

**A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING  
PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC  
SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE.**



**A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Magister Educationis  
in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa**



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**January 2019**

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, the late Simon and Martha Daniels. I thank them for the sacrifices they have made. I am grateful that through GOD's grace and unmerited favour they imparted their strong sense of humility and Christian values which grounded me all these years.

I dedicate this Degree especially to my mother, whose heart's desire it was for me to study towards achieving my M.Ed.

You are loved and I shall remain grateful to you ALWAYS for the sacrifices you made...

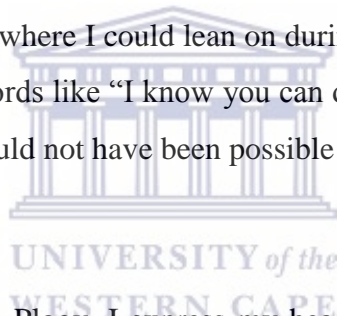


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the wonders of the GOD-incidence which led me to Glendarme Secondary school where the Headmistress allowed me to meet with her wonderful staff, who selflessly assisted me in making sense of the advantages of a mentoring programme followed at their school.

Thanks to the mentors and mentees whose investment in this study and teaching remains invaluable. I salute you in your willingness to shape the future lives of those who have been entrusted in your care.

I wish to acknowledge those who made an impact during this tumultuous period of my life. To Juan, for being the emotional rock where I could lean on during my studies. Thanks for believing in me, for encouraging me with words like “I know you can do it, you are almost there”. I share this achievement with you as it would not have been possible if I did not have your unconditional love and support.



To my supervisor, Dr Lucinda Du Plooy, I express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for her guidance and personal sacrifices which she made whilst I was on this journey. For encouraging me during those times when I contemplated giving up and for reminding me that it was all part of this humbling road which we as lifelong scholars travel. Thank you for allowing me to vent my anger at times and for your mentoring, perseverance and sacrifices. I am eternally grateful to you.

To Dr Marius Simon, who in his calm approach to research was a beacon to direct me with questions which I struggled to make sense of. Thanks for asking those questions which forced me to think; with your assistance I was able to make the research connection. You gave me direction during the times when I was in mayhem of academic confusion. Thanks for being that compass during those times.

To Dr Michelle Van Heerden, for having planted the seed which led me on pursuing this journey. Thanks for never being too busy to listen. For not cutting me any slack when it came to being focused and for stressing the importance of sticking to those timelines and for the relentless teasing keeping.

Thank you to Dr Olushola Adeniyi and Dean Booysen for the technical support and the formatting of the final thesis. Thanks for the willingness to assist and for the encouragement during those final days.

Priscilla Theron, we started this journey together from the five-page proposal. We were writing buddies and it was our duty to help each other maintain some sense of sanity. We helped each other as we gained this epistemological access into research. Thanks for the memories.

To Molopetsane Nkatsane, for always inspiring me and for being that daily smile and encouragement. Your faith ignited me in those dismal overwhelming days. Your dedication to your research was what propelled me during those crunch times.

Thanks to colleagues in the Education Faculty who shared their own experiences with me for being collegial and for the support given, it remains much appreciated.

To my family and friends, for encouraging and believing in me and for always inspiring me to continue towards the end. I shall always remain grateful for all your support and love.

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers make the transition from university graduates to school practitioners. It addressed the broader problem of teacher retention, working from the premise that beginner teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years of formal teaching. The main research question the thesis addressed is: What is the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers make the transition from university graduates to school practitioners?

The theory used to frame this study both theoretically and methodologically is Vygotsky's constructs of the Zone of Proximal Development, his notions of mediation and scaffolding, and Lave and Wenger's notion of communities of practice and their notion of legitimate peripheral participation. Noting that the conceptual tools of Lave and Wenger, are grounded in a broader theoretical framework, of Bandura's concept of "situated learning", which shares historical links with Vygotsky's socio-cultural views of how people learn.

Methodologically, this qualitative interpretive single case study made use of semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and document sources to explore this fairly under-researched area. The unit of analysis is a mentoring programme at a secondary school in the Western Cape, which comprised of three embedded cases, namely, the school principal, two mentors and two mentees.

The main findings suggest that a disjuncture exists between initial teacher education and the real school context, creating a need for a formalised mentoring programme. It also outlines the multiple Communities of Practice's (CoPs) in action within a mentoring programme revealing ways in which communities and boundaries could impact learning within a mentoring programme. Furthermore, the findings show the conversational dimensions of mentoring interactions; how talk and learning brings about a shift in the dyadic relationship between a mentor (old-timer/ the knowledgeable other) and beginner teacher (mentee/newcomer). In addition, this study illuminates the importance of mentor-mentee pairing in terms of willingness

to participate and compatibility between the mentor and beginner teacher. The thesis therefore contributes towards a growing body of knowledge on beginner teachers by focusing on how a formal mentoring programme can facilitate the smooth transitioning of beginner teachers into the teaching profession thus addressing the global problem of teacher retention.



