classroom and so they felt it is their responsibility to guide student teachers through this process. Mentor teachers saw this as important because by developing classroom management, student teachers can develop beneficial learning environments for the children in their classrooms. To develop classroom management, mentor teachers identified guidance as a crucial mentoring skill. Being able to challenge student teachers and open their minds to considering other possibilities was also identified as important practically in light of digital age pedagogy. Mentor teachers also saw this as an important part of mentoring because a lot of pedagogical knowledge passed down to student teachers

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is not written in a textbook but is rather learnt through experience. Thus, this process has a generational element to it which facilitates ongoing development and the maintenance of standards within the teaching profession.

Mentor teachers recognised that they too stand to learn about different forms of pedagogy through the mentorship relationship. Mentor teachers appreciated the fresh ideas that student teachers bring to the table. Through the sharing of resources and ideas mentor teachers realised that the mentoring relationship can be mutually beneficial. This is important because it motivates mentor teachers to continue mentoring and it also builds student teachers' identities when mentor teachers trust and respect their ideas.

5.3.1.4 Modelling

Mentor teachers saw modelling as a useful means of helping student teachers learn more about the different forms of pedagogy. Through modelling, student teachers were challenged to reimagine the classroom space and invited to consider alternative forms of teaching. Mentor teachers also believed that it is their responsibility to model or transmit a love for teaching to their student teachers. In addition to this, mentor teachers believed that it is important to model one's authentic self to student teachers. In this regard, mentor teachers felt that student teachers should see them make mistakes and recognise that teaching is not about being perfect but being authentic. This was considered important because by avoiding perfectionism there is greater flexibility and also because it opens up student teachers to the real side of teaching. Allowing student teachers this opportunity helps them to interrogate their own ideas and to find their own authentic teacher identity.

5.3.1.5 Feedback

Mentor teachers identified their dialogue with student teachers to be of significance. They recognised that to truly guide student teachers they need to encourage, ask probing questions and give advice. They recognised that doing so in a caring way is

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important so as not to break student teachers down but rather grown them. Lack of engagement by student teachers was identified as a challenge to providing feedback. Student teachers that do not take initiative or who lack the humility to take direction stand to lose out on the value of feedback. In this way, the provision of feedback is not one-sided but should be seen as a relationship-building activity of constant and intentional dialogue between mentor teacher and student teacher.

5.3.1.6 A nurturing and supportive relationship

Mentor teachers recognised that WIL is an anxiety-provoking time for student teachers and that creating a nurturing and supportive relationship is important for student-teacher growth and development. The school environment can be harsh because of the nature of children and also because of the business of school life which can leave student teachers feeling overwhelmed if they are not taken proper care of. In order to create this kind of relationship, mentor teachers believed that helping student teachers feel welcome and guiding them through encouragement and personal investment is important.

Mentor teachers asserted that their role extends beyond merely teaching how to teach. They understood that to develop a student teacher they need to take the time to invest in the student teacher as a whole person. In order to do this, mentor teachers believed that it is important to help student teachers uncover new things about themselves through showing care, empathy and genuine interest. Helping student teachers uncover the deeper parts of themselves aids in the authentic development of their teacher identities and develops their confidence as teachers. For this to occur it is important that mentor teachers understand the context of their student teachers and that they are sensitive to the unique challenges that each individual student teacher will experience in the school environment. Thus, mentor teachers have to fully invest in their student teachers and recognise that their interactions with student teachers have long term implications on the trajectory of the student teachers entire teaching career.

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Facilitating this process requires skills that are not easily taught. Being a nurturing and supportive mentor teacher is attributed to a certain type of person and not a learnt behaviour. Thus, it seems that not all teachers are good mentors even if they have years of teaching experience. This brings into question the extent to which teaching experience is considered important when identifying mentor teachers. A lot of what takes place to create a safe and nurturing mentoring relationship happens naturally without the mentor teacher deliberately utilising a certain skill set. This is because mentoring naturally forms part of who they are and so they do not necessarily think about it. Having a holistic understanding of the mentorship relationship further serves to aid in the development of a hurting and supportive relationship.

