THE EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATORS AS MENTORS OF PRE-SERVICE STUDENT TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring is a learning experience through the partnership co-created by the mentor and the mentee. The role of the mentor in this partnership has always been regarded as of paramount importance for the development of pre-service student teachers. This study focused on the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student educators enrolled in the Bachelor of Education degree programme. In an attempt to conceptualize the mentoring of selected school-based mentors, this study explored mentoring as part of the broader phenomenon of induction. The mentoring experiences provided by the school-based mentors were explored through international trends in induction and mentoring, then by contextualizing mentoring within the South African policy terrain. The interpretive paradigm was used, and a qualitative case study design was adopted. Holistic understanding was explored within the school context through conversations with participants undertaken through semi-structured interviews. Participants also created collages aimed at triggering them to put multiple realities into context when reflecting on their mentoring experiences. Document analysis was used to develop a chronology of mentoring events at the school. This study analysed mentoring practices by school-based mentors using the cognitive apprenticeship model as the conceptual framework. The findings of this study indicate that school-based mentors perform many different mentoring roles on top of their normal teaching loads. Mentors need to integrate conceptually anchored and practically anchored knowledge to provide pre-service student teachers with pedagogical competence in the real context. Furthermore, school-based mentors need to provide emotional support, constructive feedback, and modelling of good practice to create appropriate professional identities for pre-service student teachers. School-based mentors face a variety of challenges within and outside the school context. Considering that mentors need to be properly trained, the partnership between the school, university and the Department of Education needs to be improved. There should be greater clarity on the who, what and how of mentoring during teaching practice to enhance its quality and implementation. Schools need to create environments that foster professional development opportunities through the quality management system, with its focus on mentoring and coaching. The findings of this study may have implications for other programmes that use work-integrated learning in preparing pre-service student teachers.

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the Graduate Programme of Teacher Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

I **Fortune Mhonda** declare that,

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

1. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
H.O.D	Head of Department
HEI	Higher education institutions
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development
ITE	Initial teacher education
MRTEQ	Minimum requirements for teacher education qualification
PSPP	Public school on private property
QMS	Quality management system
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SMT	School management team
WIL	Work integrated learning
ZDP	Zone of proximal development

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, mentoring has become popular in the corporate world. This growing interest began to influence the South African educational sector, with policies being put in place to support mentoring. Currently, mentoring interventions with their own characteristics are being rolled out to develop educators. Furthermore, in the teacher development context, mentoring has been used as a major strategy in initial teacher training and the induction of newly qualified educators, based on the idea that the "development of professional practice is most effective and beneficial when it takes place in the professional setting and collaboration with expert professional practice" (Jones & Straker, 2006, p.167). This study explores the mentoring experiences of school-based mentors at a combined school in the Harry Gwala District in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

This chapter aims to give an overview of this study. It begins with the purpose and focus of the study, its rationale, background, research questions and methodological approach. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting the basic arrangement of the chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers and how they interpret their role. The study was conducted by selecting four experienced school-based mentors with at least two years of mentoring experience. The intention was to establish an understanding of the unique role played by these school-based mentors so that the school-based mentoring programme could be improved and training could be provided for the professional development of educators.

The study focus was the role of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers at a public school on private property (PSPP).In the South African context, a pre-service student teacher is an individual enrolled in a teacher education programme that leads to a teaching qualification, as prescribed by the policy on the minimum requirements for teacher qualifications (MRTEQ) (DHET, 2015). In addition, a school-based mentor is described in this study as an individual involved in teacher preparation, whose primary institutional home is a school.

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Mentoring of teachers is considered to be essential for improving educational outcomes, as it can enhance the quality of teaching. The link between the quality of education and mentoring of teachers is highlighted by Jansen (2019), who analysed national and international benchmark tests and found that South African learners have scored poorly in literacy and numeracy. This poor quality of educational outcomes in South Africa has been levelled against poor teacher exposure to real classroom teaching during teaching practice. As a result, various measures have been outlined in various policy documents including the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE, 2007) and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DBE & DHET, 2011) with a focus on mentoring. This policy suggests that school-based mentors need to be trained and supported at the school, district, and provincial levels to supervise and assess teaching practice, which is part of work-integrated learning (WIL). The training of school-based mentors would produce well-prepared mentors supported by training and school culture. Professionally trained mentors are now crucial because mentoring is increasingly preferred as an in-house option to professionally develop pre-service student teachers and in-service educators. In addition, Hudson (2013a) and Hudson (2016), argue that the amount of professional training for educators is limited by financial constraints and they see mentoring as a cost-effective way of developing educators. This state of affairs has resulted in many organizations venturing into mentoring as a way of developing educators.

The rationale for this study is influenced by the challenges I experienced as an educator at my current school, where both serving and pre-service educators struggle to understand the culture of the school. The school is a PSPP because it is run by the government, but the land on which it is built belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. This gave the school its distinctive Catholic religious character and many in-service and pre-service educators struggle to adapt to the unique culture of the school. This difficulty may be attributed to the fact that both serving and pre-service educators might belong to other religious beliefs, which contradict the Roman Catholic ethos. However, children and teachers of all faiths are welcomed at Catholic schools, but they must recognize and accept that the school has a Catholic character. This expectation is consistent with the Bill of Rights in the *Republic of South Africa Constitution* (1996, p.7), which states that, “everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion”. Besides the pre-service student teachers failing to adapt to this unique school culture, they also struggle to manage discipline in classes and with their pedagogical content

knowledge (PCK). Furthermore, pre-service student teachers struggle to perform their administrative duties. Given these difficulties, and as a mentor at this unique school, I became interested in the role the mentor plays in supporting both the pre-service student teachers and the in-service teachers. In my own mentoring experience, I struggled to fully assist pre-service student teachers during their practicum and I lacked support from the school, university, and the Department of Education (DoE). The major aspect I found difficult was assessing the student-teacher, as the assessment instrument was not fully explained to me by the institute of higher education. This led me to perform compliance mentoring, which I believe did not benefit the mentees because they were not thoroughly exposed to the real induction. Mukeredzi et al. (2015, p.6) argue that compliance mentoring is "where mentoring duties [are] performed to fulfil the university teaching practice assessment requirements". This is characterised by doing random classroom visits, checking student teachers' files and filling in the assessment forms without actually exposing the student teachers to a developmental mentoring process. In addition, the university supervisors came just to evaluate and left without giving me thorough feedback on the progress of the teaching practice.

In the school, because it is built on their land, the Roman Catholic Church has a say on the general administration, which includes the recruitment of teachers. This role is supported by Section 57 of the South African School's Act of 1996, which states that if the landowner is a religious organization, then it may require that the agreement contemplated in Section 14 must recognise, in an appropriate manner consistent with this act, the distinctive religious character of the school. An agreement includes the right of the owner to recommend staff appointments to ensure that the Catholic character of the school is preserved. In addition, at this school, we not only receive pre-service student teachers from our local universities, but also from other countries like Austria and Germany. These pre-service student teachers from other countries come on a cultural exchange programme mainly because the school follows the Roman Catholic religion. To maintain the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school, the Church assists the school management team (SMT) in appointing mentors of pre-service educators. This makes the school culture tight and may lead to mentor-mentee mismatch. In addition, the school-based mentors may not properly perform their roles due to the authoritarian line of the school, thus negating the proper professional development of the mentee (Ellis, 2010; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). I have also witnessed that some of the appointed educators take on their mentoring role reluctantly, which has a detrimental effect on the mentoring process. Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that school authorities may think they

understand the background of mentors and attempt to pair them, resulting in the establishment of poor ties. In addition, as a mentor, this tight school culture offers me less time to engage with the pre-service teacher, resulting in poor feedback. Feedback is very important because a mentor acts as a mirror in which the mentee's growth, learning and strengths and weaknesses should be reflected. In addition, mirroring to mentees what the mentor sees and witnesses is a very powerful form of communication. Moreover, the lack of enough time may result in poor development of PCK and other competencies (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Sayed et al., 2020; Setlhako, 2019; Singh & Mahomed, 2013).

Given that the school is a no-fee school, located in a rural area and producing quality results, it attracts a lot of learners from different backgrounds, although it has classes that are overcrowded and resources are scarce. However, the challenge of producing quality results under those conditions may present a reality shock to pre-service student teachers. According to a study conducted in the South African context by Steyn (2004), reality shocks may arise when student teachers face unexpected conditions such as poor resources, poor learner behaviour, and attitude among colleagues at the same school. This reality shock is worsened by the fact that student teachers are no longer in their comfort zone, but are immersed in unfamiliar classroom contexts where they lack the proper skills to deal with real issues. This may result in increased teacher attrition in their first two years of employment. This teacher attrition indicates the need for proper training of pre-service student teachers by school-based mentors to reduce their encountered frustrations. As a school-based mentor, I was forced to take on heavy loads and expected to supervise pre-service student teachers at the same time. The heavy workloads and trying to manage their own large and overcrowded classes may result in school-based mentors being unable to "observe a considerable number of beginner teachers' lessons" (Arends & Phurutse, 2009, p.24). This study thus tries to understand the experiences of school-based mentors from their perspective when they enact their roles.

Rural and township schools reflect the historical inequalities of the apartheid dispensation (Spaull, 2013). Most of the experienced educators, including the SMT, at the school in question, are from rural and township areas which were previously disadvantaged by the apartheid legacy. They received their teacher education in a marginalised educational system where the emphasis on professional development initiatives like mentoring and induction was rare (Shalem & De Clercq, 2019). It follows that most of the school-based mentors at the school might be unsure of how to implement policy on induction and mentoring, as they have had little experience with effective mentoring. Also, the school has a veteran school culture

exemplified by experienced educators who are concerned with their own professional development, paying little attention to the development of novice educators. In such a situation, Johnson (as cited in Hobson et al., 2009) argues that the mentoring process is more evaluative as compared to developmental, which may assist student teachers. In addition, at Catholic schools teachers are under continual pressure to ensure that their pupils meet academic standards and they can therefore be more concerned with pupil progress than supporting beginning teachers learning. This then suggests the importance of comprehending the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers and how they interpret their roles in a veteran school culture such as this. This study is informed by the struggles of the school-based mentors, who should be supported by all the stakeholders involved in the mentoring process of pre-service student educators and novice in-service educators. I hope the findings of this research will contribute towards the development of a policy framework for mentor training programmes. As a result of this goal, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of school-based educators in the mentoring of pre-service student teachers in a combined school in the Ixopo circuit in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Traditionally teachers were trained theory of education and less emphasis was made on the practical aspect of teaching (Chakanyuka, 2006; Corrigan Loughran, 2008).In many countries, there has been a shift to incorporate the practical aspect in initial teacher training through teaching practice (Korthagen (2017).As a result Initial Teacher Training (I.T.E) has received global attention to produce quality teachers as The United Nations Target 4C specify that by "2030 substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries as there is a huge gap between theory and practice (Isigida,2020).

Regional organizations such as the African Union (2006) have the goal to "ensure the provision of sufficient teachers to meet the demands of each system and to ensure that all teachers are properly qualified and possess the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to teach effectively". This goal concurs with the United Nations Target 4C, which specifies that by 2030 there should be a supply of quality and well-trained educators, especially in developing countries like South Africa (Isigida, 2020; Nakidien et al.,2021). To produce quality teachers the Global Campaign For Education (2012) argues that the best education system is one that allows pre-service educators to get a supervised classroom-based experience with an experienced educator. In this situation, the pre-service educator gets the opportunity "to

observe through increasing levels of responsibility for teaching and learning but not at the expense of learners" (p.28). In addition, mentoring has become more significant to teacher preparation and development, as many countries around the world are expanding clinical experiences where pre-service student teachers spend most of the training at schools with school-based mentors (Henning et al., 2018). This has made the school-based mentor more important than before; hence it becomes imperative to understand their experiences and how they enact their roles during the mentoring process.

The mentoring in the South African context is to make sure that the WIL skills that reflect the reality in the classroom are provided to pre-service educators (DoE, 2007). In addition, the policy on MRTEQ (DHET, 2015, p.10) states that "work-integrated Learning (WIL) consists of some aspects of learning from practice and learning in practice and must take place at schools as an initial requirement for teacher qualification." The policy outlines that learning in practice takes place when "pre-service student teachers observe lesson planning and teaching of others and learning in practice involves teaching in the real classroom or simulated classroom and making personal judgments and reflections on lessons taught" (DHET, 2015, p.10). In this regard, school-based mentors might need to have a substantial understanding of WIL to be able to integrate theory and practice when they engage with pre-service student teachers. However, Korthagen (2017) argues that most professional development initiatives fail because of the gap between theory and practice. This gap is a result of the shock novice educators experience when they move from theory-based courses at universities to the reality of schools, in particular, challenging South African schools (Mashau, 2012; Roofe & Miller, 2013). This means good mentors, who are committed, well trained and skilled to deal with a diverse interpersonal context are needed (Singh & Mahomed, 2013). In the same vein, this requires well-trained mentors to play a crucial role in terms of support, guidance and motivation in the real workplace, to incorporate the cognitive practice and the emotional practice of teaching (MRTEQ, DHET, 2015).

The Norms and Standard for Teacher Education was an early endeavour to put the weight of mentoring on the school-based mentor to give much-needed practical exposure to the pre-service student teacher during their initial professional education and training (DoE, 2000). At the school level, the Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) and Resolution Council (2003) determined the career path that created the post of senior and master teachers and revised the job descriptions to include the mentoring and coaching of novice teachers as one of

their core functions at schools. Despite the policy frameworks for mentoring as part of teacher education and as part of ongoing professional development policy initiatives at the school level, the school in this study does not have the positions of senior and master teachers leading the school and lacks structures that support proper mentoring based on policies. This issue is supported by Robinson (2016, p.18), who argues that "policies that might support teacher involvement in teacher education, like career paths for mentor teachers, are in their infancy".

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NPFTED) as informed by the National Education Policy Act, no 27 of 1996, outlines the implementation of educators' professional development in schools by highlighting that educators must be properly trained to produce quality teaching. This has been hampered because the role of the mentors and the guidelines to be followed are not properly clarified, making the training of school-based mentors difficult. Moreover, the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 (ISPFTED) policy outlines training school-based mentors for pre-service educators to attain quality education. Still, there are no clear guidelines on the implementation of the mentoring process, and, in particular, the training and support needed for mentors. The problem of implementation of the issues in specific mentoring outlined in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) has been worsened by the lack of funds and the lack of competency and expertise in implementing its principles across most provinces and districts in the whole country (Mahomed, 2017). This has affected the school under study, as it is a no-fee school, and it struggles to support school-based mentors in their mentoring process. With no proper funding and expertise in implementing the principles of the ISPFTED, a question is raised on how school-based mentors at the school experience the mentoring of pre-service student teachers.

The practical component of teaching practice in South Africa is crucial, as it involves the school-based mentors who have the primary responsibility of introducing novice teachers to the world of work. However, this world of work is faced with problems because of the legacy of apartheid. The legacy of apartheid has caused teaching practice to be viewed as of lower value, especially in rural areas (Spaull, 2013). In addition, Soudien (2007) argues that the legacy of apartheid in rural and township schools illuminated the ineffectiveness of the education system. This makes it difficult to implement professional development initiatives like mentoring. On the other hand, Kiggundu (2007, p.28) states that "… the effectiveness of

the teaching practice can be diminished or eroded by geographical distance." This means schools that are more predominantly in townships and rural areas and far away from big towns may exhibit poor teaching practices. Furthermore, these schools face isolation and poor levels of quality teachers, which negatively impacts the school-based mentoring process (Kiggundu, 2007). Thus, effective mentoring is called for, to be implemented to address and redress the education disparities caused by apartheid by effectively training school-based mentors.

At our school, most of the pre-service educators we receive are anxious about teaching practice and they do not want to be placed with higher grades because they feel unprepared. This is consistent with a study done by Mashau et al. (2019) of 383 pre-service educators who indicated anxiety about teaching practice at schools indicating that they might not be well prepared. This has been described as the theory-practice gap. Some students in Mashau et al.'s (2009, p.108) study had this to say: "I do not enjoy critique lessons. I do not enjoy the pressure of having someone judge me". Similarly, a study done by Schoeman and Mabunda (2012) with 153 pre-service educators revealed that teaching practice results in high levels of stress. This raises a question about the experiences of school-based mentors in supervising student teachers who are not properly prepared for the practicum. Hobson et al. (2009) maintain that there is insufficient information about mentors' professional knowledge and needs despite extensive information about mentoring. Similarly, Henning et al. (2018) argue that there is now widespread recognition of the importance of mentoring, but there is meagre information on how to migrate from a traditional teacher preparation model to a clinically based approach.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To explore the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service educators during teaching practice the following research questions were formed. The main research question of this study was:

What are the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service educators during teaching practice?

1.5.1 Sub-research questions

1. How do school-based educators understand their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers?
2. What challenges do school-based educators experience in fulfilling their roles as mentors for pre-service student teachers?
3. In what ways could the mentoring of pre-service student teachers be improved?

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore how school-based educators understand their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers.
2. To identify the challenges that school-based educators experience in fulfilling their roles as mentors for pre-service student teachers.
3. To examine ways in which the mentoring of pre-service student teachers could be improved.

1.7 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In order to understand the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers, a qualitative methodology situated in the interpretive paradigm was used. Qualitative research allows for an "interactive relationship between the researcher and participants as well as the participants and their own experiences and how they have constructed reality based on those experiences" (Maree, 2015, p.56). As a result, the voices of the participants (school-based mentors) are manifest through their experiences and their subjective realities in their natural context (the school).

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm. According to Mack (2010, p.6), interpretivism's "main tenet is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of people." Therefore, a case study methodology within an interpretive paradigm was deemed an appropriate approach to understanding the phenomenon of mentoring through the experiences of the participants. A case study approach allows for a rich, detailed study of a phenomenon in a real-life context, in this case, a school (Cohen et al., 2018). A case study approach is also manageable, as it allowed me to work thoroughly with fewer participants (school-based mentors) within their school context (Rule & John, 2011). In addition, Rule and John (2011, p.7) argue that the "singularity of focus" in a case study makes it possible for the researcher to map out what needs to be studied. This enabled me to explore the experiences of school-based mentors in the mentoring of pre-service student teachers within the "limited and focused setting" of my school (Rule & John, 2011, p.1). The study aims to understand and describe the phenomenon of the mentoring role through the experience of selected mentors of pre-service student teachers learning in a rural context. The case study was explanatory because the aim was "to explain what happens

in a particular case and why it happens" in real-life terms (Rule & John, 2011, p.8). It was also intrinsic because I chose it based on an intrinsic interest in understanding the unique features of mentoring in the context of my school (Stake, 1995).

Four participants teaching different learning areas who were experienced mentors were selected using purposive sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.152) argue that participants are selected based on the "researcher's knowledge of the population, and a judgment is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the study". This allowed me to access "knowledgeable people" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.114). Besides this, purposive sampling gave me the convenience of using my school as a research site, making it possible to choose the correct participants who could provide me with the targeted information.

In this study, I used the following data-generating methods: collage, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Firstly, a collage was used as an art-based method in educational research to convey thoughts and feelings by putting together images, text, and pictures (Davis, 2008; Pillay et al., 2019). A collage encourages intrapersonal communication within oneself and triggers the participants to put multiple realities into context (Kortjass, 2019). It allowed for the free flow of ideas between me and the participants. The semi-structured interview consisted of open-ended questions drawing on school-based mentors' experiences of mentoring. The interview allowed for asking questions according to the interview schedule and provided opportunities for "probing and clarification for answers" (Maree, 2015, p.87). In addition, document analysis was used to examine how school-based mentors enact their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers, using primary data from the mentoring reports provided to the mentees, school induction policy, staff meeting minutes, and university documents on mentoring. The document analysis assisted in providing a general overview of the mentoring of in-service and pre-service educators at the school, verifying data emerging from other sources, and pointing out principal issues of mentoring that can be categorized into themes. A detailed discussion of the design and methodology is given in Chapter three.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMING

The main conceptual framework underpinning this research is the cognitive apprenticeship model. This model guided my research and provided the conceptual background for making sense of, describing and explaining the practice of mentoring pre-service student teachers. In

addition, the model was used to structure both the interview and the collage questions and to inductively analyse the data that was generated in this study.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS IN THE DISSERTATION

There are five chapters in this dissertation. A concise guide of each of the chapters is presented as follows.

Chapter one: Background and orientation of the study

This chapter gives an introduction, outlines the purpose and focus of the study, its rationale, the background, the key research questions and, lastly, the conceptual framework informing it. The chapter ends with a general overview of chapters in the dissertation.

Chapter two: The literature review

This chapter explores both the international and South African literature on mentoring and teacher professional development with a particular focus on conceptions of mentoring, an overview of initial teacher education, the importance of teaching practice, teacher learning, mentor-teacher knowledge, mentor selection, relationships of mentoring, informal and formal mentoring, roles of the mentor, benefits of mentoring and, finally, difficulties in mentoring. The chapter also notes South African policy developments in mentoring and induction. This is followed by the exploration of the conceptual framework that was used as a lens to understand school-based mentors' perspectives on mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice. A detailed discussion of relevant literature is provided.

Chapter three: Research design and methodology

The chapter discusses the location of the study, the relevance of a case study approach, the main data collection methods viz. semi-structured interviews, collages, and document analysis, sources of data and the procedures followed for data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter four: Data presentation and analysis

This chapter presents the data, the analysis, and the findings of the research. The data was analysed inductively through a coding process without considering pre-existing coding frame, of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes that emerged from the data were guided

by the conceptual framework. The codes were categorized into themes and sub-themes to answer the research questions.

Chapter five: Discussion of findings, the implication of the study, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions, and the limitations, recommendations, and opportunities for further research. The conclusion and implications of the study are discussed in closing.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the focus and purpose of the study, which was to determine the role of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers and to explore the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers to understand how they interpret their roles. This chapter also gave the background of the study, describing and explaining its rationale, key research questions, research design and methodology, its conceptual framing and the general overview of the study. A brief overview of both international and national relevant literature was given. The next chapter provides a review of the consulted literature relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this review was to explore the literature that is relevant to the focus of this study, namely, the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers and how they interpret their roles during the teaching period that takes place at a public secondary school on private property. The literature is categorised into the following themes: exploration of concepts, conceptions of mentoring, an overview of the initial teacher education, importance of teaching practice, teacher education policy, teacher learning, mentor teacher knowledge, mentor selection, relationships of mentoring, informal and formal mentoring, roles of the mentor, benefits of mentoring and challenges to mentoring. Following this was an exploration of the conceptual framework for this study, which creates a lens through which the research process was conducted, enabling an exploration of the mentoring practices which emanated during a relationship which developed between the school-based mentor and the pre-service teachers within the PSPP context. The chapter concludes with a summary which outlines the purpose of the literature review.

2.2 EXPLORATION OF RELATED CONCEPTS

There are several concepts related to school-based mentoring, but I focus on the concepts of *a pre-service student teacher*, a *school-based mentor and what is a school culture*. This is because in this study other terms may be used to describe these concepts.

2.2.1 Who is a pre-service student teacher?

Hobson et al. (2009, p.207) claim that novice educators can either be beginner teachers who are undergoing a "programme of initial teacher education preparation or are in their first three years as qualified teachers". Considering this definition, this study focuses on pre-service student teachers as novice or student educators who are still at higher education institutions (HEIs) and pursuing a Bachelor of Education qualification. Henning et al. (2018) described a pre-service teacher as an individual enrolled in a teacher preparation programme that leads to a recommendation for a teaching license or teacher registration. To survive teaching practice, these pre-service student teachers need to be given "emotional support and assistance on learning classroom routines and processes" (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003, p.11). This special support is given by the school-based mentor during the practicum period.

2.2.2 Who is a school-based mentor?

The effectiveness of any mentoring relationship is greatly influenced by the selected mentor. Henning et al. (2018) describe a mentor as any individual who takes part in the initial teacher preparation and who works closely with the student teacher at the school of practical placement. School-based mentors are crucial in the sense that they assume the responsibility of mentoring others on top of their teaching loads. A school-based mentor can be "otherwise known as a universal liaison, site facilitator, cooperating teacher, collaborating teacher, or school liaison" (Henning et al., 2018, p.xxii). Clarke et al. (2014) argue that educators who have several years of experience, expertise as a classroom teacher and a commitment to professional development make good mentors. These school-based mentors offer support and comfort and assist pre-service student teachers to develop pedagogical competencies (Amorsen et al., 2017; Aslan & Öcal, 2012; Kaballa et al., 2008).

2.2.3 School culture

The most elusive parameter to student teachers is the school culture. School culture constitutes the routine behaviours characterized by unwritten rules and norms developed over the years of the school's establishment (Brock and Grady, 1997). When the teacher says, "It's the *way* we do things around here," they are referring to school culture. Student teachers are given explicit rules and procedures in their teaching practice handbooks however it is the undocumented rules that might govern what teachers do than the policies and procedures prescribed in their policy documents. These unwritten rules pose problems to student teachers and veteran teachers may finding it difficult to share with student teachers. As developer and nurturer of the school's culture, the principal, the SMT and the veteran teachers play a pivotal role in sharing that culture with beginning teachers (Brock,1999)

2.3 CONCEPTIONS OF MENTORING

Conceptions of mentoring encompass a variety of perspectives and approaches, each shedding light on different aspects and methods within the mentoring process. Mentoring has gained increased popularity across the globe, but there is no single definition of mentoring (Genç, 2016; Zachary, 2011). Shank (2005, p.73) defines it as "a one-on-one relationship between a highly competent, experienced teacher (mentor) and a novice teacher (mentee)". Setlhako (2019) refutes the general view of the mentee as someone without prior knowledge and who only receives information from the mentor. In the same vein Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that pre-service teachers are adult learners with a wealth of experience meaning pre-service teachers are not 'tabula rasa', so their understanding needs to be taken into consideration. Awaya et al.

(2003) and Zachary (2011) argue that mentoring has shifted away from the traditional imparting of knowledge from an older superior educator (mentor) to a novice educator, usually younger, to a more developmental process.