## **KEYWORDS/ PHRASES**

Mentoring programme

Mentor

Mentee

Beginner teacher

Communities of Practice

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Situated learning

Socio-cultural theory

Qualitative research

Single case study



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BT	: Beginner Teacher
MT	: Mentor
WCED	: Western Cape Education Department
CoP	: Communities of Practice
LPP	: Legitimate Peripheral Participation
DoE	: Department of Education
SACE	: South African Council of Educators
ZPD	: Zone of Proximal Development
SLT	: Social Learning Theory
VCoP	: Virtual Communities of Practice





## DECLARATION

I, Ruben Abraham Stephen Daniels declare that this thesis is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

January 2019

Signed



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
KEYWORDS/ PHRASES .....	vi
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	vii
DECLARATION.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xv
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER – SKETCHING THE CONTEXT	
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE.....	1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	6
1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION .....	7
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	8
1.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MY STUDY .....	8
1.7 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	8
1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS .....	9
1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS .....	10



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	12
2.2	REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	13
2.2.1	CONCEPTUALISING THE TERM MENTORING .....	13
2.2.2	MENTORING PROGRAMMES FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS- WHAT WE KNOW THUS FAR: .....	17
2.2.3	THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE MENTOR IN THE MENTORING PROGRAMME .....	19
2.2.4	THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE MENTEE WITHIN A MENTORING PROGRAMME .....	21
2.2.5	MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP WITHIN A MENTORING PROGRAMME	23
2.3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	24
2.3.1	INTRODUCING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	24
2.3.2	VYGOTSKY SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY .....	25
2.3.3	LAVE AND WENGER’S COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION AND BOUNDARY CROSSING .....	27
2.3.3.1	Community of Practice .....	27
2.3.3.2	Legitimate peripheral participation and boundary crossing .....	30
2.4	CONCLUSION .....	33

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

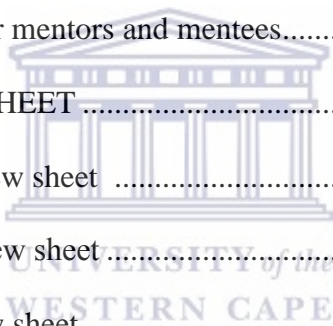
3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	34
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3.2	THE RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	34
3.3	THE RESEARCH DESIGN .....	36
3.4	SAMPLING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES .....	37
3.5	PRODUCTION OF DATA (DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND STRATEGIES) 40	
	3.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS .....	40
	3.5.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS .....	41
	3.5.3 DOCUMENT SOURCES.....	42
3.6	ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	43
3.7	RIGOUR, TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY OF THE RESEARCH....	46
3.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	47
3.9	CONCLUSION.....	48
CHAPTER FOUR		
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS		
4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	49
4.2	ENGAGING WITH MULTIPLE UNITS OF ANALYSIS – THE THREE EMBEDDED CASES .....	49
	4.2.1 EMBEDDED CASE 1: THE PRINCIPAL .....	49
	4.2.2 EMBEDDED UNIT OF ANALYSIS 2: THE MENTOR.....	56
	4.2.3 EMBEDDED UNIT OF ANALYSIS 3: THE BEGINNER TEACHER.....	65
4.3	CONCLUSION.....	71
CHAPTER FIVE		
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION		
5.1	INTRODUCTION .....	72



5.1.1 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....	72
5.1.2 THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) AND THE REAL SCHOOL CONTEXT- THE THEORY-PRACTICE DIVIDE .....	72
5.1.3 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MULTIPLE COPS- CROSSING BOUNDARIES	75
5.1.4 MENTOR- MENTEE PAIRING- BEING WILLING AND COMPATIBLE.....	79
5.1.5 BOUNCING-OFF EACH OTHER- THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE IN MENTORING INTERACTIONS.....	83
5.2 CONCLUSION.....	85
CHAPTER SIX	
CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	86
6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY .....	86
6.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ..	87
6.3.1 WHAT IS THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME? .....	87
6.3.2 HOW DOES THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME ASSIST THE BEGINNER TEACHER TO COPE WITH THE REAL SCHOOL CONTEXT?.....	88
6.3.3 HOW DO THE MENTORS EXPERIENCE THE MENTORING PROGRAMME?	89
6.3.4 HOW DO THE MENTEES EXPERIENCE THE MENTORING PROGRAMME?	90
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	90
6.5 IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES .....	91
6.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	92

REFERENCES .....	94
APPENDICES .....	107
Appendix A: PERMISSION FROM THE WCED .....	107
Appendix B: PERMISSION REQUEST FROM THE SCHOOL AND GOVERNING BODY .....	108
Appendix C: INFORMATION SHEET .....	110
Appendix D: CONSENT FORMS .....	111
Annexe D1: Consent form for Principal.....	111
Annexe D2: Consent form for mentors and mentees and focus group.....	112
Annexe D3: Consent form for mentors and mentees.....	113
Appendix E: INTERVIEW SHEET .....	114
Annexe E1: Principal interview sheet .....	114
Annexe E2: Mentors' interview sheet .....	115
Annexe E3: Mentee interview sheet.....	116
Annexe E4: Focus group interview sheet .....	117
Appendix F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE HSSREC OF UWC .....	118
Appendix G: ETHICAL CLEARANCE WCED.....	119
Appendix H: TURNITIN REPORT .....	120