In conclusion, incorporating the six factors mentioned above into mentorship practice, enables mentor teachers to successfully contribute to the development of student teachers' teacher identities. This is confirmed by the existing literature and the findings of the study. Mentor teachers recognise that they play an important part in the development of student teachers and that they have a variety of roles to play in this process from pedagogy development to nurturing and personal development of student teachers.

5.4 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I discuss the potential contributions that this study descriptive case study of limited scope has for practice and theory.

5.4.1 Contributions to practice

Mentorship of student teachers is important for the development of new teachers and the continuation of the profession. When student teachers receive sound mentorship, they are more likely to flourish as teachers and to continue in the profession. New teachers must enter the profession with confidence and passion because of the importance that teaching has for the future of all children. South Africa has a teacher shortage and general challenges with the standard of education. In light hereof, it is

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essential that the new teachers entering the profession within the South African context are well prepared and dedicated to developing the profession.

Several difficulties exist with the current state of student teacher mentorship in South Africa. Student teachers report feeling exploited by mentor teachers and uncared for. This is of concern because of the importance that developing student teachers holds for the future of education in South Africa. The present study sought to understand the status of student-teacher mentorship in South Africa by exploring mentor teachers' perspectives on their role in the identity development of student teachers. Findings confirm that mentor teachers perceive their role as important and multifaceted. The roles identified by mentor teachers in the study co-inside with Hudson's five-factor model for effective teaching (Hudson, 2004). Considering this, it stands to reason that mentor teacher training programs should focus on developing personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. Developing these skills in mentor teachers should enable them to be more effective in their role in student-teacher identity development.

In addition, the study confirmed that creating a safe and nurturing relationship is another important mentor teacher role. This is a new additional factor added by Jooste (2019) to Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring (Hudson, 2004). Mentor teachers recognise that WIL is a stressful time for student teachers. The study emphasised that mentor teachers believe that nurturing in the form of guidance and encouragement is important to help student teachers work through the complexities of the school environment. The mentor teachers in the study emphasised that mentoring in a nurturing way facilitates a supportive relationship which is not due to experience or training but rather an inherent personality trait. The findings emphasised that not all teachers are suitable to mentor because they lack the kind of empathy required. This is significant because it brings into question the criteria used to select mentor teachers and the relevance of mentor teacher training.

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The study also emphasised that the mentoring relationship is a reciprocal one and that student teachers' attitudes are likewise important. Mentor teachers identified student-teacher engagement as crucial for the success of WIL. This is significant because it points to the role that universities need to play in adequately preparing student teachers for WIL. When student teachers lack initiative, interest, or are in some way disrespectful, the mentoring relationship is jeopardised, and mentor teachers are less likely to effectively develop student teachers successfully. However, when they are engaged and bring their own ideas to the classroom, the mentorship relationship is strengthened and mentor teachers themselves benefit from the experience.

5.4.2 Contributions to theory

The descriptive case study of limited scope provides an overview of mentor teachers' perceived roles in the identity development of student teachers. The study indicated that mentor teachers understand their roles to be those outlined by Hudson's five-factor model of mentoring (Hudson, 2016) with the additional factor of safe and nurturing relationship added by Jooste (2019). Thus, mentor teachers believe that they must fulfil the following factors: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, feedback and safe and nurturing relationship.

The findings of the study confirmed that student-teacher mentorship is important for teacher identity development and mentor teachers play a significant role in this development. Thus, this study provides support for the existing literature on student-teacher mentorship and identity development. The current study furthermore adds to the body of knowledge which seeks to explore the role of mentor teachers in student-teacher identity development.

In light of these findings I have modified figure 2.2 to include the importance of student teacher attitude and developing authentic teachers. These have been included because of the importance that they hold in the holistic development of student teachers, as demonstrated in figure 5.1.