Similarly, Shank (2005) argued that the conceptualisation of mentoring has shifted to a more collaborative, ever-changing, and two-way process, where both parties benefit from the mentoring process. In a study conducted by Awaya et al. (2003), novice teachers benefitted from this shift in establishing a strong relationship between experienced teachers and novice teachers. This makes mentoring more collegial, thus making the communication bilateral. To find commonalities in different definitions of mentoring the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2020, p.4) defined mentoring as a

> collaborative learning relationship and working alliance based on intentionality, trust, and shared responsibility for the interactions in that relationship and the effectiveness of those interactions. Effective mentorship provides aspects of both psychosocial and career support and may include role modelling, advising, sponsorship, and helping the mentee develop a supportive network of others and peers. Mentorship like all working alliances evolves through stages over time, and entails critical and honest self-reflection at multiple stages of the mentorship process.

To conceptualise mentoring, Koballa et al. (2008) stated that if a school is organizing a school-based mentoring programme, the conceptions of mentoring as personal support, collegiality and apprenticeship may be considered. In offering personal support the mentor focuses more on providing emotional support. This is characterized by giving pastoral care to beginner teachers. It follows that the mentors must carefully listen to student teachers' emotional needs and provide them with proper emotional advice. Mentors who hold this conception find it challenging to offer emotional support. This mentoring conception also focuses on mentor and mentee teaching the same subjects or the same classes at the same school. The mentor encourages the student teacher to develop differentiated content and vary teaching tactics in class. This would result in student teachers developing a unique teaching style appropriate to their personality (Koballa et al., 2008). Additionally, in this conception of mentoring, the mentor provides security to the mentee on school administrative issues. This brings a sense of comfort to the mentees at the schools where they are practising teaching (Koballa et al., 2008).

In this conception of mentoring as co-learning the mentor and the mentee work together through the development of a mutual trust. There are no expert and novice teachers, as the power differentials are not of importance because there is a joint effort in solving educational issues, including sharing workloads. Consistence with this conception, "both mentor and beginning teacher are considered to be sources of knowledge valuable for teaching although the kinds of knowledge that each possesses may be different" (Koballa et al., 2008, p.399). Koballa et al. (2008) argue that despite the difference in their kinds of knowledge, mentors benefit from the current knowledge of educational issues held by the mentees and mentees also benefit from knowledge about teaching held by their mentors.

The conception of mentoring as an apprenticeship "emphasizes the craft knowledge of the mentor and how the mentor's experienced-based knowledge can help the beginning teacher" (Koballa et al., 2008, p.398). Koballa et al. (2008) argue that in this conception, as an expert, the mentor has superior knowledge that cannot be challenged. The mentor assists the mentee by guidance through modelling (Koballa et al., 2008). This is consistent with the cognitive apprenticeship model. Franke and Dahlgren (1996) argue that modelling in the cognitive apprenticeship model is a concept that emphasizes the demonstrating function of the mentor and, thus, clearly identifies the mentor as an expert in the mentoring process, resulting in a master-apprentice relationship. In this conception, mentees are given immediate assistance by allowing them to observe lessons and then offered guided participation which they apply in a real context (Koballa et al., 2008). Guided participation involves the use of teaching strategies like coaching, modelling, and scaffolding. In this conception of mentoring, mentees observe lessons and are then given opportunities to apply their learning in real classrooms and assistance to mentees is provided immediately.

2.4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)

Traditionally, teachers have trained in the theory of education, and less emphasis was placed on the practical aspect of teaching in Africa (Chakanyuka, 2011; Corrigan & Loughran, 2008). In many countries, there has been a shift to incorporate the practical aspect in initial teacher training through teaching practice (Korthagen, 2017; Musset, 2010; Wasonga et al., 2015). Most Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries (OECD) countries face the problem of having quality teachers. Teacher quality is recognised as the "single most

important variable influencing student achievement" (Musset, 2010, p.26). In their teacher preparation programmes, these OCED countries teach subject matter, pedagogical knowledge, and practical school experience (Musset, 2010). For them to close the gap between the theory of pedagogy and practice gap 75% have instituted the training of pre-service educators to be school-based with an experienced mentor, thus producing quality teachers (Musset, 2010). In countries like the Netherlands, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, students in their last year of teacher preparation are placed in schools with a group of different experienced mentors to try to close the gap between theory and practice.

Similarly, in the African context, Sub-Saharan countries like Botswana, Tanzania and Kenya are putting more emphasis on the teaching practice. These countries argue that teaching practice must be more school-based, comprehensive and mentored by experienced educators (Kwenda & Robinson, 2010). In the South African context, the teacher preparation follows a longer four-year training model with integrated periods of school-based practicum, but the lack of quality teachers remains critical (Kwenda & Robinson, 2010). The reason may be levelled against poor exposure of pre-service educators to teaching practice with school-based mentors. Pre-service educators might not receive proper support at the schools to which they are attached, resulting in them failing to gain the pedagogical competence. The findings of a study conducted by Mutemeri and Chetty (2011) of 26 lecturers and 61 final-year undergraduate student teachers acknowledged that the higher education institutes must evaluate the school-based mentors' capabilities beforehand because some of the school-based educators are not willing and are not prepared to assist the pre-service-educators.

Pre-service educators have indicated the lack of enough supervision at their schools of attachment from their supervisors. Robinson (2016) argues that the universities lack enough funds to supervise the student teachers thus leaving the supervision role to the schools. In a study done by Schoeman and Mabunda (2012), 33% out of 153 students acknowledged that there is no proper follow-up and supervision by their supervisors, leaving most of the supervision on the shoulders of the school-based mentors. Similarly, in a study done by Mutemeri and Chetty (2011) with fourth-year Bachelor of Education students and lecturers, 40% of the lecturers acknowledged supervision to be inadequate. In the same study, lecturers revealed that some of the lack of supervision was caused by dysfunctional schools. These are schools whose organizational structure makes it difficult for teaching practice to take place. However, the quality of teacher education is paramount.

2.4.1 Importance of teaching practice

In the South African context, the MRTEQ policy (DHET, 2015) requires pre-service teachers to go for practical teaching in schools deemed to be functional. These are schools that offer a conducive environment for mentoring. In these schools pre-service teachers observe school-based mentors teaching several lessons and later they are allowed to teach (Heeralal & Bayaga, 2011). This is modelling of good practice where the mentor acts as an expert performing a task whilst the novice observes simultaneously, building a conceptional model of the processes needed to accomplish a task (Collins et al., 1989). In the same vein, Franke and Dahlgren (1996) argue that modelling in the cognitive apprentice model is a concept which emphasizes the demonstrating function of the mentor and thus clearly identifies the mentor as an expert in the mentoring process, resulting in a master-apprentice relationship. In addition, the school-based mentor gives guidance to the pre-service educator in a variety of contexts and may result in pre-service teachers undergoing self-discovery, thus allowing them to develop to full potential.

Teaching practice in a school is very important for the pre-service teachers to use their academic knowledge learned at a HEI in the real classroom under the supervision of a school-based mentor (Robinson, 2016; Setlhako, 2019). In a research undertaken by Robinson (2016, p.15), most interviewees, including school-based mentors, agreed that teaching practice provides an "exposure to the daily work of teachers, student teachers are exposed to school structure and organization, expectations, reality, experience, diversity issues, examinations, professional development, staffroom politics… under the guidance of the mentor". This provides a school-based mentor with opportunities to work with the student teacher in different aspects of their professional development. In addition, teaching practice allows school-based mentors and mentees to collaborate concerning developing pedagogic content knowledge (Sayed et al., 2020). For teaching practice to take place effectively, it must be guided by policies from the DoE.

2.5. TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context, the initial teacher education qualification is governed by the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015). Two options can be chosen by prospective educators to become professional; firstly, a four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) and, secondly, a one-year Post

Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which follows a three-year bachelor's degree. It is stipulated in the policy that these qualifications can only be obtained through accredited universities, and through private institutions if they adhere to the stipulated quality criteria. The MRTEQ policy (DHET, 2015) acknowledges various types of knowledge that are enshrined in the integrated and applied knowledge; it does not support the "notion of a purely skills-based approach and foregrounds knowledge, reflection, connection, *synthesis* and research" (Robinson, 2016, p.13).

Pre-service educators need to be exposed to the following types of knowledge: disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, fundamental, and situational learning. In addition, they need to conform to the minimum set of competencies prescribed in Appendix C of the MRTEQ policy (DHET, 2015). Practical learning and WIL, of about 8-12 weeks annually, are spread across the academic programme at functional schools. The school-based mentor takes a leading role in mentoring the pre-service teacher and there must be a guarantee of proper supervision and assessment of pre-service educators during teaching practice, which is a component of WIL (DoE, 2007). Work Integrated Learning is acknowledged as a key aspect of initial teacher education. Therefore, well-trained and prepared school-based mentors are needed to implement WIL at the school level.

The DoE established the ISPFTED, whose primary outcome is to improve teacher quality through effective structured mentoring at specified training centres known as training schools (TS) and professional practice schools (PPS). However, there are no clear guidelines on the implementation of the mentoring process and, in particular, the training and support needed for mentors in this initiative. Robinson (2016) argued that the establishment of the PPSs and TSs was not thoroughly researched, although consultations were done. Additionally, the establishment of these schools was hampered by the lack of supervision and funds. (Robinson, 2016; Mahomed, 2017). Notably, schools generally do not receive financial support to accommodate pre-service student teachers, making policy implementation a difficult process.

The introduction of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC], 2003), which is now known as the Quality Management System (QMS) (ELRC, 2014), emphasised the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers, and part of IQMS is the mentoring of novice educators (Ncube, Mammen & Molepo, 2012).The SMT is expected to put processes in place to ensure that the QMS principles are

implemented with its focus on mentoring and coaching. The SMTs are therefore expected to provide the development of educators as part of their mentoring and coaching roles and emphasize the developmental nature of the QMS and not concentrate on its use as a basis for payment progression. A thorough understanding of the QMS by all educators may lead to a culture of working together. This culture leads to collegiality which may foster support behaviours towards others at the school (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Bainer,1999). However, given all the effort by various stakeholders to improve the quality of education, policy implementation remains an impediment.Pierser et al.(2018) argued that national policies also contribute to low status and role confusion and conflict as there is no recognised carrer progression for those in role and a lack of common understanding about what mentoring should entail. The policy framework discussed must make it possible for both student teachers and school-based learners to learn.

2.6 TEACHER LEARNING

Kelly (2006, p.506) distinguished between two learning approaches as the cognitive and the social-cultural approaches. The cognitive approach involves the gathering of knowledge, skills, and understanding in one context to be used in another context. In addition, learning is viewed as internal and involves the mind, which internally processes information for use in different situations (Kelly, 2006). This approach also links with Sfard's (2009) acquisition metaphor, which is concerned with the acquisition of concepts of basic units of knowledge which the learner accumulates, refines and combines to form a dense network over some time. This may suggest that a more experienced mentor might have developed a denser network of concepts than a novice teacher and so is able to assist the novice teacher in learning. In the same vein, Kelly (2006) maintains that experienced educators have an advanced structure of the same knowledge possessed by novice educators. This makes experienced school-based mentors have better planning techniques, which make them better at problem-solving as compared to novice educators. It follows that novice educators must learn a body of knowledge from experts that can make them become experts in their areas of professional practice (Kelly, 2006). However, the cognitivist faces an issue from the social approach, which argues that learning is not only individually based.

In the social-cultural approach, learning does not reside entirely in the heads of the individuals, but is distributed among individuals in a variety of contexts, encompassing teachers, learners, print, and electronic media (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This means that learning is shaped by its context and is not permanently attached to the brain of an individual (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Learning in context is also consistent with the cognitive apprenticeship model, with Piaget as its first proponent, and it bases its focus on the idea of social constructivism theory which emphasises learning in context. This means the school-based mentor must expose the mentee to various contexts, as learning is not individually based but is distributed. In addition, the cognitivist overlooks the tacit knowledge which is very important during teaching practice and the school-based educator must be aware of the importance of classroom practice in influencing the learning process (Henning et al., 2018).

It follows that if school-based mentors foster the professional growth of novice educators in school settings, tacit knowledge is acquired "implicitly", or unconsciously, from the context of teaching, which is ever-changing and shaped by the context it is embedded in (Kelly, 2006). This means teacher learning is a transition from novice educator to expert educator through interaction and participation with an experienced professional (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Similar to the participation metaphor approach by Sfard (2009) and Kelly (2006), learning as participation focuses on knowledge as an activity rather than knowledge as something to be acquired. This also means school-based mentors may improve their expertise by participation in a group as a community of practice and through induction and mentoring. Educators can also become experts by attending to various issues concerning and affecting teaching in school contexts (Kelly, 2006). It then becomes imperative that student teachers are exposed to authentic teaching settings at a functional school to gain pedagogical competence.

For learning to effectively take place, Sfard (2009) and Illeris (2007) argue that both the cognitive and the social approaches should be considered. Sfard (2009) maintains that one approach to teacher learning is not enough, as they need to complement each other. In addition, Illeris (2007) maintains that meaningful learning is the combination of the external interaction between the learner and the environment and the internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition, which involves the cognition process. Kelly (2006) also added that expert teachers engage with both pieces of knowledge in practice and knowledge of practice.

More recently, a study carried out by Korthagen (2017) has revealed that teachers' learning takes place consciously and unconsciously and involves cognitive, emotional, and motivational dimensions. He argues that in most professional development activities of pre-service teachers, there is always a gap between theory and practice. This gap can be reduced by considering that teacher learning processes are "multi-dimensional, multilevel, and often unconscious"

(Korthagen, 2017, p.399). This means school-based educators as mentors also need to consider pre-service student teachers' human side, as opposed to only focusing on pedagogies.

2.7 MENTOR TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

Grossman (1990) combined Shulman's (1987) seven components of teacher knowledge into four knowledge categories: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of context, and general pedagogical knowledge (GPK). Firstly, content knowledge refers to the "amount and organisation of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher" (Shulman, 1987, p.9). This is the knowledge the teacher possesses for the learning areas they are teaching. It follows that school-based mentors as teachers need to understand how important concepts of their subjects are related and organized for the content to be useful for teaching (Bertram, 2011). Secondly, GPK refers to "broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter" (Shulman, 1987, p.227). Student teachers would require this kind of knowledge, as it is practically based and can be tacitly obtained, because it is difficult to explain it in text. It follows that school-based mentors need to possess a good command of both PCK and GPK to assist student teachers.

Pedagogical content knowledge consists of teachers' views and perceptions in teaching the learning area in different grades, learners' conceptions, and misconceptions in topics of identified subjects, curriculum knowledge, and the best ways of teaching and instructional materials (Grossman, 1990). It is how an educator changes the content knowledge so that it can be comprehended by the learners in the environment of learning (Bertram, 2011). It also includes learner's learning difficulties and opportunities in different subjects identified by the teacher. Knowledge of educational context includes their immediate context (school and learners) and the broader environment, which includes educational officials, parents, community, and other relevant stakeholders (Grossman, 1990). Curriculum knowledge refers to what educators need to understand about teaching and learning material that serves as "tools of the trade" (Shulman, 1987, p.227). In the South African context, school-based mentors must assist student teachers in understanding these tools: the programme of assessment, Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) documents and many more. In addition, Moosa (2018) argues that school-based mentors must possess context knowledge, which can be understood and applied once the student teachers are immersed in

the specific context. School-based mentors must possess the categories of the knowledge highlighted in the discussion for them to be selected.

2.8. MENTOR SELECTION

The selection of mentors plays a pivotal role in determining the success of any mentoring programme (Brock, 1999; Hobson et al., 2009;). Brock (1999) argues that despite the importance of mentor selection, in many schools' mentors are randomly chosen without considering their compatibility. This incompatibility may be caused by the school-based mentor and student teacher's differences in philosophical understandings of mentoring (Msila, 2012). However, Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that there are no fixed or rigid established rules as to who should be selected to be a mentor and how the mentoring process should be carried out. On the other hand, having attributes and being a good classroom practitioner does not guarantee that a teacher will be an effective mentor because mentoring is not a natural skill people inherently have (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson et al., 2009). In addition, school-based mentors are usually selected based on their experience at the school. This is supported by Kram (1988) who argues that mentors with previous mentoring experience value its importance because they possess authentic first-hand knowledge about mentoring and are willing to help others. Moreover, previous mentoring experience is the consistent finding regarding mentors' willingness to mentor others (Allen, 2007). Contrary to this, Hobson et al. (2009) argue that being an experienced teacher does not make a person a competent mentor.

However, there is knowledge that can only be articulated in the real learning context by an experienced mentor (Bertram, 2011). Henning et al. (2018) identify this type of knowledge as tacit knowledge, which can be acquired "implicitly or unconsciously from the context of teaching" (p.6). According to Windsor (1995) this type of knowledge is subtle and complicated, as it is inherent and cannot be transferred as a concrete and clear guide for action. It may only be obtained in context through guidance. This type of knowledge is therefore necessary, as teachers generally require tacit learning because no explicit explanation can fully address all the interactions that happen in the context of learning (Henning et al., 2018). This issue is also consistent with the cognitive apprenticeship model, where an individual who can be selected to be a mentor is mature and experienced. This model was established by Collins (1987), and it emphasizes how an experienced and expert educator assists a novice educator in attaining cognitive and metacognitive skills. In addition, Dennen and Burnner (2008) argue that the model explains learning where a novice educator is guided through learning stages by an experienced person, as is the case of a school-based mentor in this study.

In addition, mentors may be selected due to their unique understanding of the school culture, the area most elusive to novice teachers (Brock, 1999). Student teachers have difficulties in comprehending the school culture because it is undocumented and hidden. Although student teachers may be given explicit rules and expectations in the school induction policy, the policy may not fully explain the day-to-day functioning of the school. This day-to-day functioning may be made explicit by an experienced mentor who shares examples of accepted ways of doing things within the school context. If mentees manage to understand the school culture, it may provide a feeling of belonging and membership to the school (Brock, 1999).

It is important that the SMT takes a leading role in appointing the mentor of the student teacher, based on both the subject specialization of the student teacher and the expertise and professionalism of the educator. According to the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) subsection 16(3), the principal of the school has a professional leadership role to play, which includes the professional development of novice educators. However, the involvement of school officials like a school principal in mentor selection may result in a mismatch between the mentor and the mentee. This is because principals, make mistakes in assuming that an individual who works well with children will relate well with an adult in a mentoring situation (Brock,1999). The principal and the SMT need to consider compatible traits between the mentor and the mentee to develop good relationships. In addition, mentors may have less autonomy to fully exercise their mentoring roles without interference from school officials (Zachary, 2011). It would be more advisable for the mentor and mentee to naturally select each other, depending on subject specialization and other compatible traits which may lead to the development of beneficial relationships.

2.9 RELATIONSHIPS OF MENTORING

Every mentoring relationship is unique. However, there are certain core actions of the school-based mentors that may result in the establishment of effective mentoring relationships. These actions should include aligning expectations, establishing rapport, maintaining open communication, and enabling mentee agency (Awaya et al., 2003; Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). Given those core actions, “mentors should therefore develop strong relationships of trust and goodwill with their mentees to enhance their professional growth” (Mukeredzi et al., 2015, p.3). If trust and goodwill are

enhanced, Shank (2005) suggests that a bilateral reciprocal relationship between the mentor and mentee is established in which ideas are equally shared. Awaya et al. (2003, p.56) argue that "successful relationships require a mutual commitment to working together as equals and maintaining an open conversation on issues of mutual concern such as establishing agreement on roles and responsibilities". This is opposed to a judgemental mentoring relationship in which the mentor takes the central role in evaluating the mentee's performance, disregarding the mentee's critical thinking on practice and thus the mentee's well-being (Manning & Hobson, 2017). To achieve a bilateral reciprocal relationship, school-based mentors agree to a developmental and non-directive relationship, where the mentee takes the central role of managing and directing their professional development with the help of the mentor (Clutterbuck, 2004). A developmental mentoring relationship relies on trust and openness in the mentoring relationship (Manning & Hobson, 2017).

Most mentoring relationships in most schools are formal and dyad in structure. A dyad mentoring relationship is one in which one mentor and one mentee work together as a pair (Montgomery & Page, 2018). In this type of relationship, the mentor supports the student teacher and gradually removes support until the student can perform a task on their own, a phenomenon known as scaffolding. Drawing from the apprenticeship model, a dyad relationship shows the professional development of a mentee by an expert with craft knowledge (Collins et al., 1989). However, Kennedy (2005) argues that mentoring in the dyad relationship can be hindered by power differentials. According to Starr-Glass (2014) power differential refers to the perceived difference between mentor and mentee regarding status, authority, and self-efficacy (Starr-Glass. High power differentials limit how mentor and mentee regard one another. This led to the decreased mentee empowerment, creativity, and initiative. Power differentials calls for school-based mentors to fully understand their roles to avoid impeding the mentoring relationship. On the other hand, a single mentor may not have all the skills needed in a mentoring relationship (Montgomery & Page, 2018), suggesting that other relationships beyond a dyad could be vital for mentee development.

A final consideration is that a good relationship must exist between the school and the HEI through effective partnerships. However, in the findings of a study done by Mutemeri and Chetty (2011) of 26 lecturers, 60% agreed that there was a poor partnership between the school and the HEI which negatively affected the school-based mentor in establishing strong

relationships with mentees. Notably, the relationships in mentoring in schools can be either formal or informal.

2.10 FORMAL AND INFORMAL MENTORING

The two types of mentoring, formal and informal, both take place at schools. Formal mentoring occurs through a well-structured programme and mentor selection is done by carefully considering mentor and mentee pairing (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). On the other hand, informal mentoring occurs spontaneously between two people where one wants to professionally develop by getting ongoing support from a willing mentor (Kram, 1988; Zachary, 2011).

Mentees in informal mentoring relationships acknowledge receiving better levels of support than individuals in formal mentorship programmes (Chao et al., 1992; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). This is because informal mentoring relationships occur spontaneously because of mutual understanding, professional respect, and the mentee perceiving the mentor as a role model thus, mentees in informal mentoring relationships report being more satisfied with their mentors than mentees in formal relationships. As a result, mentees may develop greater trust with their mentor in an informal relationship and identify with them to a greater extent than mentees in formal mentoring relationships (Chao et al., 1992; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Mentors perform a variety of roles in both a formal and an informal set up.

2.11 THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Mentors' roles and responsibilities are often explained in implicit terms (Heirdsfeild et al., 2008) because they are not properly documented (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). In addition to that, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) argue that there is confusion on exactly what is done by the mentors. However, in a study done by Hudson (2016), it was established that mentees play a central role in terms of supporting mentees in setting goals, developing reflection practices, and providing feedback and guidance for mentees. Koballa et al. (2008) also add that mentors focus on personal support, which consists of emotional, pedagogical, and administrative issues. In addition to that, effective mentors wear different hats and make use of diverse skills to guide, support and motivate their mentees. There are several major roles performed by the school-based mentors in this endeavour.

2.11.1 Creation of a conducive context

Of the many roles played by the school-based mentor, the most important is the creation of a suitable context that can allow the teaching practice to take place effectively (Henning et al., 2018). This is because "the context is a powerful contributor to the overall practicum experience and school-based mentors are best placed to ensure that this element of the practicum is fully engaged and utilised as a part of the student teachers' experiences in the school setting" (Clarke et al., 2014, p.28). In addition, Henning et al. (2018) argue that the introduction of the mentees to the actual context allows the mentors to ask questions about their experiences and their expectations regarding the teaching practice period. Furthermore, the school-based mentor, as a leader, "shares with the student teachers the vision of the school and aligns his or her professional goals with those of the school" (Singh & Mahomed, 2013). This will in turn assist in establishing the level of support that should be given to the mentees.

2.11.2 Pedagogical support

School-based mentors offer pedagogical support in the form of classroom management, administrative requirements, and curriculum issues of the school. This is the GPK, which puts its emphasis on the learning, learners, classroom control, and issues of the curriculum (Grossman, 1990). Koballa et al. (2008) argue that mentors who believe in the pedagogical support of mentees will assist them in the administrative challenges of the school.

The classroom context plays an important role in the learning process of student teachers, because classroom tacit learning is vital for learning to teach (Henning et al., 2018). In addition, Cianciolo et al. (2006, p.622) argue that "tacit knowledge is very closely associated with practical intelligence, is critically important for solving complex practical problems, and is also a great source of creative inspiration". It follows that school-based mentors must work in proximity with their student teachers to assist them with pedagogical issues (Koballa et al., 2008). Although the role of the mentor is to introduce the student teacher to the reality of teaching, when student teachers come to the classroom, they get a reality shock as they encounter unexpected events in the real classroom. This can be related to the divide between theory and practice (Lilach, 2020).

Student teachers come with knowledge for practice (theory-based), which they learn at higher institutions of learning (Cochran-Smith & Lyttle, 1999). However, the school-based mentor has the role to play in assisting the student teacher to attain knowledge-in-practice, which is the knowledge they get in the real classroom setting through the use of reflective practices in

class (knowledge of practice) by referring to the theory learned at higher institutions of learning (Henning et al., 2018). Furthermore, Kinyaduka (2017) and Barends (2022) add that the role of the school-based mentor is to combine the theory learned at university with the practical requirements in the real classroom set-up when they offer pedagogical support. However, in a study done by Lilach (2020), the theory-practice gap may be worsened by the school-based mentors, who may not give student teachers room to use the ideas they have acquired from higher institutions of learning in real classrooms because they may perceive them as ignorant of educational matters. This may cause an emotional drain on the pre-service student teachers. Thus, the emotional support given to student teachers is paramount.

2.11.3 Emotional support

School-based mentors must provide emotional support to students, because when student teachers enter a school context, they may find it overwhelming, and they may be engulfed with the fear of living up to expectations (Armosen et al., 2017). This is because when they are immersed in the real teaching context, they may be faced with reality shocks. According to a study by Steyn (2004), reality shocks may arise when student teachers face unexpected things like poor resources, poor learner behaviour and attitudes of colleagues at the same school. This reality shock is worsened by the fact that they are no longer in their comfort zone but are immersed in unfamiliar classroom contexts where they lack the proper skills to deal with real issues in the classroom. In a study done by Ngwira and Potokri (2019), it was established that student teachers, before joining the teaching profession, thought teaching was easy with only minor challenges. However, they soon encountered serious challenges they had never anticipated in a real classroom. This situation demonstrates the harsh realities of real teaching.