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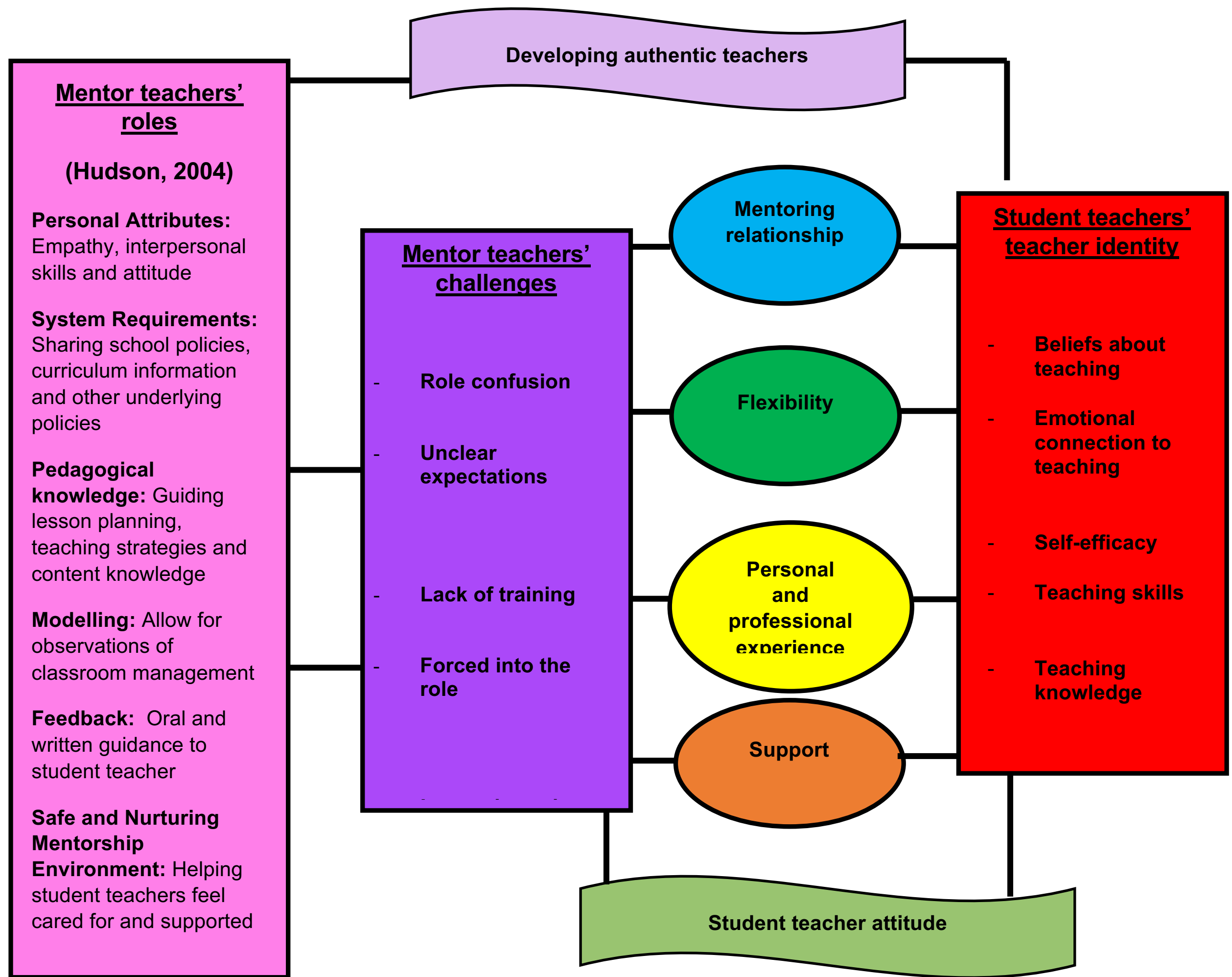

Figure 5.1 Conceptual Framework incorporating results of the study (adapted from Hudson, 2004)

5.5 CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS

A lack of generalisability of findings is a major limitation of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). This descriptive case study of limited scope consisted of interviews with only four participants. All the participants were considered experienced mentor teachers and they all taught at the same school. Due to the small sample size, the findings of this study cannot be generalised. Importantly, the aim of this study was never to develop generalised findings, rather the aim was to develop a detailed understanding of mentor teachers' perspectives on their role in student-teacher identity development. The rich data generated from the study provides valuable insight and has the potential to be transferred to similar contexts. In order to develop the

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opportunity for transferability, an in-depth explanation of the studies context is provided in Chapter 3 of this mini dissertation.

Reflecting on my role as the researcher is significant when considering the limitations of the study. This study was undertaken for the partial completion of my training as master's student in educational psychology. In addition to my role as a student educational psychologist, I am also a qualified teacher. I have been both a student teacher and a mentor teacher in my five-year career as a teacher. I, therefore, came to this study with my own beliefs and biases owing to my experience. In order to mitigate potential researcher bias, I kept a researcher journal and I sought regular guidance from my supervisor. I also relied on my reflective skills developed by my psychological training to remain as objective as possible. Member-checking was also included in the study to ensure that the findings of the study truly reflect the participants' experiences.

An additional limitation of this study relates to participant availability and participant circumstances. The data was collected during the time of national lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Participants were facing a lot of uncertainties during this time and were under new and unanticipated stress. This could have impacted their level of engagement and recall since stress has an impact on memory and general cognitive functioning. Participants might have felt slightly more removed from their role as mentor teacher because they were not receiving student teachers as a result of the pandemic. This might have affected the richness of the data collected.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following sub-section, I use the findings of the study to provide recommendations for training, practice and future research.

5.6.1 Recommendations for training

The findings of the study confirmed that mentor teachers perceive their mentoring role to be important in the development of student-teacher development. Mentor teachers

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recognised that their role in student-teacher development is multi-dimensional and that they need to see their student teachers holistically. In addition to this mentor teachers believe that they play an important role in guiding and supporting student teachers by creating a safe and nurturing relationship. The findings have shown that mentor teachers are under time constraints and school stressors that make student-teacher mentoring difficult at times. Moreover, this finding suggests that it takes a certain type of person to mentor in a nurturing way and that this cannot always be taught through training.

The findings have implications for the future of mentor teacher training programmes. It is recommended that before training with mentor teachers takes place greater time is spend allocating suitable mentors who have the innate capacity to nurture and support student teachers. Finding the right kind of mentors is significant in creating a mentor who will be truly attentive to the needs of student teachers. It is also recommended that mentor teacher training focuses on developing mentors who believe in the holistic development of student teachers and who recognise that student teachers come into the mentoring relationship with their own personal stories and beliefs about teaching. Making this the focus of mentor teacher training should help to create a mentoring relationship that is more beneficial for both student teacher and mentor teacher. Owing to the time constraints that mentor teachers face, it is also recommended that training focuses on helping mentor teachers learn more about managing teaching and mentoring and finding ways to help mentor teachers feel better supported.

5.6.2 Recommendations for practice

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that mentor teachers spend more time investing in the holistic development of student teachers. This suggestion is based on the findings of the study and the existing literature. Mentor teachers need to take time to get to know their student teachers and engage more with their personal narratives. Building this kind of relationship helps student teachers feel more confident to explore their identities as teachers and flourish during WIL. Building a safe and nurturing environment helps to facilitate this process as student teachers feel secure

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in their role and less anxious. This also requires that mentor teachers are welcoming and sensitive to the context of their student teachers.