In the same vein, Awaya et al. (2003) argue that it is uncomfortable to teach in front of a mentor, as it adds a lot of unnecessary pressure for the mentee. Additionally, Aslan and Öcal (2012) added that pre-service student teachers can feel uncomfortable in the observational procedure as the classroom environment is unknown to them. In that situation, Koballa et al. (2008) suggest that mentors must give emotional support by listening carefully as student teachers narrate their experiences. These experiences include both good and bad. This may assist student teachers in understanding and resisting the pressures brought about by teaching. In addition, when school-based mentors are giving welfare advice as feedback conversations, they must not cause feedback overload, which can further strain the mentee (Awaya et al., 2003). Giving student teachers emotional support within the context of their teaching career may raise their confidence and self-esteem.

Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that mentees, as adult people, have an intrinsic motivation to learn because they have accumulated a vast amount of knowledge and experiences. They go on to say that mentees, as adults, value what they want to learn concerning at what stage they are in life and the challenges they may encounter. The school-based mentor should recognize that adult learners learn best in practical situations, are problem centred, promote their positive self-esteem, are goal-oriented, show respect for the individual learner, capitalise on their experience, and allow choice and direction (Goodlad, 1990). This means school-based mentors should give emotional support through constructive feedback throughout their teaching practice.

2.11.4 Giving feedback

School-based mentors need to give feedback to pre-service educators (Ambrosetti, 2014; Clarke et al., 2014; Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017), the purpose of which is "not to impose some professional standards but rather in terms of helping student teachers develop their strengths and improving their weak areas according to their personality, character, and ability" (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005, p.285). In addition to that, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007) argue that supervision and effective feedback from school-based mentors afford student teachers with rigour, which is important for them to become effective educators. Rigour can be defined "as in-depth pedagogical and practical knowledge that student teachers should acquire during their pre-service teacher education programs and that practising teachers can apply in a variety of teaching and learning contexts" (Nomlomo & Sosibo, 2016, p.10).

Feedback can be oral or written. A plethora of literature suggests that school-based mentors prefer more open-ended than close-ended questions and they dominate the conversations. In addition, because some lack the required writing skills, school-based mentors prefer informal oral feedback to pre-service educators as compared to written feedback (Clarke et al., 2014). Clarke et al. (2014) also argue that school-based mentors provide a lot of rich feedback to mentees, but that feedback lacks depth and scope, thus impeding proper reflection in the mentoring process. Furthermore, school-based mentors struggle in trying to give the right feedback concerning the developmental stage of the pre-service teacher. In a case study undertaken by Setlhako (2019) on the novice teachers' experience of the development of professional identities, pre-service teachers acknowledged that the feedback given to them is not detailed and elaborate.

2.11.5 Gate keepers of the profession

In their provision of both formative and summative assessments, it is the summative assessment by school-based mentors that plays a pivotal role in allowing pre-service teachers entry into the profession. However, according to the literature, school-based mentors are not thoroughly trained on assessment and they lack direction on how best to do summative assessments (Clarke et al., 2014). The literature review by Clarke et al. (2014) reveals that there is limited research on student-teacher evaluation, given the critical role it plays in initial teacher training. As a result of their review, the following questions were raised: "are the cooperating teachers knowledgeable enough for formative evaluation? are cooperating teachers knowledgeable enough for summative evaluation and are our cooperating teachers' summative evaluations discriminating enough to ensure that individual differences are not only recognised but also accurately reported?" (Clarke et al., 2014, p.22). Clarke et al. (2014) argue that their view of the response to their posed questions has no meaning because school-based mentors' involvement in assessment is still in its infancy. Besides assisting and benefitting pre-service students in the roles outlined, mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship.

2.12 BENEFITS FOR MENTORS

A literature review by Hobson et al. (2009) suggests that mentors' exposure to mentoring pre-service educators positively impacts their own professional and personal development. Zachary (2011) and Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that those educators who prepare themselves for the mentoring job increase their chances of making pre-service teachers achieve their goals, but they also improve and enrich their own practice. The main contributor to mentors learning during mentoring is self-reflection on their practice (Hudson, 2013). In addition, Hobson et al. (2009) and Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that mentoring motivates school-based mentors to communicate with other educators and also university supervisors. In addition to that, mentors feel a sense of job satisfaction, especially if their contribution is acknowledged and verified by university supervisors (Hobson et al., 2009). Wasonga et al. (2015, p.7) argue that if mentors are given a "chance to contribute to the teaching profession by helping the less experienced colleagues", the educators' profession will be renewed. This renewal in the profession enhances their professional relationships with pupils and fellow educators, making them more collaborative. This increased collaboration among educators may result in educators improving their communication skills, which would enable the school-based mentor to venture into other areas of professional development.

Due to their knowledge and expertise gained during the mentoring process, school-based mentors may be placed in positions of responsibility within the education system. The positions offered would allow them to combine what they learn during mentoring with their expertise in their learning areas. In the same vein, Wasonga et al. (2015, p.7) add that

> Mentors can be inspired to research teacher training, and teacher mentoring in an attempt to bridge the gap between college pre-service training, in-service training and practice realities. It can inspire them to want to pursue further education or participate in research at the university level.

The same view is also acknowledged in research by Hobson et al. (2009), who suggested that the participation by school-based mentors will improve career progression and they may pursue further academic studies in educator professional development. However, there are several complications encountered in mentoring.

2.11 CHALLENGES TO MENTORING

The school-based mentors are faced with a variety of complications emanating from within the school context, lack of support from HEIs, a theory-practice gap, and the evaluation dilemma.

2.11.1 School context

The research findings by Aspfors and Fransson (2015) reviewed that school-based mentors are concerned with the school environment, as its culture affects their participation in the mentoring process. Some schools might have a tight environment, which would not give enough time and freedom for school-based mentors to participate fully in the mentoring process (Liaw, 2012). Another difficulty might be overcrowding at schools, which would interfere with the space for planning and reflection between the mentor and the mentee (Robinson, 2016). In addition, overcrowding at schools might result in educators being overburdened by their workloads at their schools (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Hobson et al., 2009; Robinson, 2016). Furthermore, Ellis (2010) and Jansen (2019) argue that a tight school context might lead the school to develop compliance and bureaucratic systems which would offer little support to the mentor and the mentee. This lack of support at schools has a detrimental effect on successful mentoring (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Wynn et al., 2007).

In addition to the issues mentioned, there is also no funding and remuneration for mentoring in the South African context (Robinson, 2016). This makes mentoring more of a voluntary activity based on willingness. Wasonga et al. (2015, p.8) argue "that it is therefore not possible for the authority to ensure continued mentor goodwill throughout the entire process" because any form of training would not be sufficient, as school-based mentors will be mostly affected by extraneous factors like time constraints, availability of relevant equipment and resources. This may put the mentor and the pre-service educator in isolation at the school because of a lack of supervision and evaluation of the mentoring process by HEIs (Hobson et al., 2009). Besides the problems that might arise from the school context, mentors also face an external contextual adversity.

2.11.2 Poor support from HEIs

The school-based mentors work with different mentees and so there is no one-size-fits-all in the mentoring process because of their different professional needs. Some previously good mentoring practices may not work with certain pre-service teachers (Wasonga et al., 2015). This issue is worsened in South Africa by the fact that more students are entering the teaching profession (Roofe and Miller, 2013) and there seems to be an absence of adequate urgency on how teaching practices are structured and coordinated. In addition, there are no strict guidelines there to be followed on who can be a mentor, their training needs, and how the mentoring process is going to be carried out during the teaching practice (Deacon, 2012; Robinson, 2016; Wasonga et al., 2015). A study done by Robinson (2016), which involved school-based mentors and other various stakeholders involved in mentoring pre-service educators, revealed that there is no adequate communication between the HEIs and the schools regarding the timing and the support the mentors are supposed to offer the student teachers. The study also highlighted that mentors do not know how many lessons student teachers are supposed to be taught and observed by the students. The schools also highlighted the absence of clarity on the role of the school-based mentor, which brought confusion to the mentor on what they are supposed to do with the pre-service educators. The study also revealed that the universities rely too much on the school-based mentor to the extent that they "expect the schools to do far more than they can manage" (Robinson, 2016, p.17). In terms of communication between universities and the school, the research by Robinson (2016) revealed that, where it existed, it was just procedural and lacked detail and rigour. In a separate study done by Schoeman and Mabunda (2012) of 153 pre-service educators at the end of their practicum, 27, or 7% of the

pre-service educators acknowledged that there was no proper coordination and communication between school-based mentors and university lecturers. This lack of support from HEIs leads to school-based mentors facing pre-service student teachers with a theory-practice gap.

2.11.3 Theory-practice gap

Teaching practice is critical to the integration of different types of knowledge and skills learned at college into reality in a classroom by the school-based mentor, thus trying to close a gap between theory and practice (Deacon, 2012; Korthagen, 2017; Mukeredzi et al., 2015; Setlhako, 2019; Wasonga et al., 2015). This theory and practice gap is a huge problem in the initial preparation of educators, as school-based mentors may work with student teachers who are unsure and have anxiety about teaching practice despite being trained in the theory of education at universities. In a study of 383 first-year BEd foundation phase student teachers, they indicated that they faced anxiety about teaching practice and that they might not be thoroughly prepared for their practicum by universities (Mashau et al., 2019). Similarly, Roofe and Miller's (2013) study of 30 fourth and third-year students admitted that at an HIE showed that they lack quality learning experiences, thus they cannot balance theory and practice.

2.11.4 Evaluation dilemma

Besides guiding the pre-service teachers, school-based mentors play a pivotal role in assessing the student teachers during teaching practice. Internationally and locally, assessment plays a major part, as it is used to determine the extent of the progress of the pre-service teacher in terms of the course requirement (Aspden, 2017). This brings an ethical dilemma to the school-based mentor, as they must balance assessment, guidance, and confidentiality during the teaching practice (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). This means the school-based mentor must have know-how on handling that dilemma. In a case study carried out by Aspden (2017), he concluded that assessment created a good relationship between the school-based mentor and the other stakeholders, but on the other hand, the assessment may bring about compliance on the part of the pre-service teacher to score good marks. This is consistent with Lilach (2020), who argues that student teachers might be faced with an ethical dilemma when they attempt to please their school-based mentors for a pass mark at the expence of their professional identity. Similarly, in the South African context the findings of a study conducted by Mukeredzi et al. (2015) show that compliance mentoring is done to fulfil the university teaching practice assessment requirements, thus defeating the purpose of teaching practice. In addition, a case

study conducted by Rusznyak and Bertram (2015) revealed that school-based mentors work with different assessment tools, and they struggle to comprehend them, as they have different evaluation criteria.

2.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by the cognitive apprenticeship model with Piaget as its first proponent and it bases its focus on the idea of social constructivism theory, which emphasises learning in context. Vygotsky (1987) emphasizes the role of social interactions and cultural context in cognitive development. When applied to mentoring in schools mentors can create opportunities for collaborative learning, encourage discussions, and facilitate peer interaction. This social engagement helps students internalize new concepts and skills. As a result, Collins (1987) established the cognitive apprenticeship model which emphasizes how an experienced and expert educator assists a novice educator in attaining cognitive and metacognitive skills through social interaction. In addition, Dennen and Burnner (2008) argue that the model explains learning in which a novice educator is guided through learning stages. The model works best within the qualitative approach, as it tries to explain social phenomena textually without the use of numbers. It consists of the following major components: situatedness, coaching, mentoring, zone of proximal development (ZDP), scaffolding, modelling, reflection, and articulation.

2.12.1 Situatedness

The key aspect of cognitive apprenticeship is situated learning which takes place through active engagement within an original environment (Dennen, 2004). In my study, the school-based mentor and the novice teacher are in a specific context, which is the classroom in a school. The novice teacher practices actual teaching within the school context guided by the mentor.

2.12.2 Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching also form part of the apprenticeship model. Mentoring is a "professional development relationship in which a more experienced participant assists a less experienced one in developing a career (Dennen, 2004, p.817). Parsloe and Wray (as cited in Dennen, 2004) argued that coaching and mentoring mean almost the same thing, only that coaching is long-term and focuses on specific skills; mentoring is short-term and plays a supportive role. The focus of this study is to explore the experiences of school-based mentors in mentoring pre-service student teachers.

2.12.3 Zone of proximal development

Vygotsky and Cole (1978) coined the concept of the (ZDP), which suggests that there is a gap between what we can do on our own and what we can do with the help of a more experienced and knowledgeable person (experienced school-based mentor). When the help is provided to novice teachers, they move from actual ability to a more potential ability. This suggests that the gap is closed by social interaction between the learner (novice teacher) and a more experienced mentor (Dennen, 2004).

2.12.4 Scaffolding

According to Vygotsky and Cole (1978), socio-constructivists view scaffolding as the breaking down of tasks perceived by learners to be challenging into smaller manageable ones that the learner can grasp. The school-based mentor will assist according to the way the novice educator grasps important concepts during mentoring and withdraws when the novice teacher shows competence in the execution of the task.

2.12.5 Modelling

Modelling is demonstration of activities by the experienced educator to the novice educator and the novice educator imitating those activities. This is a way of helping the less experienced educator accomplish certain tasks (Dennen, 2004).

2.12.6 Reflection and articulation

Lastly, reflection is important for "self-analysis and assessment" and articulation is the act of using language in communication to analyse and reflect on the learning process (Dennen & Burner, 2008, p.427). This should lead to bilateral communication, which is a crucial ingredient in the establishment of a strong relationship between the school-based mentor and pre-service educator.

2.13 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter reviewed both the international and South African literature on mentoring and teacher professional development with a particular focus on ITE, conceptions of mentoring, mentor selection, teacher learning, mentor teacher knowledge, mentoring roles, relationships of mentoring, and mentor training. There is no consensus on mentor selection and mentors play a variety of roles in addition to their normal teaching loads. The literature also revealed the challenges and opportunities experienced by school-based mentors in the implementation of their roles. The chapter also focussed on South African policy developments

in mentoring and teacher professional development. It also set out the cognitive apprenticeship model as a framework underpinning this study. The next chapter describes the methodology and explains the research design of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to make explicit the chosen research methodology and to justify the selection of a case study of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student educators for this study. There are five sections in the chapter. The first section discusses the interpretive paradigm with its ontological and epistemological assumptions which influenced the research design. The second section examines the reasons for selecting the case study as a methodology for this study. The third section discusses the sources of data, data collection methods, sampling methods, and the research site. The fourth section examines the interpretation of the case through inductive data analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing the quality issues of trustworthiness, the researcher's positionality, and crucial ethical considerations.

3.2 THE INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Paradigms constitute the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, interprets it and acts in it. The way we perceive the world will determine the way we conduct our research. Research paradigms are explained by Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.20) in the following way: "a paradigm represents a particular world view that defines, for the researchers who hold this view, what is acceptable to research and how this should be done". Similarly, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explain the significance of paradigms: that they provide beliefs and dictates, which, for scholars in a particular discipline, influence what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted. This means a paradigm "serves as the lens or organizing principle by which reality is interpreted" (Maree, 2015, p.48). The importance of a paradigm is highlighted by Guba and Lincoln (1989), who suggest that a paradigm consists of the following facets: epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the interpretivist paradigm adopted in this study suggest a subjective view of the world where reality is constructed in the mind of individuals, or what Maree (2015, p.54) suggests, as a constructivist approach where "reality is a social construction; it accepts that the researcher cannot be separated from the research and it asserts that research findings are created rather than discovered." Similarly, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017, p.33) suggests that qualitative researchers have a constructive

epistemological stance and that an effort is made to get into "the head of the subjects being studied so to speak and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning the subject is making of the context." This suggests that reality is not an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2018; Maree, 2015). In addition, Maree (2015) argues that in qualitative research there exists an interactive relationship between the researcher and the subjects and between the subjects and their context and how meaning has been created concerning their context. The ontological position of interpretivism is described as relativism by Kivunga and Kuyini (2017), which suggests that the situation being studied has more than one reality. Furthermore, the social nature of an interpretive paradigm is highlighted by Maree (2015, p.55), who argues that people construct "the social world by sharing meanings through interaction among individuals and produce rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied".

A qualitative approach, drawing upon an interpretive paradigm, is therefore appropriate for comprehending the different voices reflecting the phenomenon of school-based mentoring. As Cohen et al. (2018) have indicated, the purpose of the research is what should guide the choice of the paradigm and methodology. However, the purposes and nature of the research may be made clearer by drawing upon one or more of these paradigms. It is for this reason that it is of paramount importance to foreground the research paradigm of this study and understand its implications for the research process. In its endeavour to explore the mentoring experiences of school-based educators in mentoring pre-service student teachers, the reality in this context cannot, therefore, be seen as something that exists independently of the researcher and research participants; rather, it is seen as socially constructed by taking into consideration the research participants, their context, and the researcher. The interpretive paradigm has a unique understanding of phenomena "through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.21). It also puts its focus on multiple realities and different interpretations of situations (Cohen et al., 2018). As a result, it produces research findings which may "bring us greater clarity on how people make meaning of phenomena in a specific context, thus aiding greater understanding of the human behaviour" (Maree, 2015, p.56). The interpretive paradigm, therefore, became the appropriate one that allowed me to work with different sources. These sources in this study were the interview transcripts from school-based mentors, collages created by the mentors, the school induction policy, university mentoring documents and QMS documents.

This study aims to understand and describe the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers assisted me in observing their experience in a natural context, which Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.290) explain as "the site where participants experience the issue or problem, under study". The study aimed to gain insights into the phenomenon of the experiences of school-based mentors in the particular context by drawing upon the range of their experiences. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that interpretive researchers gather subjective data themselves by analysing documents, observing behaviour, or interviewing participants in the chosen context and they do not rely on instruments generated by other researchers. This led to research results that are in-depth and thick in description (Maree, 2015). The choice of paradigm thus has a clear influence on the methodological stance. The following section examines the choice of a case study methodology and its appropriateness for understanding the experience of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service educators.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research design is explained by Maree (2015, p.70) as a "plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used to data analysis to be done". Using a qualitative approach, this study examined the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers, a method that created an opportunity to interpret the meanings the school-based educators attribute to their experiences. By drawing on collages, interviews, and document analysis, I sought to make sense of their experiences through inductive analysis, as explained in Chapter four of this study. The opportunity to use a variety of data collection methods in a qualitative study enhances its trustworthiness; a concept that is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. This variety is supported by Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.291) who explain:

> Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisuals rather than rely on a single data source. These are all open-ended forms of data in which the participants share their ideas freely, not constrained by pre-determined scales or instruments. Then the researchers review all of the data, make sense of it, and organize it into codes and themes that cut across all of the data sources.

This approach drawing on different methods enabled me to examine the lived experiences of the school-based mentors through different lenses.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In considering the characteristics of a case study approach, I examine reasons for its appropriateness for this study. The study adopts a qualitative case study, located within an interpretive paradigm. A case study is explained by Yin (2003, p.13) as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". On the other hand, Merriam (1998, p. xiii) defines a case study as an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, process, or a social unit". To find commonalities in different definitions, Simons (2009, p.21) defines a case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in real life".

Yin (2003) classifies case studies into explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive. The focus of this research was on both exploring and describing the phenomenon of the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service educators within its real-life context. This suggests that it overlaps between the two types of case studies, namely, exploratory and descriptive. Drawing on Stake's (1995) categorization of a case study into intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple case studies, my study can be categorized as an intrinsic one, where the case is chosen based on an intrinsic interest in comprehending the rare characteristics of school-based mentoring of pre-service student teachers of a specific context. An intrinsic case study is opposed to an instrumental and multiple case study, because its focus is to explore a broader issue.

A case study approach allows for a rich, detailed study of a phenomenon in a real-life context. The focus of my study on the experiences of school-based mentors in a particular context led to "what", "how", and "why" questions. Furthermore, a case study design allowed me to understand the phenomenon under study by asking specific questions during the interview process, because I had restricted control of events occurring within a real-life context, in this case, a school. These advantages suggest that the case study methodology is the appropriate one. Another key feature of a case study is the emphasis on its singularity or examination of a single unit. Rule and John (2011, p.7) argue that the "singularity of focus" in a case study makes it possible to map out what needs to be studied. They explain that it makes it possible to examine a case within a "limited and focused setting." (Rule & John, 2011, p.7). This limited and focused setting enabled me to accumulate authentic detailed data through the eyes of the

school-based mentors in their natural settings. In my study, the case is the mentoring, the focus within the case is the experience of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service educators, and the context of the case is the school located in a rural setup.

In this study, a smaller sample was used. Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) explain that the study of the specific unit of analysis/case requires a smaller sample to allow a thorough and in-depth focus. They assert that the use of a larger sample might jeopardize the effectiveness of a case study as it might reduce the production of a detailed description. A case study allowed me to manage and work with a smaller number of school-based mentors, as explained by Rule and John (2011), who claim that a case study approach is manageable as it allows one to work thoroughly with fewer participants.

Another feature of a case study is the natural setting. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that a natural setting is a situation where there is no modification or manipulation of the research site by the researcher. In this study, the natural setting is the school, and the school-based mentors and pre-service teachers interact without any manipulation from the researcher. Yin (2003) explains that case studies are appropriate for studying situations where there is no control over the behaviour of the participants. Cohen et al. (2018) argue that in natural settings phenomena can be understood in real terms and the ideas will be understood more clearly by the readers. Merriam (1998) argues that a case study provides a thick description within a temporal boundary. The temporal boundary is my school, which according to Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007, 84), is "spatially bound in a formal institutional setting with an established space, schedule, shared expectations, and often a prescribed curriculum". In the same vein, Louis (as cited by Bassey, 1999) contends that the case is studied as a system with boundaries and the parts found in the case are related and cannot be studied in isolation. It is in this natural setting that data was collected using different sources, to understand the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers.

Cohen et al. (2018) argue that case studies can go into situations in ways that cannot be possible numerically, meaning the case study makes it possible to get information that cannot be accessed by the scientific method. Additionally, Starman (2013) argues that case studies can deal with complex situations and consider a myriad of other attributes accurately because they do not deal with many cases; this led to a thorough examination of the phenomenon under study. In the same sense both Cohen et al. (2018) and Starman (2013) argue that within a

particular case, researchers may look at other variables that might come out and might be contextually important and look for the how and why relationships.

This study has its roots in the mentoring of pre-service student teachers with a focus on the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of the pre-service student teacher, so the case study approach becomes appropriate for generating ideas and insights for improving mentoring, and suggesting some implications for teacher mentoring more broadly. A case study has a clear influence on the choice of data collection methods, and the method of sampling. The following section examines data, data collection, and data management.

3.5 SAMPLING

Given that the study had an interpretive and qualitative approach, purposive sampling was required to get the richest data. According to Maree (2015) sampling is a process used to select a portion of the population for study. For this study, participants were chosen using purposive sampling. According to Cohen et al. (2018 p.386), is when participants are chosen according to "fit for purpose", meaning the right participants were chosen based on some special characteristics. As explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) participants are selected based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgment is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the study. Furthermore "sampling decisions are therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions." (Maree, 2015, p.79).

The focus of the study being on the role of the school mentors and the purpose to explore their experiences and how they interpret their mentoring roles for pre-service student teachers, it followed that choosing the school-based mentors for the sample was based on identifying those who would most likely provide the most relevant, rich data. That sample would enable a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study and would represent the diversity of the school. In terms of the requirement for student-teacher placement at schools, they are allocated to experienced educators with at least two years of mentoring at the school. As an educator at the school where the study was done, I needed to be careful about how my position might impact the quality of the study. The issue of my positionality concerning the study and the participants is developed further in a later section.

What facilitated the purposive sampling process was that the school-based educators as mentors were located at the same school. This meant that, as a researcher, I was able to have an internal view of the participants in the real context. Extreme caution was taken not to

manipulate the data, as there was the potential for bias. The rapport created by working together at the same school made it possible to select four educators teaching different subjects at the secondary level. Then, purposive sampling was used to select four of those mentors who represented different subjects and had taught the subjects for at least five years and with at least two years of mentoring experience. The educators who did not have the necessary experience of at least two years in mentoring and had not taught for at least five years, including educators from other schools, were excluded from this study. An extra participant was selected in case one dropped out. In addition, the site and the district in which the school was located were viewed as important, as this would allow for recognition of specific contextual factors that might have impacted school-based educators who are mentors of pre-service student teachers. Race and gender were also considered important aspects in selecting the sample to ensure diversity in the study. Taking these factors into consideration would allow for a comprehensive understanding of school-based mentoring. The summary of the four school-based mentors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample of school-based mentors

Mentor pseudonym	**Gender**	**Race**	**Area of specialization**
Frank	Male	Black	Geography/Social Sciences (High Sch)
Gloria	Female	White	English Home Lang (High Sch)
Gibson	Male	Black	History and Isizulu (High Sch)
Mandy	Female	Coloured	Accounting and Business Studies (High Sch)

The mentors were also selected because they had taught for at least five years and had a minimum of two years of mentoring experience. I believe that experienced mentors would provide the richest data for this study. Drawing upon Maree (2015), qualitative research, when done with a smaller sample, should not be restricted to the selection of the participants only, but also should include the site, proceedings, and any other activities that can assist in producing quality and rich data. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2018, p.226) argue that "the selection of a sampling strategy must be governed by the criterion of suitability". They also add that the choice of which strategy to follow must be "mindful of the purpose of the research, the time scales and the constraints on the research, the research design, the methods of the data collection and the methodology of the research" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.226). All perspectives impacting the approach used in the purposive sampling were considered to improve the validity of the study.

3.4 DATA GENERATION METHODS

The study generated multiple sources of data, enabling the use of multiple ways of data collection. Maree (2015) argues that there are a lot of variables in a case study, and he advocates for more than one way of collecting data. In the same vein, Shenton (2004) argues that different data collection methods can compensate for each other in the event of any shortcomings. Yazan (2005) contends that a case study must use multiple data collection methods to enhance trustworthiness. In this study, I used well-established data collection method, namely, collages, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

The study generated qualitative data, which I needed to analyse to understand the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers. Aside from the document analysis, the data emerged through the voices of the school-based educators who needed to be heard in their school context. Purposive sampling allowed me to get the unique voices of the school-based educators, and to select appropriate documents.

From among the three data-generating methods, I used the collage first because according to Kortjass (2019), a collage encourages intrapersonal communication within oneself and triggers the participants to put multiple realities into context. In addition, a collage was a crucial starting point, because "… people easily relate to images because they are so pervasive in our society" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.224). The collage as a data collection method was followed by the semi-structured interview, which consisted of open-ended questions drawing on school-

based mentors' views on their mentoring practices. The semi-structured interview allowed for asking questions according to the interview schedule and provided opportunities for "probing and clarification for answers" (Maree, 2015, p.87). They also allowed me to seek clarity on some aspects of the collages during the interview session. Lastly, the document analysis assisted in providing a general overview of the mentoring of in-service and pre-service educators at the school, verifying data emerging from other sources, and pointing out principal issues of mentoring that could be categorized into themes.

3.4.1 Collage

Arts-based research is a participatory research practice that connects visual images to more traditional academic research practices in higher education (Burnard et al. 2018). This often involves the researcher interacting with their participant through arts-related activities, where working with the participant informs the researcher's understanding of the participant's lived experiences and results in the researcher creating scholarly arts-based works (Wang et al.2017). In this study a collage was used as an arts based method to try and understand the participants' multiple perspectives of mentoring.

Campbell et al. (2016) describe a collage as an art-based data-generating practice that can produce data that highlights the lives of the participants. Participants put together different images and texts in such a way that they produce new meaning on the way they understand the world (Charlie, 2016). A collage is a good example of visual media and Cohen et al. (2018) argue that visual media are things that we can interact with using all our senses to produce meaning that can be hidden in word-based data. Given that a case study methodology was used in this study, visual media like a collage was deemed appropriate.

After their consent was given, the participants did the collage-making in a quiet environment to make sure the proceedings went smoothly provided them with a pair of scissors, glue sticks, magazines, still images, text, and various printed materials. In a duration of 90 minutes, I instructed the participants to use the scissors to cut out images and texts that relate to their past, present, and future experiences as school-based mentors. I offered them the opportunity to "choose what they see as important" and "guided by non-directive questions" (Rule & John, 2011, p.65). The questions were the same as those of the interviews and they were aimed at answering all three research questions. Asking the same set of questions for both the collage and the interviews promoted triangulation, which increases the chances of credibility of the research findings (Babbie, 2001). I instructed them to put the images together in any order they

thought provoked their feelings and thoughts with a focus on their mentoring experiences. Detailed instructions given to participants during the making of the collages are indicated in appendix 2. Russo-Zimet (2016) reiterate that collage puts together visual ideas even if they seem not to be related to each other, as long as they provoke thoughts and feelings. After the participants completed the task of collage-making, I instructed them to write up about their collages. The opportunities given to participants to elaborate on a collage help the participants to express their feelings and thoughts in such a way that generate their life stories (Kortjass, 2019). Their written account supported and expanded much of the data elicited from the other data-generating sources concerning all the research questions. Although collages have numerous advantages, they also have some potential limitations, as discussed in the following two sections.

Advantages of collages

The collage practice allowed me to generate data on how the school-based educators perceive their work of mentoring pre-service student teachers within a school context. The collage removes the barrier of language and "helps tap into the unconscious and unquestioned domains of experience and beliefs" (Rule & John, 2011, p.70) of the school-based mentor. This allowed the participants to freely express themselves about their experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. This is consistent with Norris et al. (2007), who reiterate that collages are democratic, as they can be assessed by anyone with much ease and can be technologically manipulated to produce more complex meanings. Allowing participants to participate freely at their level brought a sense of ownership that was important in generating a rich description of their subjective experiences. Pillay et al. (2019) argue that the idea of making a collage is appealing, as participants are not passive in the data generation practice, because there are no specialized artistic skills required in doing it. Furthermore, collages can be used in areas where resources are very scarce. Norris et al. (2007, p.481) assert that most materials for making a collage are seen everywhere in the environment, giving participants the ability to utilize the sense of vision and touch to "seduce, to convince, to persuade, to charm, to explain and to critique" any phenomenon. This resulted in participants being able to convey their thoughts and feelings in educational research (Davis, 2008). Moreover, Leavy (2015) and Mackworth-Young et al. (2022) argue that more traditional data generation, like the semi-structured interviews used in this research, may not be as effective in allowing respondents to adequately express themselves.

Disadvantages of collages

Despite the uniqueness and participatory nature of the collage as a data-generating tool, it has limitations. Firstly, the resources given to the participants may limit their creativity, as highlighted by Mackworth-Young et al. (2022, p.1166), who claim that in making collages, participants can be limited by the materials given to them and the images from magazines may show the "idealized versions of participants' lives in the collage". The other potential disadvantage highlighted by Cohen et al. (2018), is the impact of ethical practice and the issue of reflexivity on the use of images in the construction of the collage. Therefore, I needed to be cognizant of my positionality regarding its influence on the process. This is discussed in greater detail in the section on positionality.

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

In this study, I used interviews together with a variety of other methods to explore the experiences of school-based educators. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.123) define an interview as "a structured and focused conversation where the researcher has in mind particular information that he or she wants from the respondent and has designed particular, questions to be answered". Kvale (1996) describes an interview as a formalized talk between two or more people to obtain rich information from both parties through an exchange of views. This means an interview is not an ordinary conversation, as it is controlled and scheduled by the interviewer who introduces the topic under discussion.

Maree (2015) describes three types of interviews, namely, open-ended, semi-structured, and structured interviews. In an open-ended interview, the interviewer guides the phenomenon under discussion by asking questions and the interviewee responds freely about the topic (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The structured interview questions are prepared in advance on an interview schedule and may consist of questions that require open-ended questions or closed-ended responses which follow a predetermined sequence. Semi-structured interviews consist of a few questions which do not follow an prior laid-out order, but which allows for the researcher to ask questions according to an interview schedule.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were a primary data-gathering technique, because of the flexibility in discussing issues with the participant guided by a set of questions prepared in advance on an interview schedule. Cohen et al. (2018) explain that semi-structured interviews are not a rigid data-generating practice, as the researcher is present and can use probing techniques, thus getting insightful information that is in-depth in nature. In addition, semi-

structured interviews were most suitable with my smaller sample of four school-based mentors. They offer opportunities for "probing and clarification for answers" (Maree, 2015, p.87). Lastly, I used encouragement and silent probes in the interview process to encourage the participants to clarify their responses. This assisted in getting data which was accurate.

Taking into consideration that the interview is not just a data-generating tool, Cohen et al. (2018, p.506) contend that it is also a "social, interpersonal encounter" between the researcher and respondent. I established a good relationship with the participants during the making of the collages, and envisaged that the interviews would provide them an opportunity to communicate their views in an open and trusting manner. Cohen et al. (2018) suggest that if a good relationship is developed between the interviewer and interviewee, information concealed by the interviewee can be accessed without fear or uncertainty. In my study, this helped me to gain more insight into the phenomenon without difficulty, especially given that I worked with a small sample. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) explain that interviewing is a good method to use for getting in-depth data from a small sample.

Cohen et al. (2018) also suggest that researchers using semi-structured questions must pay close attention to the responses given by their participants in case added information arises during the encounter. Maree (2015) states that semi-structured interviews are widely used in investigations to complement data coming from other data-generating methods. This makes the semi-structured interview suitable for this study, as it helped in merging data coming from other sources. This is particularly useful when using a case study approach, which attempts to capture the rich, lived realities of participants.

Despite the openness and depth of the established relationships, a potential disadvantage of interviewing is the impact power relationships may have on the interview process, as pointed out by Bertram and Christiansen (2014). I had to be aware of my positionality and its potential influence on the process. To get accurate data out of the interview, I avoided what McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe as leading questions that might distort the data. Maree (2015) suggests that researchers must make sure they redirect participants to the focus of the interview to avoid concentrating on issues that do not contribute to the phenomenon. Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that interviews produce data that is self-reported by the interviewee and needs to be verified by other methods. In this study, a collage and document analysis were used to verify the authenticity of the data emerging from the interview. This is explained later in more detail.

Initially, I intended to use semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the interviewees to address my research questions, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the protocols associated with the lockdown, I used online interviewing. Cohen et al. (2018, p.538) suggest that "online interviewing in the virtual world takes several forms" such as text-based, text and visuals, audio-only and audio and visuals. I used audio and visuals (Zoom meeting) in this study. Although they present an advantage over face-to-face interviews, removing the constraints of time and distance, they also have limitations, for example, the need for a smartphone or a computer with a proper internet connection, as the quality of the interview depends on the strength and quality of the internet connection.

I verbally communicated the interview process to the participants in advance and the date for the interview was set outside of the school operating times. This was necessary to provide the respondents with a relaxed and conducive environment. Drawing on Maree's (2015) probing styles, the detailed-oriented probe, elaboration probe, and clarification probe, I obtained accurate data, rich in detail. Interviews were approximately 45 minutes to 90 minutes and were recorded using the Zoom application with the permission of the participants. Interviews were in English as these were school-based educators who were proficient in the language and who were teaching in this medium. I transcribed the recordings were into text, which supported and expanded much of the data elicited from the collage of images.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Given that the mentoring of pre-service student teachers took place in a formal school institution, documents formed an integral aspect of the collection of data for this case study. These documents included a variety of different types such as minutes of the induction meeting, mentoring feedback reports, school visit reports, policy documents on induction, school induction policy, QMS reports and other sources. Bowen (2009, p.27) defines document analysis as a "systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic". Maree (2015) argues that any document related to the phenomenon under investigation is very important if it produces meaning. He distinguishes between primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources of data are those that are not published, such as a school's induction policy. Secondary sources of information are those that depend on previously published works. Maree (2015) contends that great care should be given to those materials before assessing them, as they may not be accurate. Primary documents formed the bulk of my study and were considered original documents providing vital background information.

Bowen (2009) argues that document analysis is less time-consuming, as the researcher is only focused on data selection instead of data collection. He contends that documents are easily assessed so they are cost-effective. Furthermore, Bowen (2009) argues that the documents are not affected by the process of research because they remain stable and will not be contaminated by the researcher. In the same vein, Creswell (2014, p.223) argues that documents remain stable because they are in the "language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them." This means no data coding is necessary. Creswell (2014) also acknowledges that documents are crucial as they contain the participant's language which cannot be contaminated any further. The other rationale for using document analysis is to triangulate with the semi-structured interviews and collages to enhance trustworthiness, a process supported by Maree (2015) and Babbie (2001).

Great caution was taken in the choice of documents for my study. Bowen (2007) argues that some documents may lack detail because they were not made regarding that particular research. This may result in them not answering the research question. Creswell (2014) argues that some documents, like minutes of a meeting, might not be authentic and in some extreme cases, the handwriting might be illegible. Moreover, the documents may be difficult to locate and retrieve because they are not readily available to everyone (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 1994).

Drawing upon Rule and John (2011, p.80), working with the documents in this case study, therefore, served the following purposes:

- confirming relevance and identifying gaps in the set of documents
- overall understanding of the case
- identifying major issues and themes (content and thematic analysis)
- developing a chronology of events or history of the case
- confirming/triangulating of data/findings from other sources
- contradicting /departing from findings of other sources
- identifying field questions to be pursued in further data collection.

The documents and collages therefore provided a rich background to the study, supporting the semi-structured interviews of the participants thereby contributing to the quality of the study.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Having collected and organized the data, I immersed myself in it to the extent that I was familiar with the depth and breadth of what had been generated by the interviews, collages, and

document analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.16) maintain that immersion in the data usually involves repeated reading "of the data and reading the data in an active way searching for meanings, patterns and so on". I then needed to interpret the data through the process of qualitative data analysis. This process tries to "establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analyzing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their constructions of the phenomenon" (Maree, 2015, p.99). Qualitative data analysis mostly consists of the following: content analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. In this study content analysis was the most appropriate method to analyse the interview transcript and the collage scripts. Content analysis, according to Maree(2015) is an inductive and iterative process where we look for similarities and differences in the text that would corroborate or disconfirm theory. Furthermore, inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that the codes emerge from the data.

The interview transcript was electronically transcribed and then the transcripts and the scripts of the collages were thoroughly analysed, and codes were assigned to data that answered the research questions and research objectives. Rule and John (2011, p.77) describe coding as "a process of choosing labels and assigning them to different parts of data". Furthermore, the "codes also provide the researcher with a good opportunity for getting close to the data" (Rule & John, 2011, p.77). This closeness to the data enabled me to perform content and thematic analysis. In content and the thematic analysis, the codes are utilized to identify patterns emerging from the data and they are grouped in an ordered manner to form categories. A continued analysis of the categories led me to the formation of themes that produced a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of school-based mentoring. In addition, a theme captures something important about the data concerning the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Rule and John (2011, p.78) explain that the "further analysis of the categories and search for patterns of meaning could lead to the generation of themes". I analysed the data generated by the document analysis to identify the overall understanding of the case and confirmation of data from the interviews and collages. Given that the study is an interpretive and qualitative case study, analyzing data inductively through content analysis assisted me in identifying the multiple realities of the school-based mentors potentially present in the data.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Given that this is a qualitative study, its reliability and validity can be addressed by looking at the extent of its trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is an alternative to reliability and validity and takes the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study into consideration (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). According to Shenton (2004), credibility refers to how consistent with reality the findings are. In this study I ensured credibility by using multiple sources of data. The use of documents and the collage provided the background that explains the lived experiences of the participants and verifies the information that they supplied. In addition, the study adopted research methods that are well established, such as the proper generation and use of questions in data gathering techniques and in the data analysis approach. Shelton (2004, p.65) argues that there must be "the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organizations before the first data collection dialogues take place". This was made possible because I was already immersed in and so familiar with the context.

I had properly informed participants about the focus and purpose of the research meaning and only those who were willing to participate were chosen and were also free to leave the research process at any time. This increased the potential of producing credible data. Besides giving the participants the informed consent forms, I also explained to them that their privacy would be observed, and they could respond without any fear. Continuous member checks were done to verify raw data emanating from the collage scripts and the interviews, to help clear the errors that might reduce the credibility of the data. I did this by verifying the transcripts and collage scripts with the participants to clear up errors and doubts about the data. This is consistent with Maree (2015, p.113), who explains that "at the completion of interviewing or other data collection strategies you could submit your transcripts or field notes to the participants to correct errors of fact".

Dependability is the attempt to report the research process in detail, enabling future researchers to repeat the research resulting in similar findings (Shelton, 2004). The research design was thoroughly and strategically developed by including all the relevant features to enable the attainment of proper research practices. This enables anyone who reads the research report to attain a clear understanding of the methods used and their effectiveness (Shelton, 2004). Confirmability is a procedure "taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are a result of the experiences of and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shelton, 2004, p.72). I attempted to do this by fully disclosing

my positionality, detailing my entire research process, fulfilling ethical requirements, member checking and highlighting the limitations of the study.

3.7 RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY

Researcher positionality is another facet of quality. It follows that as a researcher who is also an educator and a senior mentor at the research site, I was immersed in the context of the entire process. This position of being an educator and an experienced mentor carries with it some power and trust issues, which meant that I needed to be aware of my role with some form of sensitivity and transparency. In addition, these "dual roles may also introduce explicit tensions in areas such as confidentiality" (British Education Research Association [BERA], 2018, p.13). To reduce the influence of researcher positionality, I assured the participants that their data would not be accessed by other people who were not directly involved in the study and that their participation would remain anonymous throughout the research process. The role of the researcher and the participants was made explicit. They were also informed that they were free to withdraw if they felt threatened or compromised in the research process.

In addition, the researcher and the participants share a common interest in the study. This means that potentially the generation of the research report from the study would be of interest to them. Therefore, I indicated that I would provide them with a copy of the finished report if they wanted it. I tried to produce unbiased data by abiding by all the established ethical guidelines, establishing the limitations of the study and confirming the accuracy of the generated transcripts.

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Cohen et al. (2018, p.111) contend that "ethical research concerns what researchers ought and ought not to do in their research and research behaviour." A case study, according to Creswell (2014), involves getting information from the participants in the field using a variety of well-established data collection methods. In this study, these methods were in-depth interviews, collage, and document analysis. Its ethical considerations included a complete and thorough explanation of the purpose of the study and the impact it might have on school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers. Thus, an explanation of how the project would be funded and the benefits it may bring to society was given, which assisted school-based mentors in making informed decisions to participate in the research process. Creswell (2014) suggests that researchers must be transparent and open to the participants when collecting data. In the same vein, Cohen et al. (2018) warn researchers about hiding, fabricating, and misrepresenting

facts in the research process. This form of autonomy compels "the researcher to respect and protect any individual's right to be fully informed, to decide whether to participate and choose to withdraw from the study" (Rule & John, 2011, p.112).

Other considerations included gaining informed consent from all school-based mentor educators for their participation and the use of the data generated during the research process. I first discussed the purpose of the study with the school principal, and I obtained permission to carry it out. I then discussed the purpose of the study with those educators who were mentors to student teachers, to determine who would be interested in participating. I got the permission from the school principal (Appendix 5) to carry out the study after I was cleared by the DoE. The university also issued me with a clearance letter to carry out the study (Appendix 4). The participants were given enough time to read the informed concent form (Appendix 5) and understand the implications of the study before they agreed to it. I informed the participants that it would be conducted outside of school hours and that they could withdraw at any time in the research process.

I carefully considered issues of anonymity and confidentiality in the study. The identities of the participants were protected by not using their real names, but their pseudo names instead. This protected them against any form of tracing that could undermine their privacy. Data sets were stored in a locked cupboard in the supervisor's office. Digital data has been password-protected. The password will only be known by the supervisor and researcher. All digital audio files, and all other electronic data, are stored on the hard drive of my password-protected personal computer, and on the hard drive of the password-protected laptop of the supervisor. After five years, transcripts and other such data will be shredded and digital data in the form of USBs (Universal Serial Bus) will be deleted.

The principle of non-maleficence ensures that no harm, discomfort, hurt, or suffering may be caused to participants or any other person who might be affected by the research (Cohen et al., 2018; Rule & John, 2011). This issue was discussed thoroughly during the time I met with the participants to ensure that "participants are no worse off at the end of the research than they were at the start of the research" (Cohen et al., 2018). This study was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic. To protect participants from harm, Covid-19 protocols were observed following the university guidelines. These guidelines prescribed how to collect data with minimum contact with the participants to reduce the spread of the virus. Lastly, the normal teaching and learning time at the school was not used for this research to make sure learners

did not lose quality teaching time. The collages and interviews were done in December soon after the final examinations.

The issue of beneficence suggests that research should be for the public good (John & Rule, 2011). However, Cohen et al. (2018) argue that “beneficence, whilst eminently worthy may not be the main purpose of the research” (Cohen et al., 2018, p.128). For this study, I gave a simplified summary of the report to the participants, the school, and the DoE. The findings of the study could be useful in the improvement of mentoring at schools.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the overall research design and unpacked the methodological approach of this qualitative case study, underpinned by the interpretive paradigm. The chapter established the variety of methods and sources utilized in the understanding of the case, pointing out the unique position of the researcher. The chapter concluded by examining the quality criteria in the form of trustworthiness, researcher positionality, ethics, and limitations. The following chapter presents and analyses data produced by a variety of data sources and methods.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research design and the methodology of the study. This chapter presents the qualitative data that was gathered through semi-structured interviews, collages, and the analysis of the school induction policy. As stated, the purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student educators focusing on how they enact their roles. The original data contained in the interview transcripts, collages, and document analysis were subjected to thematic analysis to find common themes across the data. In addition, I have selected some direct quotes from the interview data and the collage write-up to illustrate the emerging categories and themes and to illustrate a specific understanding of the participants concerning their unique experiences as school-based mentors. I used the cognitive apprenticeship model to structure both the interview and the collage questions and to analyse the data that was generated inductively in this study. This model consists of the following major components: modelling, feedback, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection, and exploration.

I start by first presenting the profile of the school context, followed by profiles of the participants. I used pseudonyms to protect their identities, which enabled me to illustrate their unique experiences in the educational field, and, more specifically, the period they have been involved in the mentoring of pre-service student teachers. The themes were discussed by considering the main research questions as follows:

1. How do school-based educators understand their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers?
2. What challenges do school-based educators experience in fulfilling their role as mentors for pre-service student teachers?
3. In what ways could the mentoring of pre-service student teachers be improved?

4.2 PROFILING THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The study was conducted at a combined school in Harry Gwala District in KwaZulu-Natal. The school is combined because it offers both primary and secondary education and has an enrollment of about 1400 learners from various races. The combined school was purposively selected because it offers teaching practice to pre-service student teachers from various initial

teacher training institutions. The school is a PSPP and consists of 44 permanent educators from different backgrounds. The property belongs to the Roman Catholic Church and the DoE provided the school with a Deed of Agreement which gives the school the right to uphold the Catholic ethos and its distinctive religious character. In PSPPs, the school governing board (SGB), together with all members of the school community develop a Vision and Mission Statement that sets out the school's Catholic character. An understanding of this unique school culture would assist student teachers in their school practicum period.

The school serves the Ixopo community which mostly consists of households with little or no income, solely depending on the social grant. The bulk of the learners live in single-family homes. In addition, they are faced with various social ills: poverty, unemployed parents, substance abuse, child-headed homes, and teenage pregnancies. The school is a no-fee school, depending entirely on the funds allocated by the DoE; however, the funds allocated are not adequate to cover all the school needs. The parents agree to support the school by contributing a certain amount annually, but most of the parents struggle to pay the contribution, leaving the school to operate with a very constrained budget. The SGB and the school staff engage in various fundraising activities to sustain the school. The Roman Catholic church, with the assistance of volunteer educators takes care of vulnerable children through their humanitarian initiatives. These vulnerable children are supplied with basic needs and are taught life skills to become responsible citizens of the country.

The school produces excellent results despite the challenges faced by the school. Teaching within this context demands a unique ethos from the teachers, requiring them to be fully committed to the holistic development of the child. In addition, educators need to be creative and make learning opportunities for every learner in the school's diverse population. This environment provides both the school-based mentor and the pre-service teacher with a unique learning experience. However, the school-based mentor and the student teacher may face barriers to quality mentoring because the nuns from the Roman Catholic Church have a say in how the mentoring process takes place. This may impact how pre-service teachers learn to teach, and the key role mentors can play.

4.3 PROFILING THE PARTICIPANTS

Three of the selected participants occupy management post at the school and they were selected because mentoring is one of their key roles at the school. In addition, they take a

mentoring role during the implementation of QMS and they do understand the culture of the school. Selecting them was deemed to produce quality data.

4.3.1 Mentor 1: Gloria

Gloria is a 64-year-old female educator who has been teaching English home language and she is also the deputy principal of the school. She holds a Master's degree in psychology. She is an educator with 36 years of teaching experience and 25 years of experience in mentoring novice educators. She is a firm believer in the value of mentoring for both pre-service student teachers and first-year teachers. Gloria developed her mentoring interest initially by offering to mentor colleagues using the mentoring experience she had developed at her previous school. Furthermore, as the departmental head of languages, she feels that the mentoring role forms a major part of the job description of the departmental head as well as of subject heads and senior teachers. This is evident from the following verbatim sentiments she shared:

> *Often departmental heads are selected to be mentors for obvious reasons. They know exactly what is required in terms of curriculum, as well as classroom management. Subject heads may be selected for the same reason, and occasionally senior teachers who have many years of experience (Gloria).*

She also acknowledged that during the early days of her career as a departmental head, she did attend induction courses that guided her on mentoring; however, most of her mentoring developed due to self-learning. Figure 1 shows Gloria's collage showing her refelections about multiple realities in her mentoring experiences.

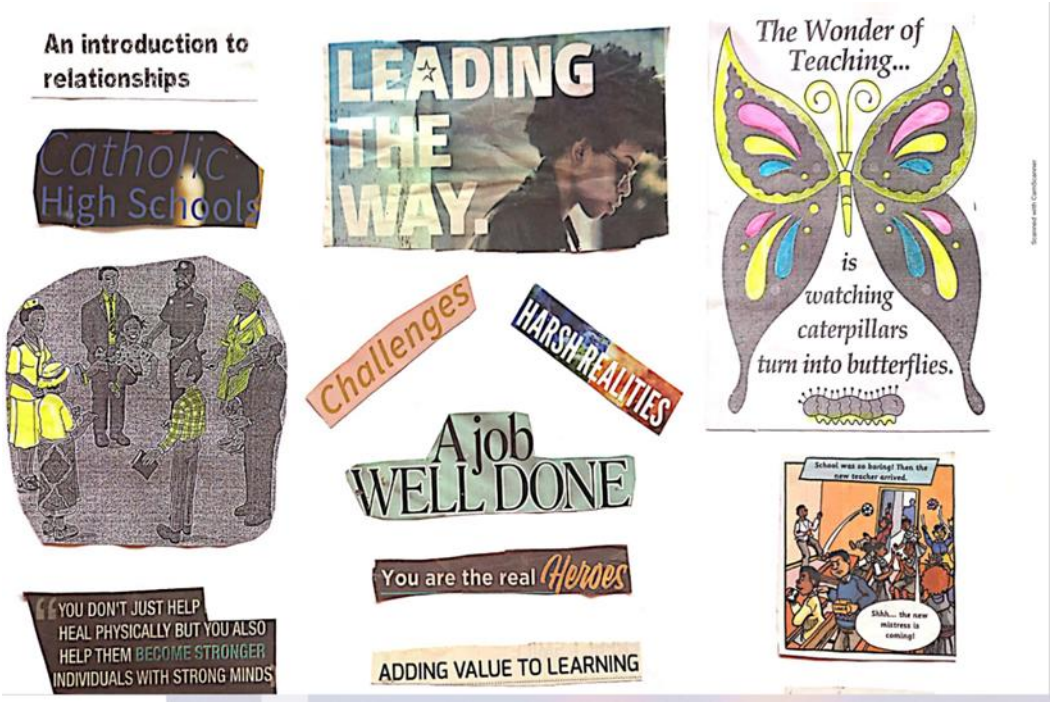

Figure 1: Gloria's collage

Below is a summary of Gloria's explanation of the images illustrated on her collage (Figure 1) about her multiple perspectives on school based mentoring:

> Firstly, Mandy argued that a mentor is a role model for student teachers, 'leading the way' for others to follow. She went on to say that *without guidance learning to teach is a minefield of situations that can blow up in the mentees face, leaving student teachers unable to cope with the 'harsh realities' of teaching*. The mentor helps student teachers and learners to 'become stronger individuals with strong minds'. Furthermore, the relationship between the mentor and the mentees sets the stage for all further interactions. In addition, she acknowledged that good mentors impart the 'the wonder of teaching…' that turns 'caterpillars into butterflies'. This means mentors have a role to gradually change beginning teachers into professional teachers ready to start a new career. Also, according to her collage write-up, *there is immense joy and satisfaction to be obtained by 'a job well done'*. Teachers with this attitude can really see themselves *'as the real heroes' of the world, since without education there would be no other professions at all*. Gloria added that there are many other areas mentors can assist their mentees, including pastoral care for the mentee. This is a guiding principle of the "Catholic schools" where learners mentors stress and model the holistic development of learners, where a concern for the total welfare of the child is expressed. One of the

‘harsh realities’ of teaching is achieving discipline in the classroom, and this is no mean feat. Gloria illustrated that she assists student teachers in achieving discipline by putting a picture indicating a chaotic class.