The findings also indicated that student teachers need to be engaged in the mentoring relationship to ensure that WIL is truly beneficial for them. Based on this student teachers are urged to be respectful towards their mentor teacher. In this regard, I suggest that student teachers remain cognisant of mentor teachers' time and that they adhere to lesson planning deadlines set out by their mentor teacher. Student teachers are also encouraged to bring their ideas to the classroom and to share their ideas with their mentor teacher. This is important because by sharing their ideas they can also help to develop the teaching practice of their mentor teacher. Being honest and humble is also important in establishing a healthy and mutually beneficial mentoring relationship.

5.6.3 Recommendations for research

The following recommendations for future research are made based on the findings of the study.

- Follow up case study research that specifically focuses on the interpersonal factors that make a good mentor teacher.
- A case study that specifically investigates the roles and responsibilities student teachers need to fulfil, in order to create a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship.
- Exploratory studies that explore the methods that mentor teachers put in place to develop a nurturing and safe mentoring relationship.

5.7 CLOSING REMARKS

In this descriptive case study of limited scope, I aimed to uncover mentor teachers' perspectives on their mentoring role in the identity development of student teachers.

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The findings confirmed the relevance of Hudson's five-factor mentoring model for effective teaching (Hudson 2016) and the addition of a sixth factor identified by Jooste (2019) in the mentorship of student teachers. The study specifically emphasised that mentor teachers believe they have an important role in nurturing student teachers and developing authentic teachers by holistically engaging with their student teachers. Through approaching the mentorship relationship holistically, the study emphasised that mentoring is a mutually beneficial process. However, for mentoring to be mutually beneficial student-teacher attitude was highlighted as important.

The findings of the study provided useful and insightful information on the future direction of mentor teacher training and emphasised ways in which the mentoring relationship can be strengthened. I believe these findings are important and relevant to the mentorship of student teachers in the South African context because understanding mentorship from the mentor teachers' perspective should help to improve student-teacher mentorship and ultimately help to develop impactful teachers in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Principal

Dear

My name is Lucy Hathorn and I am a registered Master student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. As part of my M.Ed. Educational Psychology degree, I have to conduct research and submit a mini-dissertation by the end of August 2020. The title of my study is **a mentor teacher perspective on teacher identity development during work integrated learning.** With this study I aim to explore and describe mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL within the South African context.

I hereby seek permission from you to interview five mentor teachers who have vast experience, at least five years, in the mentoring of pre-service teachers during work-integrated learning (WIL). I anticipate conducting semi structured interviews of about 60-90 minutes long with experienced mentor teachers (n=5) who are willing to participate in my research. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participating mentor teachers may choose to withdraw from the research at any given time or they may choose not to answer questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. I do not foresee that participants will experience any harm or risk as a result of participating in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants and your school will be guaranteed as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or report. If direct quotes are used in the report, no identifying information will be included. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password protected computer and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor. General feedback from the results of the study will be made available in a summary to your school and the participants once the research is complete.

If you have any further questions about the research study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Annelize du Plessis-de Beer Supervisor (0828280919; Email: annelize.duplessis@up.ac.za).

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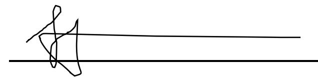
Should you choose to allow teachers at your school to participate in the study, please sign the Principal Consent form (see next page). Once signed please return the form to me via email at lucyhathorn@gmail.com.

Your favourable consideration is highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs. Lucy Strydom (Hathorn)
0825658499

Permission to conduct research at St Mary's School

I, ____, Principal of St. Mary's School, hereby grant permission for Mrs. Lucy Strydom (Hathorn) to conduct semi-structured interviews with five mentor teachers who will voluntary participate in the mentioned research study.

Signed ____________________________ on ___________ May 2020 at _______________________

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APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Ms. _______________

Teacher

Dear _________________

My name is Lucy Hathorn and I am a registered Master student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. As part of my M.Ed Educational Psychology degree, I have to conduct research and submit a mini-dissertation by the end of August 2020. The title of my study is **a mentor teacher perspective on teacher identity development during work integrated learning.** With this study I aim to explore and describe mentor teachers' perspectives on teacher identity development during WIL within the South African context.