A detailed explanation of various aspects of the collage are explained in the themes that emerged from the data.

4.3.2 Mentor 2: Frank

Frank is a male educator who is 36 years old and immigrated to South Africa in 2008. He holds a Bachelor of Education degree majoring in geography. He has been in the teaching profession for 19 years and has been involved in the mentoring of student teachers and first-year educators for almost 9 years. At school, Frank is a subject head for geography, and he also teaches social sciences in lower grades. He likes mentoring because he believes that when student teachers arrive at his school, they have the theory only and he must make them understand the reality of teaching in the real world. In addition, he acknowledges that student educators also bring in new knowledge to him and to the institution. This is evident from the following sentiments he shared:

> *I think mentoring preservice educators is quite an exciting thing, because you receive students who have got knowledge from university, and when they come to school, they need to apply that application into the field space, quite an exciting moment. They would also bring in new things that they are learning from the universities and bring them into the school (Frank).*

Figure 2 shows Frank’s collage, which illustrates his past and present mentoring experiences at his school.

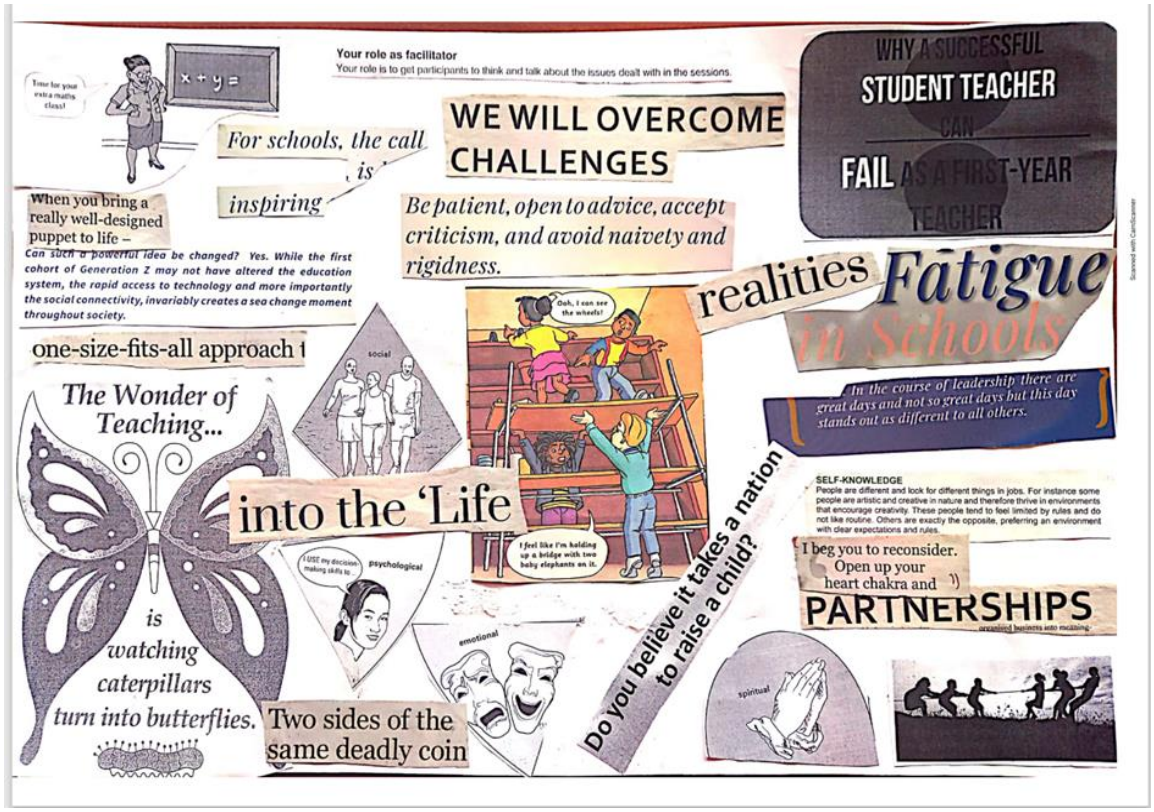

Figure 2: Frank's collage

In his collage write-up Frank gave a summary of his reflection on mentoring, as illustrated by his collage. The extract captures his reflection:

> *The collage points out that there could be failure in schools if we just use a one size fits all approach when tackling matters pertaining to student teachers. The school should offer spiritual and emotional support for results to be achieved The collage also points out a 'cutting on self-knowledge' which clearly speaks about different ways of doing things. Like this cutting on self-knowledge, we should be more open in schools for teachers to come up with creative ways of dealing with pre-service teachers. On the other hand, the tug of war on the collage means that the school is not a competing ground, as a result, school-based mentors should take mentoring responsibilities without fear of being overloaded and failing to produce good results as other educators in the same school who are not mentoring.*

A detailed explanation of the lived experiences as illustrated in his collage are fully explained in the themes that emerged from the data

4.3.3 Mentor 3: Mandy

Mandy is a female educator who is 34 years old and has been in the teaching field for almost 14 years. She has been involved in the mentoring of pre-service student educators for 10 years. Mandy is also a former student of the school. She holds a Master's degree in educational management, and she is also a departmental head in the commerce department. She believes that good mentors must understand the school's vision and school culture. This is necessary because of the distinctive Roman Catholic character of the school. She also added that effective mentors must study and continue to be abreast with the latest educational matters to be able to pass this on to the mentees and the learners in class. This is evident from the following sentiments she shared:

> *I've been part of this institution from grade one up until the matric and coming back (as a teacher). So, I know what the school stands for. I know I can relate to the vision, mission, objectives, and anything that the school stands for. I have knowledge of that since I'm a past student, as well as an educator so I have knowledge on what the school stands for, and what we need in the school to strive, so I think… and also the fact that I'm always studying (Mandy).*

Figure 3 shows her overall understanding of mentoring as a school-based mentor.

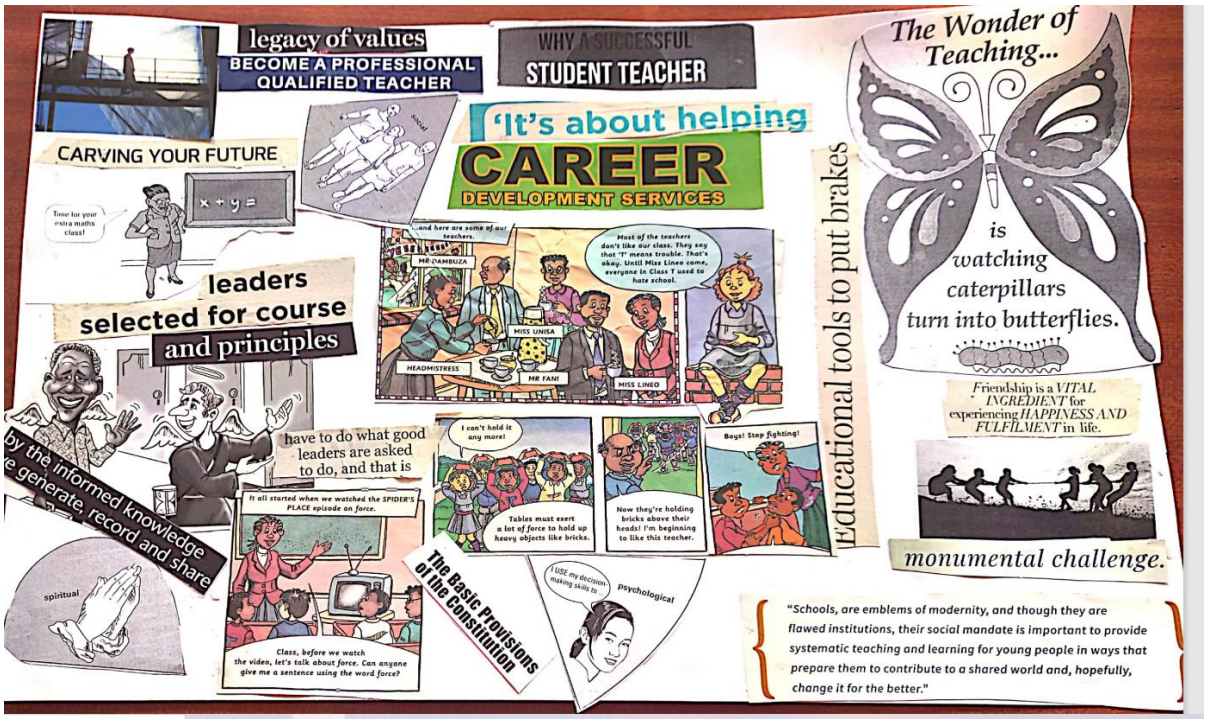

Figure 3: Mandy's collage

In her collage (Figure 3), Mandy expresses her views on her experiences as a school based mentor. In my interpretive summary of her experiences as reflected in the images on her collage, I discuss that she focused more on professionalism.

> Mandy claimed that highly professional school based mentors must leave a legacy of values to student teachers which will improve their professional identities. In the collage text 'aspect of leaders selected for course and principles', Mandy meant that school-based mentors should be selected on the basis of their level of education and understanding of the school culture, which will produce a successful student teacher. A successful student teacher is indicated by an image of caterpillars changing to butterflies in her collage. She also added an image of educators in the staffroom to indicate dynamics within the school context, which ought to be understood by student teachers through the assistance of a school-based mentor. She highlighted that sometimes student teachers are reluctant to be developed, so she has shown educational tools to put brakes on unprofessional practice. In her collage she also highlighted the aspect of a tug of war and she elaborated that mentoring put a strain on her, as it adds more load on top of her teaching load.

4.3.4 Mentor 4: Gibson

Gibson is a male educator who is 45 years old and has been teaching Isizulu home language and history for almost 20 years. He is a departmental head in languages, and he has been involved in the mentoring of novice educators for almost 12 years. Gibson holds a Master's degree in history, and he is pursuing a Doctorate in African culture. He believes that education is a societal issue in South Africa, so pre-service student teachers must receive proper guidance from professional educators with relevant experience. This is evident from the following sentiments he shared:

> *I think education is a societal issue in South Africa. Therefore, student teachers must receive proper guidance from the professional educator. Hence, I always value participating in guiding and mentoring the student teachers during their practicum.*

Figure 4 is Gibson's collage showing a combination of different images to illustrate his previous, current and future views about mentoring at his school.

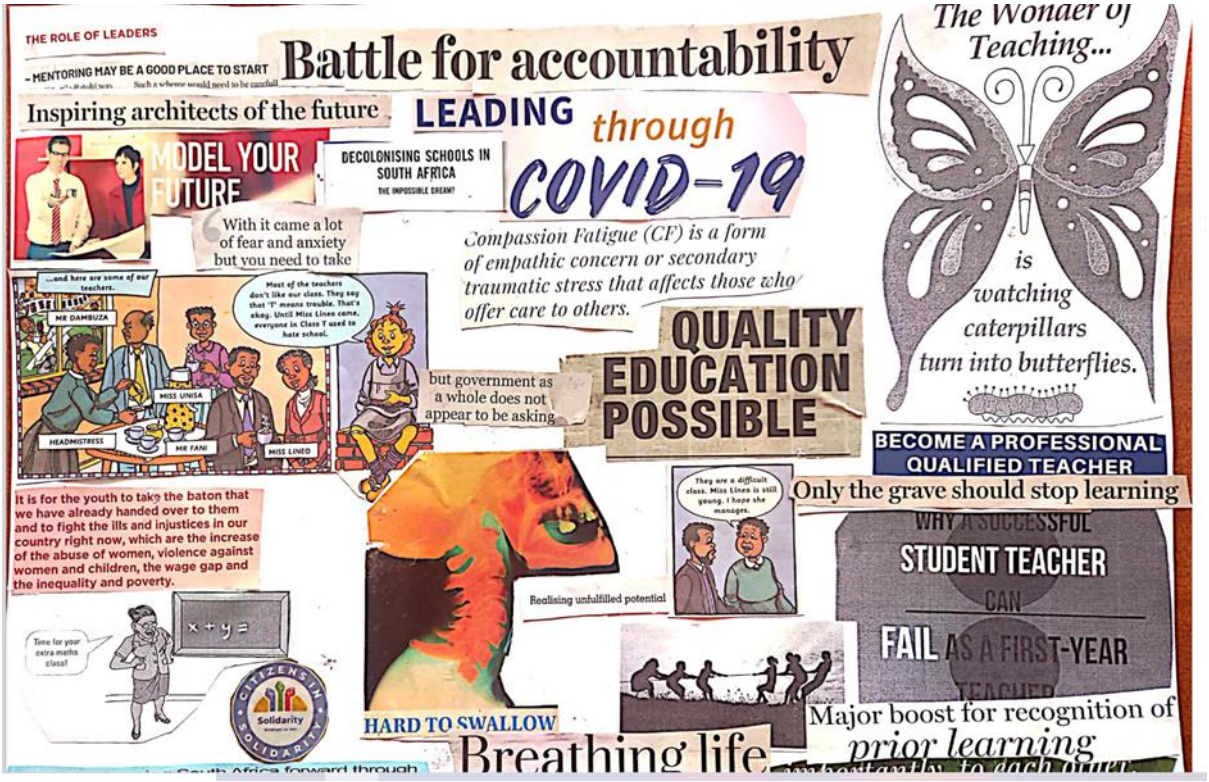

Figure 4: Gibson's collage

I comment here on Gibson's multiple realities on school-based mentoring as they are reflected in his collage (Figure 4):

> In his collage write-up, Gibson's main idea is that education is a societal issue in South Africa, therefore, it is imperative for student teachers to receive proper guidance from their professional educators. He states that he always values partaking in guiding and mentoring the student teachers. He illustrated this idea with an image labelled 'citizens in solidarity'. As an experienced and professional educator he has expertise in teaching and knows how to work with young people and to discipline with love to model their future. He added that it is interesting to impact professionalism on student teachers and inspire 'architects of the future'. His image of teachers in the staffroom having professional conversations indicates good work ethics in the school, which is often characterized by punctuality dedication and professionalism among teachers. This, according to Gibson, encourages teachers to work collectively to attain the mission and goals of the school and the community. Therefore, all of these characteristics lay a good foundation for the student teacher to be well-oriented to the teaching profession as such.

The aspect of ‘hard to swallow’ and ‘the tug of war image’ indicate the struggles faced by school-based mentors in trying to develop student teachers. He also used text stating ‘the government as a whole does not appear to be asking’, which he explained as the lack of support from the DoE. He has acknowledged that ‘only the grave should stop learning’ meaning that learning is a lifelong process.He also added that mentoring is a ‘a major boost for recognition of prior learning’ on his collage.

Further explanation of various aspects on his collage is given in the discussion of themes that emerged from the data.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND EMERGING THEMES

This section presents the data that was generated from semi-structured interviews, collages, and document analysis. The data produced aimed to address all three research questions and was inductively analysed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data because it is a “method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes and categories that emerged from the data were organized into themes aligned with the research questions. The themes that emerged shed light on the experiences of the school-based educators when they enact their roles as mentors of pre-service teachers. The emerging themes were grouped into three themes aligning with the research questions, emerging from the data gathered. These themes are presented as follows:

1. School-based educators’ understanding of their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers.
2. Challenges experienced by school-based educators in fulfilling their role as mentors for pre-service student teachers.
3. Improving the mentoring of pre-service student teachers.

4.4.1 School-based educators’ understanding of their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers

From the data generated, the mentors’ understandings and experiences of their roles and responsibilities were examined. Key aspects that emerged were: the importance of aspects of mentor selection, the identification of appropriate mentor attributes (knowledge), and mentor roles and responsibilities which included: introduction of mentees to the school context,

emotional and pedagogical mentee support, modelling, and mentor/mentee relationships and mentor knowledge.

Mentor selection

Mentor selection based on teaching experience

The selection of mentors plays a pivotal role in determining the success of any mentoring programme (Brock, 1999; Hobson et al., 2009). A common view among the participants was that mentors are chosen based on their years of teaching experience. Gloria, responding during the interview, pointed out the following:

> *We were selected because there is so much that we learned through experience and many things can only be learned through experience, as much as you have got the knowledge.*

Another participant, Mandy, seemed to share the same view about what mentor selection entails, saying:

> *Mentors are selected based on experience. So, the longer you've been at the school, then obviously you have more experience. So, you're able to relate to experience and give sound advice. So, we are selected based on our experience.*

The same view held by Gloria and Mandy on mentor selection, based on their years of experience, was also held by Frank. The extract below captures his views:

> *Mostly they are selected, maybe according to the number of years, teaching a particular subject or maybe can I say my experience? Maybe we can put it that way?*

Drawing from the above excerpts all the participants believe that mentors are selected based on their experiences at the school. This is supported by Kram (1988), who argues that mentors with previous mentoring experiences value its importance because they possess authentic first-hand knowledge about mentoring and are willing to help others. Henning et al. (2018) identify this type of knowledge as tacit knowledge, which can only be acquired by the novice teacher through direct interaction in the real context because no explanation can fully clarify it. On the contrary, Hobson et al. (2009) argue that being an experienced teacher does not make a person a competent mentor.

Mentor selection based on the knowledge of the school culture

Mandy believes that mentors are selected on the idea that they understand the school culture. She did her secondary education at the school and after tertiary education she was appointed to teach at the same school. The extract below captures her views:

> *I was chosen because of the school that I'm in, I also went to school in that school. So, I have an idea of the vision of the school, the mission of the school…, and I know what the school stands for. I know I can relate to the vision, mission, objectives, and anything that the school stands for, I have knowledge of that.*

This extract reveals the tacit knowledge Mandy has of the school culture; knowledge that can be very elusive to novice teachers. This is supported by Brock (1999), who argues that the area most elusive to novice teachers is the school culture because it is undocumented and hidden. The school in this study has a distinctive Roman Catholic character, so a school-based mentor who fully understands the Roman Catholic ethos may benefit a student teacher in comprehending the school culture. In explaining the image of the teachers in the school staffroom chatting in her collage (Figure 3) Mandy says, "*student teachers must be introduced to the school politics to understand how the school operates daily"*.

Mentor selection based on teaching subjects

Gibson seemed to have mixed feelings on the idea of how mentors are selected at his school. He acknowledges that he is not clear on the criteria that the SMT uses to select school-based mentors. However, he acknowledged that the principal takes a leading role in appointing the mentor of the student teacher based on the subject specialization of the student and the expertise and the professionalism of the educator. He reflected,

> *I'm not quite clear about the criteria that the principal and SMT follow but I can assume that it depends on the subject that the student teacher is specializing in. Because I've been seeing that if a student teacher is specializing in maybe let's say languages, we used to find out that their mentors are language teachers.*

This is supported by Brock (1999), who argues that novice educators identify themselves with the principal as the person whom they first encounter at the school, and who must take a leading role in mentor selection. The principal, by selecting the mentors who teach the same subject as the mentee, is trying to match them within each other's proximity. Wasonga et al. (2015) reiterate that an effective mentor works closely with the pre-service student teacher and teaches the same subject. Frank also noted that in some situations, it is not a case of selection, but rather

of expediency, as there may only be one teacher teaching a particular subject. He explained, "*I was the only geography teacher at the school. So maybe it was easy for me to get students as I was the only person who was offering the subject."*

Mentor selection based on the knowledge of school management

Gloria argued that "*people in management need to be mentors".* This is because she believes that if a person is in management, it is an obvious management portfolio to mentor subordinates. This is consistent with the analysed QMS document as the head of department, as a member of the SMT, plays a big role in mentoring in-service teachers. However, it is believed that the effectiveness of mentoring may be reduced if the mentor is the immediate supervisor of the teacher, because usually, they are involved in the performance appraisal of the educators (Hobson et al., 2009). The mentees might perceive their supervisors as evaluators rather than as colleagues.

Mentor selection based on mentors' personal professional development

Besides the attributes mentioned so far, Mandy believes that a mentor needs to be someone who is committed to personal and professional development. She claimed that it makes it "easier *for a person to appreciate and be willing to support others if the person is already committed to their own professional development'*. This is supported by Allen (2007), who maintains that individuals who are eager to uplift their careers are also more willing to assist novice teachers as compared to those who are less willing to uplift their practices. In her collage (Figure 3) she illustrated the aspect of "*leaders selected for course and principles*". When asked to explain, she said: *"educators* [are] *selected because they have uplifted their career by doing various education courses and have developed principles of helping others".*

Other attributes for mentor selection

In addition, all participants agreed that the selected mentors must be willing and effective educators in their practice to be able to impart their knowledge to novice educators. Gloria and Mandy identified this characteristic as those mentors who have a passion for mentoring others. In the same vein, Gibson and Frank added that to be selected as a mentor one must be professional and approachable.

Mentor knowledge

Mentors should be selected based on their specialized knowledge which would assist in professionally developing student teachers. All the participants mentioned that they need subject matter knowledge, which is the knowledge of the subject content that needs to be taught (Grossman, 1990). Drawing from the cognitive apprenticeship model, Collins (2006, p.19) described content knowledge as "domain knowledge", which includes "the concepts, facts, and procedures explicitly identified with a particular subject matter". He argues that this type of knowledge is regarded as expertise knowledge in the teaching process. Frank argued that school-based mentors must have the "*subject knowledge to be able to answer questions raised by student teachers concerning the subject matter"*.

Gibson added that student teachers must be assisted with a "*sound knowledge of the subject matter",* as it will assist them in gaining confidence in the classroom. Gloria concurred with Frank and Gibson by explaining that "*student teachers need to be assisted with expert knowledge in the subject area before they are taught how to teach*". Frank added that student teachers are there for a short time, so with the aid of the student teachers, he selects topics that they are comfortable teaching. He also confirmed that he discusses the philosophical underpinnings of the subject, as described by the CAPS document. Rogoff (1990) describes this as guided participation, which is a social aspect of cognitive apprenticeship. Guided participation involves the use of teaching strategies like coaching, modelling, and scaffolding. Dennen and Burner (2008) reiterate that for guided participation to be successful, it must occur within the learner's ZPD. In this case the student teacher.

Mentors should also be selected due on their PCK, which includes teachers' views and perceptions on teaching the learning area in different grades, learners' conceptions, and misconceptions on topics of identified subjects, curriculum knowledge, and best ways of teaching and instructional materials (Grossman, 1990). In this regard, Gloria confirmed that she teaches the student teachers the teaching methodology and the best ways of communicating the content knowledge. In her collage (Figure 1) she illustrated the aspect of 'add value'. When asked to explain this, she said she assists student teachers in adding value to learning by presenting the subject content in a way they understand it, as it may be a challenging task. This means that for the tasks to be fully understood by the student teachers, mentors must have the skill of scaffolding. Scaffolding means that the student teachers learn how to perform the whole task by first attempting to do smaller tasks. When the mentee accomplishes the smaller task, a larger and more challenging task is offered to the mentee thus assisting them to progress through the ZDP (Dennen, 2004).

In addition, Gibson assisted student teachers with planning the lesson using ATPs and programme of assessments . Frank added that he assisted student teachers in the development of their PCK, saying that, "*pre-service educators are given opportunities to present lessons on content matters whereby the mentor will be guiding from the planning of the lesson up to marking and moderating activities".* This resembles the aspect of coaching in the cognitive apprentice model, where the mentor observes students while they carry tasks and helps in the form of scaffolding, feedback, and modelling (Collins, 2006). Mentors, as teachers, should be able to develop and choose tasks that are developmentally appropriate and intellectually meaningful to ensure that all learners can understand. Fundamentally, they must possess a repertoire of representations that combine instructional techniques with subject matter and provide appropriate scaffolding to continually make learning interesting (Shulman, 1987). Frank went on to say that "*lesson planning is the heart of any lesson delivery"*. Gibson and Frank's viewpoint about PCK is supported by Hudson (2010), who maintains that mentors as experts need to assist student teachers in every aspect of lesson planning including teaching strategies, assessments, teaching resources and other curriculum needs.

Mentors must possess knowledge of context which emphasizes that educators teach in a certain context. Gibson said, *"I remind them that schools exist within communities and their core duty is to instil community values to formal education to young people".* Similarly, Gloria put the image of a child surrounded by different people occupying different positions in society and she explained that "*student teachers must understand that the school does not operate in isolation of its stakeholders"*. This is consistent with the school's mission statement which strives to foster dedication among the educators to serve the community. Gibson then added that "*the community also looks up to teachers to build up the future of young citizens of their communities"*. Therefore, it becomes important for teachers and student teachers to understand the communities from where their learners come. An understanding of the school context might play a pivotal role for the mentor to align the expectations of the school to the student teacher. This may lead to situated learning, which may result from active participation in a real context based on the idea that this engagement provides an opportunity for learning to be transferred much more easily (Dennen, 2004). Moosa (2018) argues that context knowledge can be understood better once the student teachers are immersed in the specific context.

Mentor roles and responsibilities

Introduction of mentees to the school context

Clarke et al. (2014) argue that the introduction of student teachers to the real context plays a pivotal role in orienting student teachers to the reality of teaching. This will, in turn, assist in establishing the level of support that should be given to the mentees.

The extract below captures the view of Gloria:

> *I'm not here to criticize, right, I'm here to help. The only benefit I have is experience and so, I would love to share that with you just to make your life easier, you know, and to make you and to give you confidence and there's such a sense of security.*

Here, Gloria revealed that the first meeting is vital in creating a conducive environment for the establishment of trust to reduce mentee anxiety. She explained that she would discuss her mentoring philosophy with the mentee – a philosophy based on non-judgemental mentoring with an emphasis on developmental mentoring, drawing on her experience as a teacher. She believes that this gives the mentee a sense of belonging, bolstering the mentee's confidence in the whole process of mentoring.