You have been selected as one of the mentor teachers at your school experience in the mentoring of pre-service teachers during work integrated learning or teaching practicum. It will be much appreciated if you might consider participating in the mentioned research study. I have already obtained Ethical Clearance from the Ethics Committee (EDU049-19) and will attach a copy of the latter to this letter.

I plan to conduct semi-structured interviews of about 60-90 minutes long. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participating mentor teachers may choose to withdraw from the research at any given time or they may choose not to answer questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. I do not foresee that participants will experience any harm or risk as a result of participating in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants and your school will be guaranteed as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or report. If direct quotes are used in the report, no identifying information will be included. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password protected computer and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor. General feedback from the results of the study will be made available in a summary to you and your school once the research is completed.

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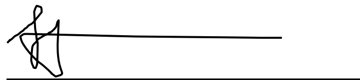
If you have any further questions about the research study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Annelize du Plessis-de Beer Supervisor (0828280919; Email: annelize.duplessis@up.ac.za).

Should you choose to participate in the study, please sign the Consent form (see next page). Once signed please return the form to me via email at lucyhathorn@gmail.com.

Your favourable consideration is highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs. Lucy Strydom (Hathorn)
0825658499

Consent to participate in a research study I

I, ____, hereby grant permission for Mrs. Lucy Strydom (Hathorn) to interview me as mentor teacher. I am aware of the fact that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any point in time during the research study.

I further grant permission that the researcher may use data generated by me, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies."

Signed __________________________ on __________ May 2020 at _____________________

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Question

How many years have you been teaching?

And how many of those years have you been a mentor teacher?

How did you become a mentor teacher?

What do you enjoy about being a mentor teacher?

What challenges do you face while mentoring

Why do you think that mentoring student teachers is important?

Teacher identity development is seen as an important part of teacher training. What do you understand by the term teacher identity?

When you think about your own identity as a teacher, what stands out to you as being important?

What are your thoughts on the role of WIL in student teacher's teacher identity development?

If you think about the student teachers that you have mentored over the years, what role do you think you have played in their teacher identity development?

What other roles do you think are important in mentoring student teachers?

What responsibilities do you think you have when mentoring student teachers?

In what way can these responsibilities be linked to teacher identity development?

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What hurdles do you think get in the way of developing student teachers teacher identity development during WIL?

Based on your experience do you think that WIL is fulfilling its role in the developing of student teacher's teacher identity?

Is there anything that can be improved on during WIL to make it more valuable for student teachers teacher identity development?

Those are all the questions that I have for you. Are there any other thoughts or comments that you would like to add?

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Appendix D: DATA ANALYSES TABLE

Initial themes	Refined themes	Sub-themes	Main themes
Student teachers need to feel welcome	Pastoral care	Safe, nurturing and supportive relationship	Building favorable mentoring relationship
Nurturing of student teacher			
Encouragement	Parental role		
Guiding student teacher			
Personal development	Holistic development	Relationship that is holistic in nature	
Mentorship as holistic			
Student teacher attitude	Student teacher initiative		
Poorly prepared student teachers			
Learning from student teacher	Mentorship as beneficial for mentor teacher	A relationship which affords mutual growth and opportunities	
Mentoring contributes to the profession			
Sharing professional knowledge	Mentorship is reciprocal		
Sharing resources			

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Mentor teachers are too busy			
Help student teacher discover if they want to teach	Developing impactful teachers	Developing authentic teachers	Enhancing student teachers’ professional identity
Develop a love for teaching			
Help student teacher discover the kind of teacher they want to become	Helping student teachers find who they are as teachers		
Authenticity is important part of teacher identity			
Modelling how to teach	Teaching student teachers how to teach	Sound classroom management	
Learning to teach through practice			
Learning how to manage a classroom	Practical guidance		
Providing feedback			
Pedagogical knowledge			

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