Similarly, Mandy stated that both parties need to be comfortable and have a sense of security before the mentoring process starts. She explained: "*I make sure the person is comfortable, and I'm comfortable with the person and I set down the rules, the things that I'd like and things that I don't like, so both of us are comfortable".*

What emerges from this extract is that she believes a mentor should take a leading role from the first meeting. This is more directive mentoring, where the mentor takes a leading role in directing the mentoring process (Clutterbuck, 2004). She also illustrated the aspect of educational tools to put brakes n her collage (Figure 3) and an image of a woman with captions 'psychological and I use my decision-making skills' (Figure 3). When asked to explain these two illustrations in her collage (Figure 3) she said, "*these are the rules and guidelines I give to student teachers on issues concerning the whole mentoring process using my psychology and decision-making skills".*

On the other hand, Frank adopts a more informal introductory approach by establishing a personal connection. He explained:

> *We just meet and greet and just… to know each other, maybe to know like, what inspired them, maybe to become a teacher…and secondly, I also tell them about*

myself. And of course, I tell them about the school, the classrooms, and maybe… that we are going to be visiting.

Aside from the personal connection, he also introduces the mentee to the culture and layout of the school.

In contrast to Gloria, Mandy, and Frank, Gibson has a scheduled professional conversation with the mentee in which he focuses on the learners and what the mentee can expect from different classes. He also briefly orientates the mentee to his expectations and other staff members. He explained:

I used to have about 10 to 15 minutes talking with a person that… so, I'm this type of a person, and the people that I work with this year, the learners that I work with this year are like this… So, now, it depends on the specialization of the student teacher.

In addition, Gibson emphasised the importance of communication through an understanding of tone and respect for learners' prior knowledge. He explained: "*it is vitally important that you mind the level of communication and respect the learner's prior knowledge to create a safe and open environment for teaching and learning."*

Mentoring relationships

A common view across all participants is the importance of the mentoring relationship. The excerpt below captures Gloria's views on this.

I think the relationship is a major thing in terms of how successful the mentoring is. All right. If there's an open relationship, if there's a willingness on the part of the mentee, to accept the mentoring, then and a willingness on the part of the mentor to be patient and tolerant and accepting and not too demanding, I think the relationship says it all… without a good relationship and a good rapport I don't think effective mentoring can happen.

Here, she highlights the importance of openness, trust, tolerance, and rapport in the development of effective mentoring. In her collage (Figure 1) Gloria demonstrated the aspect of an 'introduction to relationships'. When asked to elaborate, Gloria explained:

Yeah, because mentoring is all about a relationship that the mentee develops with a mentor. So, if you haven't got the relationship, then mentoring just can't even happen. It's a basic block that's needed for mentoring.

By referring to any open relationship Gloria means that she gives the student teacher enough space to let the student show their skills with minimum intervention. If both parties are willing to work together the relationship will be fruitful and may lead to a greater sense of equality and collegiality in the mentoring (Shank, 2005). Gloria suggested that the mentor needs to be "*patient and tolerant",* the mentee takes the central role of managing and directing their professional development according to their own pace in a transparent manner (Clutterbuck, 2004; Manning & Hobson, 2017).

Mandy concurred with Gloria, that a mentoring relationship is of paramount importance and must be open and built on trust. Mandy also highlighted the importance of setting boundaries. These boundaries assist her in aligning expectations from both parties in the mentoring relationship. At this stage, the mentor makes expectations explicit and creates an environment free from threats (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020*).* This assists in producing trust. If trust is developed the mentoring relationship may become more developmental.

The excerpt below captures Mandy's views.

Okay, the relationship with the mentor and the mentee, it's a very important relationship you know, then in the beginning you need to set boundaries. As I said earlier, you need to set boundaries and you need to tell the person your expectations and they need to sit down with you and give you their expectations.

Frank concurred with Gloria that effective mentoring is created if the mentoring relationship is strong, open, transparent, and kept strictly professional. He also argued that a poor mentoring relationship may be evident during lesson delivery and should be avoided at all costs. Frank gave his response thus:

I think the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor relationship should be kept strictly professional, and the relationship should be strong between the two. Because if you don't have a good

relationship between the two, it is going to be evident when lessons are being delivered.

In his collage (Figure 2), Frank demonstrated the aspect of good relationships during teaching practice by putting an image of three people moving together with a caption 'social' written on it. When asked to elaborate, he said: "*TP* [teaching practice] *requires strong relationships and social understanding for better collegiality".*

Gibson concurred with Frank by emphasizing that the relationship between the mentor and the mentee should be kept professional. However, he was explicit in suggesting that the mentoring relationship must be kept professional both within the school and outside the school boundaries. This means the mentor and the mentee must continue to act professionally within informal and formal mentoring settings. When Frank was asked about the extent of professional boundaries, he explained, *"we probably should always carry ourselves as professional people in the school as well as outside the school."*

Emotional support

When student teachers enter a school context, they may be overwhelmed with the fear of living up to expectations (Amorsen al., 2017). This is consistent with Frank's reflection: *" I remember one time I was assigned a student teacher, the first week of going to class she would be shaking because of fear and lack of confidence"*. To support this, Frank pasted an image of two faces showing emotional drain on his collage (Figure 2). When asked to elaborate, Frank highlighted that the *"fear of going to class can emotionally drain a student teacher to the extent of hating the profession before they are even fully employed."* To further emphasize student teachers' fears of teaching practice, he added the following text to the image 'with it came a lot of fear and anxiety, but you need to take' on his collage (Figure 2). In the same vein, Awaya et al. (2003) argue that it is uncomfortable to teach in front of a mentor, as it adds a lot of unnecessary pressure for the mentee. Acknowledging the tensions experienced by mentees, Frank focusses on trying to raise their confidence through offering emotional support. He explained: "*I later sat down with the student teacher to offer emotional support until she could find strength and confidence in delivering lessons".*

Similarly, Gibson highlighted the importance of emotional support for mentees. He explained that this emerges from a fear of not meeting the expectations of mentors, learners, and their families. Mentees have a fear of not passing the teaching practice. This is captured in his words:

> *Because they're thinking are they going to pass their course, some people have got families, some people have got children, babies, and all those kinds of things. So, when they come to class, it doesn't mean that they're emotionally strong.*

This excerpt suggests that most mentees are adults with families, and the mentor needs to understand them and orient them accordingly as adult people. Furthermore, Wasonga et al. (2015) explain that mentees as adults value what they want to learn concerning what stage they are in life and the challenges they may encounter. This is captured by Frank, when he said: "*If they've got any challenges, you must also just sit down with them and talk to them to understand them more so that you have a good road together".* This is also supported by Amorsen et al. (2017), who encourages mentors to understand mentees' external factors that may affect their emotional well-being such as family, assignments, and part-time jobs. Gloria expressed similar insights regarding an acknowledgement and understanding of the complexity of life generally. She explained:

> *We all face certain harsh realities in our lives, life is not easy. All right, whether it's in a professional area, work area, or personal area, and so I think mentoring must help mentees deal with and cope with the difficult situations, and the harsh realities in their lives and that's part of mentoring. Our personal experiences, our work, and professional experiences, all have a tremendous impact on us emotionally psychologically, and even physically.*

Here, she reveals the importance of mentors being able to relate to and offer support to their mentees. She distinguished three areas of support for student teachers: the professional area, the work area, and the personal area. This is important, because when student teachers are immersed in the real teaching context, they may be faced with reality shocks. According to a study done by Steyn (2004), reality shocks may arise when student teachers face unexpected conditions like poor resources, poor learner behaviour, and the attitude of colleagues. Gloria highlighted the importance of mentoring support in enabling student teachers to deal effectively with the challenges they may face.

In her collage, Gloria included the aspect of Catholic high schools, arguing that the school is immersed in a Christian context, and it exhibits a distinctly Roman Catholic religious character. The Catholic school promotes and teaches the values of Christianity as upheld by the Catholic Church, through its religious education programme, its pastoral care and religious practices, and its general programme of holistic education. Besides taking care of the vulnerable and the

marginalised, the church believes in the holistic development of every human being. This holistic development of individuals has an influence on the mentoring process at this school. Mandy had the following to say about offering emotional support to mentees:

> *I think Catholic high schools place a strong emphasis on mentoring. So, because the whole Catholic ethos is to reach out and help other people, whether it's the learners or the teachers. Catholic, of course, also means whole or holistic. So, the idea that mentoring is not just for one area of a mentee's life, but in fact, it's, you know, it can involve pastoring professional development.*

Mandy went on to say that mentoring should not focus only on issues of pedagogies, but must also focus on the human part of the mentee. This is consistent with Frick et al. (2010), who argue that mentoring should not focus wholly on developing pedagogical competencies, but should also concentrate on the humanist aspect of the student teacher. To support this, Mandy pasted the following words 'you do not just help heal physically but you also help them become stronger individuals with strong minds' on her collage (Figure 1).

Pedagogical support

Regarding their roles and responsibilities, a common view across all participants was of offering pedagogical support in the form of classroom management, administrative requirements of the school, and curriculum issues. This is the GPK, which puts its emphasis on the learning, learners, classroom control, and issues of the curriculum (Grossman, 1990). Sometimes referred to as pedagogical knowledge, an aspect of teacher education in HEIs is the development of subject and pedagogic knowledge. Frequently, however, there is a disjuncture between what is taught in HEIs and the realities of school contexts. All the participants indicated a recognition of this disjuncture and felt that one of their roles in the provision of guidance in pedagogy had been proven to work in practice.

Frank advocated that one of the roles of the mentor is to introduce the student teacher to the reality of teaching, as when student teachers come to the classroom, they often face a reality shock when they encounter unexpected events in the real classroom. This can be related to the divide between theory and practice (Lilach, 2020). Gibson also argued that the role of the teacher is to combine the theory learned at university with the practical requirements in the real classroom setup. In explaining the image of the butterfly and the caterpillar in his collage (Figure 4), he said:

> *You change a person from a caterpillar to a butterfly, because when student teachers come to you, they have a theory most of the time, but not practical, you see. So now as a mentor, you just combine these things in one person.*

Here, he highlights the transformational potential of effective mentoring in student-teacher professional growth. Student teachers come with knowledge-for-practice (theory based), which they learn at higher institutions of learning (Cochran-Smith & Lyttle, 1999). The school-based mentor has a key role to play in assisting the student teacher to attain knowledge-in-practice, which is the knowledge they get in the real classroom setting using reflective practices in class. This can lead to a knowledge of practice.

All participants in this study agreed that the most important aspect of pedagogical practice they assisted student teachers with is discipline as part of classroom management, as effective teaching requires effective classroom management. Frank explained:

> *I talk much about classroom management because I believe that if there is no classroom management, if learners are not disciplined, no matter how you try to teach no matter how good the content you are giving them, if the learners are not listening, we're not going to go anywhere.*

Gloria concurred with Frank on the importance of assisting student teachers with discipline. In referring to the cartoon of learners in a classroom in her collage (Figure 1), she highlighted that discipline in class is of vital importance and many student teachers struggle with discipline. She went on to say that assisting student teachers to instil discipline in class is one of the major facets of mentoring. Below is her explanation.

> *The children in that cartoon are behaving very badly. I think that basically shows one of the main reasons teachers need mentoring, in terms of discipline in the classroom and how to deal with the learners in the classroom.*

Besides the emphasis by all the participants on the issue of discipline, Mandy and Gibson also brought up the issue of self-discipline on the part of the student teacher in terms of punctuality, preparation, and good use of notional times as prescribed by the CAPS document. They felt that adhering to these notional times may contribute to and lead to a conducive classroom climate for teaching and learning. Gibson expanded by saying: "*I also tell the mentees that they must prepare on time, they must not come to class empty-handed, …*[be] *prepared for learners*

to ask them questions." Similarly, Mandy highlighted time management and punctuality by saying,

> *You know, punctuality says so much about you as a person. It says so much about pre-service educators, that you value people's time, you know that when you're going to come into the classroom, you're going to value the 30 minutes.*

All the participants agreed that they assist student teachers with the administrative issues of the school. This is consistent with Koballa et al. (2008), who argue that mentors who believe in the pedagogical support of mentees will assist them in the administrative challenges of the school. Gibson acknowledged that he assists in administrative issues of the school, which include assistance in lesson planning using the ATP and POA. Frank added that he also assists school-based mentors in assessments and record keeping of important documents like learners' marks, class registers and records of moderation activities. In the same vein, Gibson and Gloria concurred on the issue of teaching student teachers how to teach content, as this leads to a specific teaching style.

Modelling

In their conception of mentoring, Franke and Dahlgren (1996) argue that modelling in the cognitive apprenticeship model is a concept that emphasizes the demonstrating function of the mentor and thus clearly identifies the mentor as an expert in the mentoring process, resulting in a master-apprentice relationship. Essentially then, in modelling, mentees learn teaching skills by watching their mentors modelling various aspects of pedagogy like classroom management, teaching strategies, and understanding of context and professionalism. A common view across all four participants is that a mentor models good practice for the mentee and leads by example. This modelling of good practice is captured by Frank, when he said:

> *The mentor should display a lot of positive attributes for the student teacher to emulate to be successful. The mentor should be a person of time, in other words, the mentor should always be early for classes and whatever activity is being done at school.*

Frank highlighted the importance of a mentor demonstrating professionalism in all aspects of work. He continued by saying,

> *Mentoring is bringing the theory that they* [students] *have learned at university, bringing it into reality now in school. Also mentoring I understand as whereby you hold someone's hand, and you walk with him or her. So, it's like you're teaching them the right ways of doing things. And it's not only teaching them but there will be only watching them from the side or watching from the back, how you contain yourself how you deal with so many classroom issues.*

By referring to the "*many classroom issues*", Frank revealed an understanding of the complexity of learning to teach and the many ways in which a mentor needs to demonstrate effective professional practice. He also highlighted the importance of assisting mentees to bridge the theory-practice gap, by demonstrating realities and *"walking with him or her"* in his collage (Figure 2). Learning that occurs within the real context is considered to assist the practice of the apprentice (Dennen & Burner, 2008). In this extract, there is a sense of a joint effort where the mentor is the guide or the coach, but also recognizes opportunities for the mentee to work independently supported by the mentor. Frank models professional practice to the student teachers by demonstrating to them the right ways of doing things. This is consistent with Dennen (2004), who argues that in cognitive apprenticeship the expert and the apprentice are immersed in the same authentic socially constructed context and skills are developed through the observation of a variety of activities. The apprentice is given a chance to imitate the skills and the mentor will correct the apprentice through guided participation in many classroom issues. Frank highlighted the guided nature of mentoring when he said, "*whereby you hold someone's hand, and you walk with him or her."* This is emphasised again when he said, "*And it's not only teaching them but there will be only watching them from the side or watching from the back."* Drawing from the cognitive apprentice model, guided participation is accomplished through coaching. By 'walking' with the student teachers and guiding them from the sidelines, he is coaching them in the development of professional practice. This is also an example of scaffolding, where he encourages them to take incremental steps while he supports them.

Similarly, Gibson highlighted the use of modelling and scaffolded learning in his mentoring, when he said:

> *Firstly, I teach a couple of lessons before the student is given a chance to stand in front of the class to see how a lesson is introduced with teaching aids, teaching the concept whilst engaging the learners as well as on how to conclude the lesson.*

Gibson, like the other participants, feels that the mentor must set a good example, and this is indicated in his collage (Figure 4) by the pasting of the text, 'inspiring architects of the future, model your career*'*. He added that the mentee must be approachable and consistent throughout the mentoring process to gain the trust of the student teacher. This enables the mentor to produce a good relationship with the mentee and create an environment that makes modelling of good practice possible, thereby facilitating effective learning (Hudson, 2010). In addition, Gibson models professional practice by teaching in an inclusive way and by discussing this with his student teachers. An example of this is how he articulates the importance of teaching without favouritism. Gibson also plans and discusses lessons with the student teacher to model good practice, consistent with the cognitive apprentice model. He had this to say.

> *I teach learners without favouritism toward others. The reason is to show the student teacher how a teacher earns trust and integrity from the learners they teach. I also plan and discuss lessons together with the student teacher.*

Gloria also acknowledged the impact of mentor modelling on student-teacher professional development when she said, *"observing experienced teachers at work in the classroom is an invaluable aid to student teachers, who need to learn courage and poise."* She added that lesson observation of an experienced mentor in action allows the mentees to reflect upon the lessons observed and ask for guidance in the process of developing their lessons. According to the cognitive apprenticeship model, reflection refers to "students looking back over what they did and analysing their performance" (Collins, 1991, p.125). Reflection may make students teachers see how experts (School-based mentors) carry out the same task and make them think in ways that may make them do the same skill much better. Gloria, like Frank and Gibson, affirmed that to mentor effectively one needs to lead by example. The excerpt below captures her view.

> *Yeah, I feel very strongly about that. I feel that to be a good mentor, you must set an example. You lead by example. Because we all say actions speak louder than words, and I feel that words speak most when they are supported by actions.*

Mandy also believes that mentors must lead by example, saying that she demonstrates punctuality, as this is at the heart of professional practice. She explained: "*when they come to the classroom, they need to be punctual because the learners need to take them seriously and because if they're always late the learners are not going to see anything serious about them"*. Mandy, like the other participants, sees the influential role an experienced mentor can play in

demonstrating professional practice. She believes that this is a constructive process in which the mentor takes the lead during the modelling process, but through the process, the mentor also gains much satisfaction from being part of this professional development. This professional stance is reflected in the excerpt below.

> *I like the fact that I can impart my knowledge and experiences to pre-service educators from an experienced seasoned educator like me. The opportunity to pass on my legacy of values gives me great joy. I like the fact that I can help develop a pre-service educator's career. I like the fact that I can see a positive change taking place after mentoring.*

Furthermore, Mandy's idea of the wonder of teaching as *'*watching caterpillars turn into butterflies' on her collage (Figure 3), was taking a student teacher who does not know anything and giving him or her the much-needed support through modelling of good practice. Frank also alluded to the sentiments echoed by Mandy, when he likened student teachers to a puppet on his collage (Figure 2). He said *"a puppet cannot do things on their own"*, meaning that a student teacher cannot do anything without the mentor. However, Mandy and Frank did not seem to realise that student teachers are not 'tabula rasa', meaning that the student teachers are not empty vessels. Student teachers have accumulated some amount of knowledge through their own experiences (Wasonga et al., 2015). In addition, Henning et al. (2018) argue that some student teachers are extroverted, and they come to schools with advanced knowledge of children's learning. According to the ZPD in the cognitive apprentice model, student teachers as learners come with a certain level of skills which makes it possible for them to move from one skill zone to another (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Mentor constructive feedback

A common view among the participants is that they use their communication skills to analzse and reflect on the mentoring process. This is a one-on-one bilateral communication that characterizes the reflection and articulation aspect of the cognitive apprenticeship model. In this regard, both the mentee and the mentor reflect upon the significance of language for learning, as they express their thoughts on pedagogical issues verbally (Vygotsky, 1934). Gloria, Mandy, and Frank revealed that they resolve the challenges they get from mentees by having constructive feedback. Gloria pointed out that she breaks the barrier that inhibits mentoring by having a private conversation highlighting that she has more experience, and her aim is developmental and not to criticize negatively. This approach is supported by Amorsen

et al. (2017), who argue that feedback should be highly professional, and mentors should avoid personal judgements. The following statement captures her view: *"Well, again, I get a chance to break down the barrier by showing that you are not there to criticize but your role is developmental".* Similarly, Mandy improves the mentoring process by motivating the student teachers, informing them that besides the challenges they face in teaching, there is also an enjoyable part to it. She went on to say that she advices the student teachers on various ways of enjoying the profession: *"I give them ways in which I can show them how to go about enjoying this job within this profession. Because there is an enjoyable part of it".* She demonstrated this aspect by pasting the following text on her collage (Figure 3) : why a successful student teacher…become a professional qualified teacher.

Frank shared the same sentiments as Gloria and Mandy about motivating the mentees. However, he expressed that he aimed at removing the fear within the mentees by instilling confidence. He suggested that he uses his professional journey to motivate and provide confidence to the mentee.

> *I think as humans, sometimes they are afraid, especially of stepping into new waters. So, on the issue of fear, mostly, we just sit together. I try to build confidence in them, telling them also my journey.*

In this concept of the cognitive apprenticeship model, the mentor mediates expert knowledge by making what is tacit explicit to novice educators through mentors' stories and experiences. This enables the learning process to be more concrete and authentic and makes it easier for the mentor to connect theory to practice (Dennen, 2004). Frank also suggested that he improves the mentoring process by maintaining the preparedness of the mentees, by checking their documents daily and giving them corrective measures before the onset of the lesson. He had this to say: "*On the problem of not making worksheets or having teaching materials on time, we sit down maybe even a week earlier and check what lessons are we going to be having and I give constructive feedback on the student-teacher level of preparation".*

By getting this kind of constructive feedback, mentees can build their confidence, insights, and general pedagogical skills and move to the next skill level, as described by the ZDP. Central to the theory of the cognitive apprenticeship model is the ZDP, which is described by Blanton et al. (2005) as the learning space between the teacher's present stage of teaching knowledge skills and the next potential level of teaching knowledge skills through the assistance from

experts. Frank, in his collage (Figure 2), argued that for feedback to be helpful, student teachers must 'be patient, open to advise, accept criticism and avoid naivety and rigidness'.

The teaching practice assessment documents written by mentors reveal that they generally give written feedback after classroom observation sessions. Classroom observation is very important, as it allows student teachers to be observed by an experienced mentor, with the addition of constructive feedback which helps to assess the space between actual and potential performance through social interaction between the mentor and the mentee (Dennen & Burner, 2008). The teaching practice assessment documents from the different institutions written by mentors indicate that feedback was given mainly for students teachers understanding of the content knowledge, knowledge of curriculum, classroom management, lesson planning, and knowledge of context. In addition, the assessment documents from two institutions also indicate that written feedback was given for student teachers understanding of learning diversity, relationship with learners and professionalism as determined by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2018). In this regard, the mentor uses verbal description to make thinking come to the surface. At this stage, Bonk and Sugar (1998, p.142) argue that the mentor may assist the mentee by "chunking, sequencing, detailing, reviewing or any other means to structure the tasks and its components so as to fit it into the learners ZPD". Once this is achieved the student teacher may be able to perform the task at a higher level alone.

4.4.2 Challenges experienced by school-based educators in fulfilling their role as mentors for pre-service student teachers

From data that was analysed the following themes reflecting adversity emerged: mentee attitude, school context, lack of support from DoE, and poor support from HEIs.

Mentee attitude

A common view across all participants concerned the difficulties caused by mentee attitudes. Gloria argued that sometimes a student teacher is allocated to her, but is reluctant to cooperate with her. She explained: *"*It *can be challenging if you're officially supposed to be a mentor to someone, and they are reluctant to accept the mentor in the process".* She added that the mentee "*may just somehow not feel that they're making a connection with you, they can't relate to you".* This is consistent with Awaya et al. (2003), who argue that on some occasions the mentor may be willing to mentor the student teacher effectively, but the student teacher is reluctant to be mentored. Gloria added that "*sometimes people feel threatened by someone with greater experience maybe because they feel insecure in their knowledge and ability especially*

if the person is in management". This is supported by a study done by Mashau et al. (2019) where student teachers revealed that they were anxious to work with an experienced school-based mentor because they felt unprepared for the practicum.

Similarly, Mandy reflected upon the negative attitudes and lack of commitment of some student teachers. She explained: *"The challenge I am experiencing lately is that a lot of the new people that are coming in are not enthusiastic."* Mandy added that the student teachers do not have a clear understanding of their teacher roles, making the mentoring process difficult. She explained: *"I find that some of them don't have a love for the profession, they just don't have that clear understanding of the role of a teacher*." She also noted that they are in the profession to get good remuneration and holidays. She elucidated: *"they've got this idea that they're coming for the salary, if I come by, I'm going to get a good salary and then I get my holidays*". This is supported by a study carried out by Moosa (2018), where school-based mentors expected student teachers to show an eagerness to learn and to love the job and not regard teaching as just a job opportunity. Frank also faced the problem of unprofessional student teachers who were reluctant to prepare for lessons. He explained: "*Some students, maybe they don't prepare enough, they want to cut corners."*

Another challenge for the mentors regarding mentee attitude emerged from the disconnect between mentee expectations and the realities of the school. Their ideas may well contradict what is there in the real classroom, leading to frustration and a lack of confidence in their teaching and classroom management. Frank explained: "O*ne of the challenges that I face, is that the mentees come with preconceived ideas, right to the school, and sometimes, you need to change those ideas*." He concurred with Gloria about the fear the student teachers have, saying, *"Some mentees have fear within them, that they can't even stand in front of the classroom."* This then requires both pedagogical and emotional support from the mentors. Frank illustrated this fear with the following caption on his collage (Figure 2): 'why successful student teachers fail', and when asked to explain he said, "*students may fail TP because they do not want to change pre-conceived ideas from colleges".*

School context

The contextual challenges of overcrowded classrooms and insufficient resources place a large burden on mentors, who in addition to managing large classes must then find the time to mentor student teachers. This is illustrated in Frank's collage (Figure 2), where he highlights the aspect of 'fatigue in schools' which leads to burnout. When asked to elaborate on this he explained

that at schools there is a problem with human resources which leads to the school-based mentors having large classes. Frank explained that with such a big teaching load, he is also expected to assist student teachers, which leads to him burning out. Another challenge is that the "ability to manage students in the classroom is the most painful and struggled component to every student teacher during the practicum period" (Liaw, 2012, p.158). This is illustrated in Mandy's collage when she highlights this aspect with the text 'boys stop fighting' (Figure 3). She explained that at schools student teachers are given large classes with troublesome learners and they struggle in trying to maintain discipline in those classes during classroom observation.

In his collage (Figure 4), Gibson illustrated an image of two educators discussing a class given to a student teacher with the following text: 'they are a difficult class. Miss Lineo is still young. I hope she manages'. When asked to elaborate he concurred with Mandy on the issue of undisciplined classes given to student teachers.

In addition, time is very scarce at schools for school-based mentors and student teachers to engage. This is illustrated by Mandy and Gibson as a tug of war in their collages (Figure 3 and Figure 4 respectively). When they were asked about the issue of the tug of war, they highlighted that they do not have enough time to mentor student teachers effectively because they are senior SMT members, and they are heavily involved in the school administration. In addition to this, they said they are also expected to offer extra lessons to grade 12 learners. They illustrated the issue of scarce time in their collages by using an image of a maths teacher saying 'time for your extra maths class' to learners.

Other challenges in the school context emerge from dynamics within the school. This is illustrated by Gibson in his collage (Figure 4), where he refers to a situation as being 'hard to swallow'. When asked to interpret this, he explained that there are politics that may hinder the proper mentoring of a student teacher. He went on to say that sometimes student teachers can be influenced negatively by unprofessional in-service teachers and then start to develop bad behaviour. He gave an example of an unsupportive colleague who happened to have a conflict of interest in the mentoring process of the mentee. He explained that this student teacher refused to be mentored and she closed the classroom door and locked it to him so he would not observe the lesson. This incident was caused by the influence of a colleague, who was also the parent of the student teacher, which indicates the modelling of an unprofessional practice by an

unprofessional educator. This is an example of a dysfunctional mentoring relationship, which resulted in the establishment of a toxic mentee who harassed the mentor (Scandura,1998).

Gibson was faced with the dilemma of how to manage this uncooperative student teacher, exacerbated by his knowledge of the student teacher's home circumstances. He did not fully reprimand her, because of her family dynamics. This is evident when he said.

> *So that is why I say that is a difficult pill to swallow. So, it becomes hard because you must tell lies. After all, you now look at the student teacher, and find that there is a family that is expecting the student teacher to become a qualified teacher, and the teacher is going to put bread on the table. So now if you can tell the truth, then this person is going to fail, and the family behind is going to suffer.*

This is consistent with Wasonga et al. (2015), who argue that sometimes mentors may avoid criticising the student teacher, thereby restricting crucial learning experiences for the student. They also add that mentors may be reluctant to take the blame in the event the student teacher fails the teaching practice.

Another difficult issue was caused by different religious beliefs. The school has a distinctive Roman Catholic character, but does not discriminate against other people with different religious orientations. The consideration that it may be challenging to mentor a student teacher with a different religion orientation is illustrated in Mandy's collage (Figure 3), where she pasted an image of a *"spiritual praying hand"* and she explained that student teachers from other religions may resist accepting the Roman Catholic ethos during the mentoring process, thus hampering their holistic development.

Lack of Support from the DoE

Hudson (2013) argues that well-prepared mentors are effective in the mentoring process. This is because the mentoring process should not be a trial-and-error process (Wasonga et al., 2015). A common view among three participants was the lack of proper mentor training at the school, district, provincial, and national levels.

Gloria, as a member of the SMT, did receive some mentoring training, but only at the district level. She had this to say: "*As a member of management, we did go to induction courses in some training courses, which gave a certain amount of guidance for me in mentoring*." As a

result of the lack of training, Gloria draws her mentoring skills from her Honours degree in Psychology. She also pursued a lot of counselling courses which assisted her in giving emotional support to students and practising teachers. She explained:

> *But I think for myself, that was more my initiative, I've got an Honours degree in Psychology. I've done a whole lot of counselling courses, and so, it was more a matter of me developing myself, personally.*

She bemoans the lack of adequate training from the DoE by saying, "*there was a little bit from the district in the workshops and things that were held*".

Mandy bemoaned the lack of mentor training from the DoE, saying, *"Okay, with regards to the Department of Education, I have not received any training.*" Like other mentors at the school, Mandy had to develop herself in the field of mentorship. She did this through her studies in teacher professional development. This is evident in her response:

> *However, in my capacity, because I was always studying when I was doing my Master's and there are parts of teacher training that we did learn, so I am coping in the sense that I've gone out externally on my own.*

Similar sentiments regarding the inadequacy of training by the DoE are shared by Frank. He received training at the school level only and he also had to improve his mentoring skills through self-development initiatives. The excerpt below captures his views.

> *I have received training mostly at the school level, at the district level there is not much support from them. So, most of the training is from the school level and of course just from my own reading.*

In contrast to Gloria, Mandy, and Frank, Gibson received support and training at the school level, district level, and provincial level. This was because he was appointed a history cluster coordinator at the district level. He was then tasked to mentor in-service educators at both the district and the provincial level. This is evident when he said, "*I'll say I received training from school, and then I'll say district but not nationally, but I'll say provincially*." This he indicated on his collage (Figure 4) as an aspect of the caption, 'But the government as a whole does not appear to be asking'. When he was asked to explain he said the DoE as a whole is not doing enough to support the mentoring of student teachers in schools during teaching practice.

Poor support from HEI's

Regarding communication between HEIs and schools concerning teaching practice placements and mentoring, both Gloria and Frank felt that communication from HEIs is ineffective. Gloria complained about the lack of face-to-face communication from HEIs, saying that the lecturers no longer visit the student teachers during the practicum. She felt that both lecturers and mentors need time to observe some lessons together so that a common understanding of professional development could emerge. This is evidentin her statement:

> *…a lot of them don't even come to the schools anymore, they don't monitor, or they don't sit in a lesson with the teachers, the pre-service teachers, it's all they now expect that all to happen for the HOD or the mentor to do all that work and to report back to them.*

Similarly, Gibson referred to the written approach to communication without lecturers visiting the school and engaging in discussion with the school mentors. He said: *"The communication is written communication, which comes in hard copies, but they also provide us with their email addresses of the universities if you are facing any challenges."* This absence of lecturers in the school visits is highlighted by Robinson (2016 , p.17), whose study revealed that the universities rely too much on the school-based mentor to the extent that they "expect the schools to do far more than they can manage".

Frank added that the communication between the school and the HEI is not that strong and many of the lecturers do not respond to their electronic mails, and he does not have direct contact with the university lecturers for easier communication, saying *"mostly we don't have like direct communication whereby you can call them on a cell phone"*. He explained further, *"mostly it is through email, and some of them they do respond late to the emails."* Frank added that the lecturers, "*do not honour the dates they set aside to visit the school"*.

In contrast, Mandy indicated that she receives both written and direct communication and she acknowledged that the communication is effective, possibly because of teaching different subjects. This highlights the importance of the communication process between the school and the HEI, as it is part of relationship building.

4.4.3 Improving the mentoring of pre-service student teachers

All the participants had different views on the improvement of mentoring at the school, university, and DoE levels. From the data that was analysed, the following themes emerged: improvement at the school level, improvement at HEIs, improvement at the district level,

opportunities in mentoring, policy support of mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Improvement at the school level

Gloria highlighted that for mentoring to be improved it entirely depends on the individual school-based mentors by saying, *"How could it be improved? I think that depends largely on the specific mentor; you know…"*. This is the case because mentoring is mostly voluntary and no training would be adequate (Wasonga et al., 2015). This means the mentor must take the initiative to develop their mentoring practice.

On the other hand, Mandy insisted that when pre-service educators come to school, school-based mentors must ensure that mentees are given the appropriate and correct roles that will assist them in developing the practical skills needed in teaching. The following statement captures her view: "*I think it can be improved in the sense that when these pre-service teachers come to school, I think we, we need to ensure that they do what they came to do."* She bemoans teachers who give student teachers tough roles and roles that have nothing to do with their teaching practices. This is supported by Whitelaw et al. (2008), who argue that some school leaders give student teachers heavy loads and expect them to be involved completely in other school activities, more than the serving teachers. This may emotionally drain the student teacher and result in him/her being demotivated in the whole mentoring process.

When Frank was asked about the text on his collage (Figure 2): 'I feel like holding up the bridge with two baby elephants on it and a scaffold without wheels*'*, he asserted that mentoring is not supposed to be done by one person, but all the teachers at the school must be involved for mentoring to take place smoothly. The excerpt below captures his views.

> *The mentor should not be the only one supporting, the whole staff should be involved in offering support as we are a body made of different parts. A staff is gifted in different ways and therefore, these gifts should be used to support… mentoring of the mentee.*

In addition, Frank pasted the text 'we will overcome challenges' and an image of a tug of war in his collage (Figure 2). He explained that the challenges of mentoring can be overcome by avoiding unnecessary competition at school and mentors must take responsibility willingly. This is evident in his statement:

> *…the tug of war on the collage means that the school is not a competing ground, as a result, school-based mentors should take mentoring responsibilities without fear of being overloaded and failing to produce good results as other educators in the same school who are not mentoring.*

Similar insights are held by Gibson, who argued that: "*we should be more open in schools for teachers to come up with creative ways of dealing with pre-service teachers"*. Gibson also believes that for mentoring to be improved the SMT must take a pivotal role in orienting the pre-service student educator before the student teacher is allocated to the mentor.

> *Okay. Firstly, I'll say the first thing that needs to be done maybe when the student teachers come to the school, maybe they need to see the SMT first, they need to be addressed by the SMT, not that the headmaster just assigns them to the departmental head.*

Gibson is opposed to a situation where the mentee is sent by the school head directly to the school-based mentor before they are oriented by the SMT who may understand the dynamics within the school better.

Improvement at HEIs

On the issue of how the universities can improve mentoring, Gloria responded by saying that universities must allow the lecturers to visit the school and observe the lessons together with the school-based mentor or the head of department. The following are her words regarding the issue: *"There could be a more personal contact.…visit the school where the mentee is and have a bit of hands-on face-to-face discussion after watching the mentee teaching"*. This would assist the university lecturers in understanding the needs and experiences of the student teacher and school-based mentor in the real context. Drawing from the cognitive apprenticeship model, if all the stakeholders are immersed in the real context, the situatedness of mentoring may be attained, leading to a more practical approach on how mentoring can be improved.

In addition, Mandy argued that for mentoring to improve the universities should give mentees more time at schools to acquire the necessary competencies required by the teaching profession. This is evident when she said:

> *Regarding the university, I think the universities need to give them more time at school, you know, I find that they still go back to college, and they learn more theory.*

Yes, theory is good, but teaching is more practical. So, they need to spend more time in class.

Sustained practical experience allows the student teacher to develop a broad range of skills within a single context (Henning et al, 2018). When help is provided to the novice teacher repeatedly in the same context for a longer time, the teacher may move from his or her actual ability to a more potential ability, a concept of ZPD coined by Vygotsky and Cole (1978).

Improvement at the district level

Frank, on the other hand, pointed out that mentors need to be trained by universities and the DoE annually. This is to keep school-based mentors abreast of the latest developments in the education system. He acknowledged that the education system is changing annually, so he sees it as imperative to train and capacitate educators in the mentoring of pre-service educators in an ongoing process. He explained: *"I think the Department of Education with the universities, they must conduct workshops, maybe of mentors from different schools… refresher courses at the beginning of each year".* This view is supported by Bullough (2005), who reiterates that mentors from different schools need to participate in professional workshops and seminars with relevant stakeholders like district officials and university-based educators to improve the mentor identity. Jaspers et al. (2014) acknowledged that mentoring relationships may be affected by the absence of mentor identities. Thus, district officials must put professional structures in place that may improve the mentor's identity. In his collage (Figure 2), Frank put in the issue of 'partnerships' and when asked to elaborate he said, *"all the stakeholders involved in education matters should work together for a common goal thus improving mentoring".*

Policy support of mentoring

The school induction policy was analysed to find how new teachers, including student teachers, are oriented to the school culture. In the school induction policy, the principal of the school has a professional role of explaining the vision and mission statement of the school that clearly sets out the school's Religious Catholic character. In addition, the deed of agreement is made available to student teachers, which explains that the school is a PSPP, which gives the school its distinctive religious character. An understanding of this unique school culture may assist student teachers in their orientation during the practicum period. In addition, the school SMT

explains the core duties of the mentees and the code of Professional Ethics for Educators according to South African Council for Educators (SACE).

In addition, the induction policy and staff meeting minutes indicate that the principal does explain QMS to some extent, but more can be done to thoroughly explain it. If all the educators have a thorough understanding of the purposes, principles, processes, and procedures of QMS, this may lead to a culture of cooperation. Working together leads to collegiality, which may foster support behaviour at the school toward others (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Balner, 1999).

Professional development opportunities

Zachary (2011) and Wasonga et al. (2015) argue that those educators who prepare themselves for the mentoring job increase their chances of making pre-service teachers achieve their goals and they also improve and enrich their own practice. Mandy agreed to the fact that pre-service student teachers bring in new information by saying:

> *The new people who are coming in, they're more technologically advanced. So, as I teach, I'm also learning from them. So, it's a matter of a give-and-take relationship where they learn from me, and I learn from them.*

Mandy illustrated this with the image of a teacher using a television set in a lesson in her collage (Figure 3). When asked to elaborate, she explained that the *"*[student] *teachers help with technology and computer literacy issues to us old teachers because during our TP we did not have much access to technology".*

Similarly, Gibson acknowledged learning new educational perspectives during the mentoring process. The excerpt below captures his views.

> *I always get an opportunity to learn new teaching approaches from the student teachers. The universities' new knowledge they teach young student teachers is cascaded successfully by student teachers in different schools. The university supervisors also visit the schools and meet with the mentors. Mentors learn a lot from their engagement with the university supervisors in their meetings at schools.*

Furthermore, in her collage (Figure 1), Gloria acknowledged the aspect of a 'job well done', which she explained as an *"immense joy and satisfaction to be obtained by a job well-done".* Similarly on his collage (Figure 2), Frank pasted the following text: 'for schools the call is

inspiring', and he explained that *"helping student teachers brings a feeling of happiness"*. It was also interesting to note that all four participants had the text 'the wonder of teaching is watching caterpillars turn into butterflies' on their collage. When asked about why they had this on their collages, the general view among them was that there was a huge satisfaction when mentors acted as agents of change in the mentoring process. Gloria and Gibson concurred that mentoring is when you change an ordinary student teacher to a professional educator, which may lead to the creation of "*teachers of excellence"*. Gloria also added that school-based mentors with this kind of attitude are 'real heroes' of the world on her collage (Figure 1).

Gibson and Mandy revealed that they always get good feedback from the universities after mentoring pre-service student teachers and it motivates them. This is consistent with Hobson et al. (2009), who argue that mentors will gain a sense of job satisfaction, especially if their contribution is acknowledged by university supervisors.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The data collected from the in-depth interviews, collages, and document analysis generated four key themes. In the first, how school-based mentors conceptualized mentoring, it predominantly emerged that mentors understand mentoring in terms of how they enact their roles; it also emerged that mentors perform a variety of roles that are shaped by their experience. Secondly, mentors highlighted the support they give mentees in specific terms. It emerged that mentors offer instructional and emotional support. Thirdly, mentors discussed the challenges and opportunities they encounter in the mentoring process. It emerged that most mentors encounter different challenges which may include, poor support from HEIs, mentee attitudes, the theory-practice gap, lack of resources, and the dynamics within the schools. The school-based mentors provided some suggestions on how school-based mentoring can be improved at the school level and in general. Lastly, the school-based mentors also explained the professional opportunities they get from mentoring, guided by various policies. It emerged that most of the mentors get job satisfaction, and they also gain new insight in educational matters. The acknowledgements they get from HEIs give them confidence as educators.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presented data generated from interviews, collages, and document analysis according to the purpose of this study to explore the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of student teachers. It was a qualitative case study conducted using four school-based mentors in one school. Using thematic analysis, common themes were identified drawing on the cognitive apprenticeship model as a conceptual framework. The generated data was analysed inductively. This chapter presents a summary of the findings and recommendations based on these results. The findings presented in this chapter attempt to respond to the three research questions:

1. How do school-based educators understand their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers?
2. What challenges do school-based educators experience in fulfilling their role as mentors for pre-service student teachers?
3. In what ways could the mentoring of pre-service student teachers be improved?

5.2 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings are discussed in response to the research questions.

5.2.1 How do school-based educators understand their roles as mentors of pre-service student teachers?

The responses from the interviews and collages indicated that the school-based mentors understand their experiences in terms of how they were selected to be mentors due to their unique attributes which include mentor knowledge and their establishment of good relationships with student teachers. They agreed that they perform a variety of roles and responsibilities. They understand their roles and responsibilities which are, the introduction of mentees, provision of emotional support, pedagogical support, and modelling.

Mentor selection

The findings revealed that mentor selection plays a pivotal role in determining the success of any mentoring programme. All the participants in this study agreed that they were selected based on their years of experience teaching a particular subject. Kram (1988) contends that

mentors with previous mentoring experiences are more willing to assist in the mentoring of novice educators because they have acquired a lot of information about mentoring. This approach is supported by the cognitive apprenticeship model where an individual who can be selected to be a mentor is mature, experienced and an expert educator who can assist a novice educator in attaining cognitive and metacognitive skills (Collins, 1987). However, being an experienced teacher does not necessarily make a person a competent mentor (Dexter et al., 2005; Hobson et al., 2009).

One participant acknowledged that school-based mentors acquire a special type of knowledge because there are things that can be learned through experience only. Henning et al. (2018, p.6) identify this type of knowledge as tacit knowledge which can be acquired "implicitly or unconsciously from the context of teaching". This type of knowledge is necessary, and teachers (including student teachers) also require tacit learning as no explicit explanation can fully address all the interactions that happen in the context of learning (Henning et al., 2018). This indicates that student teachers may benefit from an experienced mentor because of the years of tacit learning gained by the mentor. What is needed, however, are opportunities for this tacit learning to be made explicit to the student teacher.

In addition, the participants also believed in the contextual nature of mentoring such that mentors are selected on the basis that they had developed special experience of understanding the school culture because of their number of years in the school. This is highlighted by Ashby et al. (2008, p.27), who reiterate that "the skill with which student teachers learn to adjust to the placement school's culture will have a significant impact on their success".

Two participants in this study also acknowledged that the school principal and the SMT must take a leading role in appointing the mentors of the student teachers based on their subject specialization and the expertise and professionalism of the educator. According to the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (RSA,1996) subsection 16(3), the principal of the school has a professional leadership role to play at the school which includes the professional development of novice educators. In addition to that, the Personnel Administrative Measures (RSA, 2016) is clear on the fact that the principal and the SMT must lay an integral role in supporting novice educators. However, the involvement of school officials like a school principal in mentor selection may result in a mismatch between the mentor and the mentee leading to poor development of relationships (Zachary, 2011).

Besides the mentioned attributes, the participants also believed in other attributes for mentor selection. This includes educators who can be involved in the mentees' personal growth. Allen (2007) contends that individuals who are eager to uplift their careers are also more willing to assist novice teachers as compared to those who are less willing to uplift their own practice. However, having all the mentioned attributes and being a good classroom practitioner does not guarantee someone will be an effective mentor, because mentoring is not a natural skill people inherently have (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson et al., 2009).

Mentor knowledge

In relation to mentor knowledge, the findings suggest that mentors should be selected based on their specialized knowledge which would assist in professionally developing student teachers. Drawing from the cognitive apprenticeship model Collins (2006, p.19) describes content knowledge as "domain knowledge" which includes "the concepts, facts, and procedures explicitly identified with a particular subject matter". One participant acknowledged that this type of knowledge assists in addressing student teachers' subject content needs because they may have accumulated a vast number of general facts which are not specific to the subject.

Mentors also confirmed that they need an understanding of PCK, which is composed of four components. These components include teachers' views and perceptions in teaching the learning area in different grades, learners' conceptions and misconceptions in topics of identified subjects, curriculum knowledge, and best ways of teaching and instructional materials (Grossman, 1990). In this regard, two mentors confirmed that they teach the student teachers the teaching methodology and best ways of communicating the content knowledge. This means mentors as teachers should be able to guide student teachers in developing tasks that are developmentally appropriate and intellectually meaningful to ensure that all learners can understand. One mentor acknowledged that he is guided by the philosophical underpinnings of the subject as described by the CAPS document. For this guidance to be successful, Dennen and Burner (2008) reiterate that it must occur within the learners' ZPD, using teaching strategies like coaching, modelling, and scaffolding.

One participant acknowledged that mentors must possess knowledge of context, which emphasizes that educators teach in a certain context. This context may include their immediate context (school and learners) or the broader environment, which includes educational officials, parents, community, and other relevant stakeholders (Grossman, 1990). This is consistent with the school's mission statement, which strives to foster dedication among the educators to serve

the community. An understanding of the school context might play a pivotal role for the mentor to align the expectations of the school to the student teacher.

MENTORING ROLES

Introduction of mentees to the school context

One of the participants in this study reflected upon the establishment of a good relationship with student teachers. The participant argued that the establishment of a solid relationship was a major issue for successful mentoring to take place. All the participants also highlighted an open relationship built on trust, tolerance, willingness, and mutual understanding which makes it possible for the student teachers to develop their skills with minimal interruptions. This is consistent with Alwaya et al. (2003, p.56), who argue that "successful relationships require a mutual commitment to working together as equals and maintaining an open conversation on issues of mutual concern such as establishing agreement on roles and responsibilities". Thus, the establishment of a strong relationship acts as a building block that must be fulfilled first.

Another participant articulated the importance of setting professional boundaries which assist in delimiting expectations from both parties involved in the mentoring relationship. Another participant acknowledged keeping the relationship professionally tight, both within the school and outside the school environment. Thus, the mentor and the mentee must continue to act professionally within informal and formal mentoring settings.

Clarke et al. (2014) argue that the introduction of student teachers to the real context is of paramount importance given the challenges awaiting student teachers in classes during the teaching practice period. All the participants revealed that they orient the mentees to make sure they are comfortable before they meet the learners in the real classroom by giving the student teachers a professional conversation. According to two participants, they make student teachers feel at home by assuring them of their professional intentions and thus giving them a sense of security. Another participant articulated the need to ask the student teachers about their professional journey and provide them with their own professional journey. This is consistent with Henning et al. (2018), who argue that the introduction of the mentees to the actual school context allows the mentors to ask questions about the mentees' experiences and to make explicit the expectations in the classroom. This will, in turn, assist in establishing the level of support that can be given to the mentees.

All the participants in the study indicated that on the first encounter, they took a leading role in directing the mentoring process. This involves informing student teachers what to expect in the classes, the school context and from the wider community of the school. This is more of a directive mentoring where the mentor takes a leading role in directing the proceedings (Clutterbuck, 2004). This is important because the student teachers may not be aware of what to expect in the mentoring process.

Emotional Support

One of the participants identified three areas of emotional concern for student teachers as the professional area, the work area, and the personal area. The participant went on to say that student teachers face harsh realities in their lives, and it is the role of any mentor to offer emotional assistance in these difficult situations. These harsh realities may be caused by the reality shock in the real classroom when student teachers face unexpected things like poor resources, poor learner behaviour, and attitude of colleagues at the same school (Steyn, 2004). Another participant reflected on the issue of student teachers being afraid of going to classes in their early days of teaching practice. In that regard, one participant suggested that a mentor sits down with the student teacher and provides them with guidance until they have the confidence to stand in front of the class.

In the personal domain, one of the participants reflected upon the fact that some student teachers are adults and have families, so when they come for teaching practice, they are worried about passing the teaching practice because they are breadwinners at home. In that regard, one participant argued that the school follows the Roman Catholic ethos in which the holistic development of an individual through mentoring is one of its main concerns. It follows that the school-based mentors must have a listening ear which carefully understands student-teacher needs and frustrations as adult learners. This resonates with Koballa et al. (2008), who posit that when mentors give emotional support they need to listen carefully as student teachers narrate their experiences. Similarly, another participant acknowledged that mentors must not only concentrate on the pedagogies, but also the human aspect of student teachers.

Pedagogical support

A common view across all participants was of offering pedagogical support in the form of classroom management, administrative requirements of the school, and curriculum issues. This is the GPK, which puts its emphasis on the learning, learners, classroom control, and issues of

the curriculum (Grossman, 1990). All the participants acknowledged that through pedagogical support student teachers are exposed to the realities of the classroom. However one of the participants acknowledged that student teachers come only with theory learnt at college and the school-based mentors must combine their theory from HEI with the practical teaching in the real classroom. This shows that there is a divide between the theory taught at HEIs and the practical teaching in the real classroom (Lilach, 2020).

All the participants revealed that one of the major areas in which they support student teachers was the discipline issue. They highlighted the need for good discipline in the classroom to facilitate teaching and learning. They also emphasized the need for student teacher self-discipline and their role in supporting this development through encouraging punctuality, organization, professional dress and other aspects of professionalism. Furthermore, they all identified their role in supporting student-teacher understanding of administrative issues of the school. This is consistent with Koballa et al. (2008), who argue that mentors who believe in the pedagogical support of mentees will assist them in the administrative challenges of the school.

Modelling

The participants believed that through modelling student teachers are encouraged to put theory into practice by observing and then implementing the strategies of the mentors in the real context. This assists in bridging the gap between the theory learnt in HEIs and the real world of the school context. This lack of situatedness is seen to result in student teachers as learners not engaging with real educational artefacts (Dennen & Burner, 2008). Learning that occurs within the real context is considered to assist the practice of the apprentice (Dennen & Burner, 2008).

The participants in this study take a leading role in assisting student teachers by demonstrating to them the right ways of doing things in the real context while the mentee observes. This is consistent with Dennen (2004), who argues that the mentor and the student teacher are working in the same context, enabling skills to be transferred through the demonstrating function of the mentor. The mentee is allowed to gradually accomplish tasks through guided participation within the same socially constructed context until the mentee can perform tasks on their own. This is consistent with Vygotsky and Cole's (1978) concept of the ZDP, which suggests that there is a gap between what we can do on our own and what we can do with the help of a more

experienced and knowledgeable person. When the help is provided, the novice teacher moves from his or her actual ability to a more potential ability.

Participants also articulated the importance of modelling professional behaviour where they must set a good example and be approachable and consistent throughout the mentoring process to gain the trust of the student teachers. They emphasised that this contributes to the development of effective relationships with the mentees and creates an environment that makes modelling of good practice possible, thereby facilitating effective learning (Hudson, 2010). The participants mentioned the use of the school code of conduct for educators and the Roman Catholic ethos to reinforce professional conduct.

Giving feedback is essential for the mentor and the mentee to reflect on the teaching practice and can be oral or written. One of the participants reflected upon the motivational aspect of the mentoring process by balancing challenges experienced by teachers with rewards that teachers also experience in the profession. This kind of feedback gives the student teachers hope in the profession. Another participant reflected upon her own experiences and the importance of highlighting professional development as a journey and in this way giving hope and reducing the anxiety of the student teacher. Drawing upon the cognitive apprenticeship model, the mentor mediates expert knowledge by making what is tacit explicit to novice educators through mentors' stories and experiences. This enables the learning process to be more concrete and authentic and makes it easier for the mentor to connect theory to practice (Dennen, 2004).

The participants also revealed that they give feedback on the preparedness of the mentee before teaching by checking their documents daily and giving them corrective measures before the onset of the lesson. By giving this kind of constructive feedback mentees can build their confidence, insights, and general pedagogical skills and move to the next skill level as described by the ZDP. The ZDP is central to the theory of the cognitive apprenticeship model, which is described by Blanton et al. (2005) as the learning space between the student teacher's present stage of teaching knowledge skills and his/her next potential level of teaching knowledge skills through the assistance from experts.

Besides oral feedback, the participants also gave written feedback through teaching practice assessment documents after classroom observation sessions. Classroom observation is essential, as it allows student teachers to be observed by an experienced mentor. In addition, giving constructive feedback assesses the space between actual and potential performance through social interaction between the mentor and the mentee (Dennen & Burner, 2008). The

teaching practice assessment documents from the different institutions written by mentors indicated that feedback was given mainly for students teachers' understanding of the content knowledge, knowledge of curriculum, classroom management, lesson planning, and knowledge of context.

5.2.2 What challenges do school-based educators experience in fulfilling their role as mentors for pre-service student teachers?

Mentee attitude

All the participants identified the challenges caused by mentee attitudes. One participant revealed that sometimes a student teacher is reluctant to cooperate despite being properly oriented. This is consistent with Alwaya et al. (2003), who argue that on some occasions the mentor may be willing to mentor the student teacher effectively, but the student teacher is reluctant to be mentored. The same participant also added that sometimes student teachers develop negative attitudes because they feel threatened by the position of the mentor. Kennedy (2005) argues that mentoring relationships can be hindered by power differentials. The power differential refers to the perceived difference between mentor and mentee regarding status, authority, and self-efficacy. Another participant highlighted that the new generation that is entering the teaching profession lacks professional commitment. This was supported by a study carried out by Moosa (2018) where school-based mentors expected student teachers to show an eagerness to learn and to love the job and not regard teaching as just a job opportunity.

One of the participants also revealed the problem of unprofessional student teachers who are reluctant to prepare for lessons and follow the correct ways of doing things. A further challenge for the participants regarding mentee attitude emerged from the disconnect between mentee expectations and the realities of the school. The participants revealed that if their ideas contradict what is there in the real classroom, it could lead to frustration and a lack of confidence in their teaching and classroom management. This then requires both pedagogical and emotional support from the mentors.

The participants revealed the contextual challenges of overcrowded classrooms, heavy teaching loads, high-stake assessment regimes, insufficient resources and too many administrative duties place a large burden on mentors, who in addition to managing large classes must then find the time to mentor. This leads to school-based mentors being overstretched, often leading to frustration and burnout.

Other challenges revealed by the participants in the school context emerge from dynamics within the school. One participant explained this as school politics that may hinder the proper mentoring of a student teacher. Student teachers can be influenced negatively by unprofessional in-service teachers, described as the modelling of unprofessional practice by an unprofessional educator, leading to the student teacher refusing to be observed during teaching practice. Scandura (1998) describes this as a dysfunctional mentoring relationship, where a mentor is harassed by a mentee. Another challenge revealed by one of the participants is mentoring student teachers from other religions, citing the distinctive Roman Catholic character of the school.

One participant was faced with an ethical dilemma of how to evaluate an unprofessional student teacher. The participant ended up doing compliance mentoring and just passed the student teacher. This ethical dilemma of accurately evaluating a student teacher is complicated by the fact that they must balance assessment, guidance, and confidentiality during the teaching practice. This is consistent with Wasonga et al. (2015), who argue that sometimes mentors may avoid criticising the student teacher, thereby restricting crucial learning experiences for the student and may be reluctant to take the blame in the event the student teacher failing the teaching practice.

Lack of support from D.O.E and HEIs

The findings highlight that there is lack of support from the DoE. Although Hudson (2013) argues that well-prepared mentors are effective in the mentoring process, the common view among three participants is the lack of proper mentor training at the school from the district, provincial, and national levels. As a result of this lack of proper training, they resorted to self-study by enrolling on courses that improve mentoring skills. Only one of the participants acknowledged receiving training at the school level and district level. This highlighted the issue that the DoE was not consistent in offering support to school-based mentors. In addition, the response from most of the participants revealed that there were no proper guidelines on mentorship from the DoE, and where the training was done, it lacked supervision and coordination.

Moreover, the participants acknowledged poor support from HEIs. They highlighted that the communication between the schools and HEIs was not adequate regarding teaching practice placements and mentoring. Robinson (2016) shows that where it does exist, it is just procedural and lacks rigor and detail and it does not give explicit guidance on issues of student teaching

time and mentoring. One of the participants acknowledged receiving written communication in the form of an introduction letter and a file informing him of the mentoring process. The danger with this lack of direct contact is that school-based mentors may fail to correctly interpret the teaching practice requirements of the HEIs, leading to inadequacies in the mentoring process. Furthermore, one of the participants highlighted the lack of face-to-face communication with the lecturers creating a void in their understanding of student-teacher needs. From the response of the participants, the lecturer's emphasis is on evaluation, a more judgemental approach than developmental, as they frequently leave without giving thorough feedback to the student teachers. Another participant faced the challenge of lecturers not responding to emails and not honouring the dates set aside for school visits.

5.2.3 In what ways could the mentoring of pre-service student teachers be improved?

Improvement at school level

All the participants had different views concerning the improvement of mentoring at the school, university, and DoE levels. One of the participants highlighted that for mentoring to be improved it would entirely depend on the individual school-based mentors. This is because mentoring in most cases is voluntary and no amount of training would be adequate (Wasonga et al., 2015). Thus, mentors must take the initiative to develop their own mentoring practice. Participants also highlighted the importance of all educators, motivated by the SMT, to be involved in mentoring processes, thereby creating effective communication channels and a culture of mentoring.

It emerged from the findings that universities should encourage the lecturers to visit the school and observe the lessons together with the school-based mentor or the heads of department. This would assist the university lecturers in understanding the needs and experiences of the student teachers and the school-based mentors in the real context. Drawing from the cognitive apprenticeship model, if all the stakeholders are immersed in the real context, the situatedness of mentoring may be attained, leading to a more practical approach on how mentoring can be improved. Another participant suggested that for mentoring to improve the universities should give mentees more time at schools. This suggestion is supported by Henning et al, (2018), who explain that sustained practical experience allows the student teacher to develop a broad range of skills within a single context (Henning et al., 2018). They also argue that if a student teacher

is trained in the same context for a longer period, repeatedly, they may move from actual ability to a higher level of ability, or to what Vygotsky and Cole (1978) term the ZPD.

Support from DoE and HEIs

One of the participants highlighted the need for annual mentor training by universities and the DoE. This would keep school-based mentors abreast of the latest developments in the education system, as changes annually. A further suggestion was for district mentor training where mentors from different schools could come together. This is supported by Bullough (2005), who reiterates that mentors from different schools need to participate in professional workshops and seminars with relevant stakeholders like district officials and university-based educators to widen and deepen an understanding of mentorship. In addition, ISPFTED (DBE & DHET, 2011), as a policy framework, highlights the need to train school-based experienced teachers as mentors of student teachers to make sure student teachers receive quality support and guidance. Furthermore, the school pincipal and SMT must fully develop educators by making an annual strategic plan to facilitate a proper induction of in-service educators, thus creating a culture of mentoring at schools.

5.3 POLICY SUPPORTING MENTORING

The QMS records indicate that at the school most of the procedures are followed to some extent, leading to the creation of a mentoring culture. It follows that the SMT provides the development of educators as part of their mentoring and coaching roles, not concentrating on its use as a basis for payment progression.

5.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

All the participants emphasised that mentoring pre-service student teachers allows them to give input into the development of a professional teacher who can then perform tasks competently. This, in turn, gives them a sense of professional satisfaction, which improves their practice. Furthermore, two of the participants in this study acknowledged that they get good feedback from the universities after mentoring pre-service student teachers. This is consistent with Hobson et al. (2009), who argue that mentors will gain a sense of job satisfaction, especially if their contribution is acknowledged by university supervisors. Another participant agreed with the fact that pre-service student teachers bring in new information that may assist them in their practice. Lastly, a participant highlighted that schools must provide an environment for professional development opportunities to take place.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was restricted to four school-based educators who are mentors of pre-service student teachers at the same school. It cannot be generalized as a practice to other institutions of learning. Maree (2015) describes this as overdependency on a single case, making it impossible to generalize it to another context. However, Merriam (1998) argues that replication in qualitative research is not possible, as repeating the research will not yield the same results because human nature varies with context. This study aimed to get the in-depth lived experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers in their natural context. As a result, this study is not generalizable nor replicable to another context. The study focused on the views of only four school-based mentors, so it does not represent the experiences of all mentors or all learning institutions.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

5.6.1 Mentor selection

The school-based mentors should have previous mentoring experience in accordance with Kram's (1988) position that mentors with previous mentoring experiences value its importance because they possess authentic first-hand knowledge about mentoring and are willing to help others. Besides previous mentoring experience, it is highly recommended that the school-based mentors possess the knowledge of educational context, which includes knowing about learner backgrounds at the school and the organizational culture of the school (Bertram, 2011). This would assist them in introducing the student teachers to the school culture so that it improves student teachers' levels of belonging. Moreover, the school principal and the SMT must be involved in the selection of competent school-based mentors, as it is their responsibility to professionally develop novice educators, as revealed by the PAM document. Besides knowledge of the school's educational context, the SMTs, as leaders of schools in their selection of school-based mentors, must also consider unique attributes like mentor knowledge, approachability, and mentors' professional development initiatives.

5.6.2 The role of the school's organizational context

The SMT's role in the school's organizational context is crucial. It must provide an environment that supports collegiality. Research by Allen et al. (1997) and Billett (2003) found that rigid organizational structures, unclear expectations, job pressures, and a competitive environment reduce the mentor's ability to mentor others. I recommend that SMTs devise a

management style that involves coaching, mentoring and peer networking. Working together leads to collegiality, which may foster support behaviour at the school towards others (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Balner, 1999). However, Nieto (2003) argues that time at school is a limited commodity, and it is vital for the collegiality and professional development of educators. Despite these severe time constraints in schools, I recommend that the SMT must find time for the school-based mentor and student teacher to reflect on practice.

5.6.3 Policy implications

The SMT is encouraged to implement the school induction policy as an ongoing process, not as a once-off event. Furthermore, the SMTs are recommended to put processes in place to ensure that needs identified through the QMS and other processes are responded to. The SMTs are therefore expected to provide the development of educators as part of their mentoring and coaching roles and emphasize the developmental nature of the QMS and not concentrate solely on its use as a basis for paying progression.

5.6.4 Department of Education, school, and university partnerships

I recommend the development of strong partnerships between the HEIs, DoE, and the schools. A study by Robinson (2016), which involved school-based mentors and other various stakeholders involved in mentoring pre-service educators, revealed that there is no adequate communication between the HEIs and the schools regarding the timing and the support the mentors are supposed to offer the student teachers. A strong partnership between the HEIs and the school would assist the school-based mentors in terms of the mentoring requirements during teaching practice placements. Furthermore, strong communication between schools, the DoE and HEIs might bring more clarity to the role of the school-based mentor. This may give clear guidelines on mentorship and expose student teachers to a variety of contexts for them to adapt to dynamic teaching situations as part of their WIL.

5.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this study has provided insight into the experiences of school-based mentors when they enact their roles as mentors of student teachers in a particular school, it is a small-scale study with findings that cannot be generalized across all schools in the province. More studies among a variety of schools in the same province which would give a better understanding of the experiences of school-based mentors in enacting their roles as mentors should be conducted. This may produce more accurate and reliable information which could be generalized to other teaching contexts.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student educators focusing on how they understand their roles, what the challenges are and how mentoring can be improved. This was achieved through semi-structured interviews, collages and document analysis used to explore their experiences. The documents and collages provided a rich background to the study, supporting the interviews of the participants, thereby contributing to the quality of the study. The cognitive apprenticeship model was used as a conceptual framework to gain a deeper understanding of the data. The school-based mentors understand their roles as the introduction of mentees, provision of emotional support and pedagogical support, modelling and giving constructive feedback. The school-based mentors faced several challenges in enacting their roles, which emanated from the attitude of the pre-service student teachers, the school context and lack of support from the DoE and HEIs. The mentors also suggested ways of improving the mentoring of student teachers at the school, HEIs, and the district level. The study established that the school had an induction policy which assisted in giving some direction in the implementation of the mentoring process at the school. However, the implementation of the QMS must be done with a clear management plan to strengthen the professional development of teachers with mentoring as a key tool.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

Topic: The experiences of school-based educators in their role as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study.

Background information

1) How many years have you been in the teaching service?

2) For how many years have you been involved in the mentoring and induction of preservicesecondary school teachers?

3) What do you like and appreciate about mentoring pre-service educators at your school? Explain.

4) What is your understanding of mentoring preservice educators?

5) How are mentors at your school selected? Can you explain further?

6 How were you chosen to be a mentor at your school? Elaborate

7) What are the roles of a mentor?

8) What knowledge do you believe mentors need to mentor student teachers effectively?

9) What are your actions when you are chosen to be a mentor i.e. when you meet the menteefor the first time? Can you add some detail to that?

10) What are the areas in which you assist the pre-service educators? Elaborate on how you help them.

11) What challenges are you facing in mentoring pre-service student schoolteachers?

12) What do you do to address each of the challenges?

13) What training for mentoring at the school, district, or national level did you receive? If none,how are you coping?

14) How does the relationship between the mentor and mentee influence the

mentoringprocess? Can you give some examples from your experience?

15) What communication do universities provide regarding their expectations of thementoring of preservice educators?

16) How effective is the communication with universities regarding mentoring? What couldbe happening that is not happening to improve it?

17) What are the kinds of support you get from the School Management Team (S.M.T)?Please explain.

18) How can school-based mentoring of pre-service educators be improved? Elaborate.

Appendix 2 : Collage instructions

Topic: The experiences of school-based educators in their role as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study.

Use a pair of scissors to cut out images and texts from magazines, newspapers, and any otherprinted material provided that you think relates to your past, present, and future experiences as a mentor of pre-service student teachers.

Paste the images on an A3 white paper provided reflecting on the following:

1.What do you like and appreciate about mentoring pre-service educators at your school?

2.Your understanding of mentoring pre-service educators.

3.How are mentors at your school selected?

4.The roles of a mentor.

5.Attributes that make a school-based mentor successful in mentoring pre-service studentteachers.

6.The kinds of knowledge you believe mentors need to mentor student teachers effectively

7.Your actions when you are chosen to be a mentor i.e. when you meet the mentee for thefirst time.

8.The areas that you assist the pre-service educators.

9.The challenges you faced in mentoring pre-service student schoolteachers.

10 What can be done to address each of the challenges?

11 How does the relationship between the mentor and mentee influence the mentoring process?

12. The kinds of support you get from the School Management Team (SMT) and theuniversities.

13. How the mentoring of pre-service educators can be improved.

14. Be original, creative, and innovative.

15.Write a detailed explanation of the collage.

Appendix 3: Document analysis guidelines

Topic: The experiences of school-based educators in their role as mentors of pre-servicesecondary student teachers: A case study.

The following school documents (the induction policy, IQMS reports, class visit reports, induction minutes), university policy documents on mentoring and teaching practice including any other documents from the university relating to mentoring pre-service studentteachers. The main aim of analyzing the above-mentioned documents is to

1. Provide a general overview of the mentoring of in-service and preservice educators at theschool.

2. Develop a series of mentoring events at the school.

3. Verify data emerging from other sources.

4. Compare with data from other sources and see if there is convergence or divergence withfindings from other sources.

5 Point out principal issues of mentoring that can be categorized into themes.

Appendix 4: Ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

16 April 2021

Mr Fortune Mhonda (220101342)
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Mhonda,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002668/2021
Project title: The experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study.
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 12 April 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 16 April 2022.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

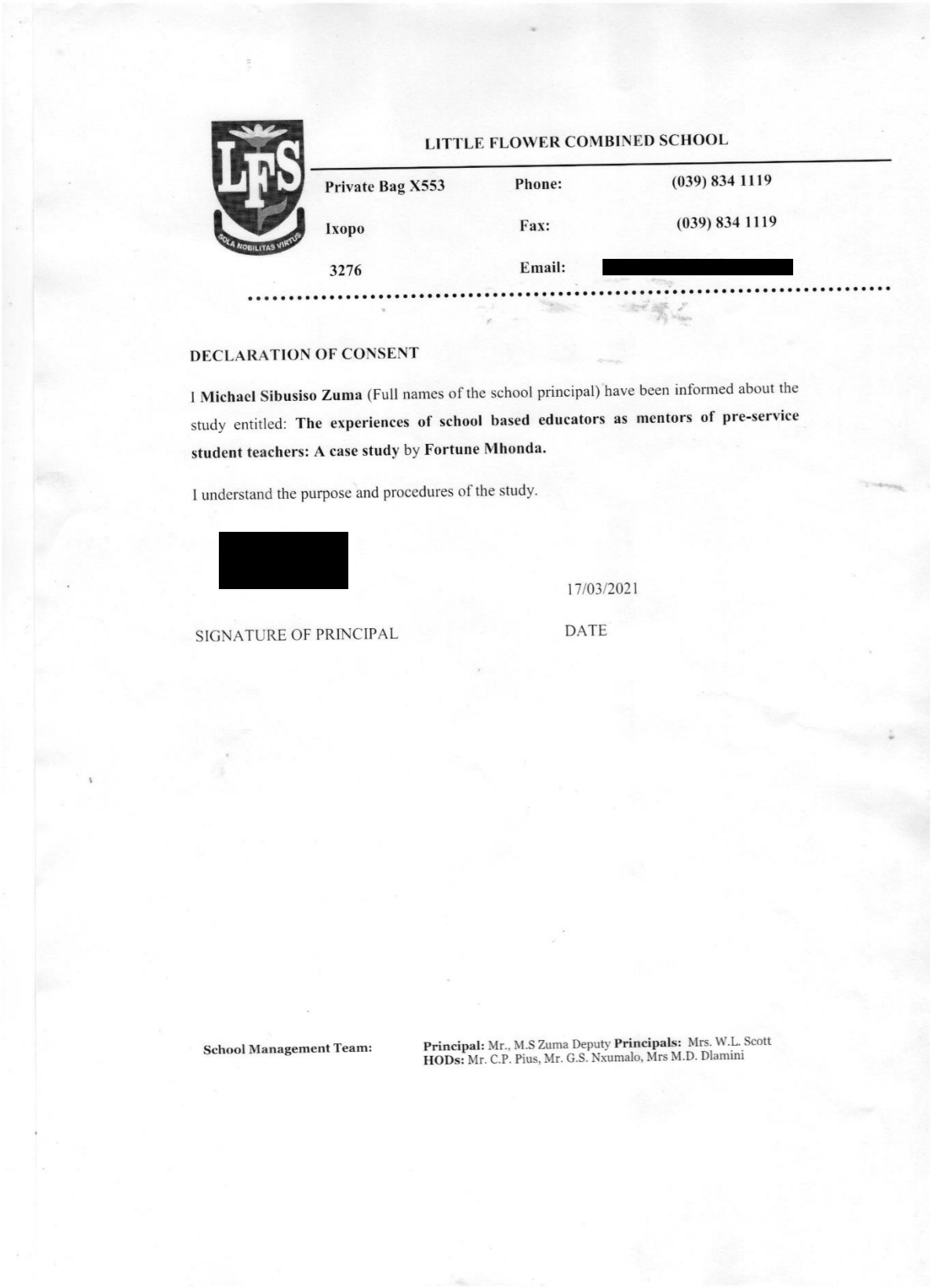
[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville
INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 5: Consent letters



LITTLE FLOWER COMBINED SCHOOL

Private Bag X553 Phone: (039) 834 1119

Ixopo Fax: (039) 834 1119

3276 Email: [redacted]

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I **Michael Sibusiso Zuma** (Full names of the school principal) have been informed about the study entitled: **The experiences of school based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study** by **Fortune Mhonda.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

[redacted] 17/03/2021

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL DATE

School Management Team: **Principal:** Mr., M.S Zuma Deputy **Principals:** Mrs. W.L. Scott
HODs: Mr. C.P. Pius, Mr. G.S. Nxumalo, Mrs M.D. Dlamini

Appendix 2: Letter to Participant

School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus, KwaZulu Natal

Dear Teacher

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Fortune Mhonda (Student No. 220101342), a Master of Education (MEd) student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg campus). As part of the requirement for this degree, I am required to conduct a research project. You are being invited to consider participating in this research study. The title of my study is: **The experiences of school based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study.** The aim and purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of school-based mentors on their role as mentors of pre-service students. The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To establish school-based teachers' experiences of mentoring pre-service student teachers.

2. To explore the challenges and opportunities in mentoring practices in schools from the point of view of school-based mentors in order to improve its implementation.

This study is expected to use four (4) participants who are educators at the same school and will involve the following procedures: As participants, educators will be requested to make a collage of images,text,pictures and symbols regarding their experiences, challenges and opportunities of mentoring pre-service student teachers using the provided materials. Furthermore they will be requested to write a detailed explanation of the collage for 60 to 90 minutes as a data generation method. Educators are also requested to participate in semi-structured interviews regarding their experiences of mentoring that are expected to last

between 20 to 40 minutes at a time suitable to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Follow-up interviews may be conducted if necessary. Each interview will be voice-recorded. The duration of their participation if they choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be 4-6 weeks.

This study will not involve any risks and/or discomfort to educators. Also, the study will not provide direct benefits for educators.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact me, my supervisor or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

My contact number

Email: [redacted] Cell: [redacted]

Supervisor

Dr J. Pennefather Email address: pennefatherj@ukzn.ac.za Telephone 0312606251

UKZN Research Office

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research study is voluntary and learners may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation learners will not be penalised. There are no consequences for participants if they withdraw from the study.

No costs will be incurred by participants as a result of participation in the study and there are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

All names of schools and participants will be changed and pseudonyms will be used so that schools and participants remain anonymous. Information provided by learners will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. Data generated through semi-structured interviews, collage and document analysis will be stored in my supervisor's office, at the School of Education, Pietermaritzburg campus for five years, and thereafter be destroyed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Education

Fortune Mhonda

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, _____ (Full names of participants) have been informed about the study entitled: **The experiences of school based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers: A case study** by **Fortune Mhonda.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at ([redacted].

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to: (Please circle response)

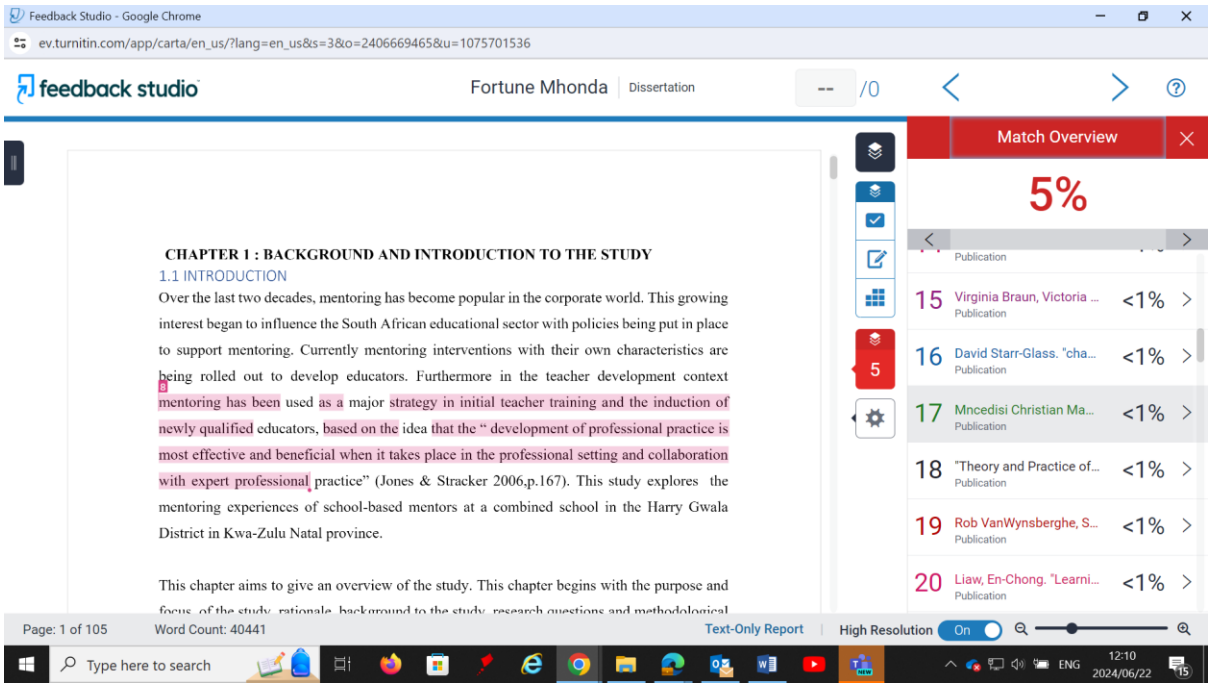
Audio-record my interview YES / NO

Use my Collage and its detailed explanation YES / NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

Appendix 6: Turnitin report



Appendix 7: Language Editor's Letter

KZN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

St Charles College,
Harwin Road,
Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg 3201
Tel: 083 593 2855
admin@kznlanguageinstitute.com
www.kznlanguageinstitute.com

Registration number: 131 804 NPO

Certificate of editing 14 July 2024

Name: Fortune Mhonda

Title: The experiences of school-based educators as mentors of pre-service student teachers: a case study

This serves to confirm that the above document was edited substantively by members of the KZN Language Institute's professional English language editing team. The document was returned to the author with tracked changes and comments intended to correct errors and to clarify meaning. It was the author's responsibility to attend to these changes.

J. Kerchhoff

Director of the KwaZulu-Natal Language Institute

KZN Language Institute - Transforming Words