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Four phases of mentoring adapted from Kram (1985, pp. 110-112).....	15
Table 3.1: The infrastructure of the school.....	38
Table 3.2: An overview of the embedded cases .....	39
Table 3.3: Strategies for promoting validity and reliability .....	47



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Six interpersonal functions and roles of the mentor adapted from Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010, p. 48) .....	20
Figure 2.2: The roles and responsibilities of the mentee. Adapted from Galbrath and Waynn (2004) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) Mentoring Programme. ....	22
Figure 2.3: A quadrangle illustrating possible mentoring relationship adapted from Luft and Ingham (1955) as cited in Mathipa and Matlabe (2016, p. 40). ....	23
Figure 2.4: Legitimate Peripheral Participation Source (peripheral participation. <a href="https://za.pinterest.com/pin/149604018849270186/">https://za.pinterest.com/pin/149604018849270186/</a> ) .....	31
Figure 3.1: A diagrammatical representation of the multiple units of analysis adapted from Yin, 1984, p. 46 .....	37
Figure 3.2: Planning phase .....	44
Figure 3.3: Category construction – open coding.....	45
Figure 3.4: Moving from descriptive to analytical coding .....	46
Figure 5.1: Discussion on Multiple CoP’s action.....	78
Figure 5.2: A sketch depicting an epistemic conversation .....	84



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER – SKETCHING THE CONTEXT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter, which aims to provide the context of this study, starts with the background and rationale for the study. It provides the statement of the problem followed by a presentation of the research questions. This is followed by the significance of the study. The chapter concludes with a definition of key terms and a brief outline of the chapters to follow.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The broad problem being addressed by this dissertation is the global challenge of teacher retention. The retention of teachers encompasses whether teachers stay in the profession, move to another school or leave the profession long before retirement (Mc Cann & Johanneson, 2005). Literature (Mc Cann & Johanneson, 2005; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), suggests that there is an alarming increase in the number of beginner teachers, those who are in their first three to five years of entering the teaching profession, exiting the profession. Approximately 40%-50% of educators in the United States of America opt to abandon teaching within the first five years of having entered the profession (Ingersoll, 2003; Voke, 2002; Fleener, 2008). Similarly, this pattern of low levels of teacher retention appears visible in a Canadian context (Clark & Antoneli, 2009; Karsenti; Colin, 2013), as well as in the United Kingdom (Ross & Hutching, 2003). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), on average nearly 10% of teachers in the first 1-3 years of their teaching leave the profession altogether, sometimes at a rate that is 150% higher than the attrition rate of other teachers (OECD, 2005).

In the international contexts, common reasons for wanting to leave the profession predominantly seem to center on, issues like: classroom management, the high levels of stress, educators feeling disempowered due to the changes in the teaching approach, other career opportunities,

remuneration, the demands of after hour preparation and the huge administrative tasks, which are considered as being part of the trade (Desforges, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2007). Beginning to teach is commonly recognised, as a particular and intricate stage of teacher learning and teacher identity development (Avalos 2011; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; OECD, 2005). Furthermore, the exhaustion and the frustration, which come with having to teach at schools labelled as „low performing schools“ or „dysfunctional schools“, could result in the beginner teacher becoming overwhelmed and even despondent. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2008) of the OECD concurs that “in countries where new teachers are leaving the profession in great numbers, the attrition rate is often attributed to new teachers being placed in more challenging working conditions or harder-to-staff schools” (TALIS, 2008 & OECD, 2012).

In South Africa, the topic of teacher demand and supply has developed into an issue of national concern (Pitsoe, 2013). This point is supported by research done by the Department of Education. For the DoE “it appears that novice teachers are already leaving the profession in increasing numbers” (DoE, 2005, p. 73). This exodus raises concerns about the quality of education in the future and the repercussions this will have on teacher supply and the attrition rate (DoE, 2005, p. 73). Arends (2009) reiterates this by noting that despite a strong accent on teacher education and development in post-apartheid South Africa, statistics attest to a low retaining of beginner teachers in the teaching profession. In South Africa it has been found that teachers under 30 tend to resign in significant numbers in comparison to older teachers (Arends, 2009, p.2). According to the DoE (2005, p. 73), the average attrition rate is between 5.0 to 5.5% per annum, which in real terms means that between 17000 to 20 000 are exiting the profession per annum (DoE, 2005, p. 73).

The DoE (2005) provides the following reasons for teacher retention: seemingly low salaries, arbitrary teacher deployment systems, unattractive work locations (disintegration of discipline), lack of professional development opportunities, insufficient supportive supervision, amongst other things (DoE, 2005, p. 78, Chakandinakira, 2016). Xaba (2003) provides a more popular reason, especially amongst teachers in urban areas and highlights the fact that young teachers

normally leave for greener pastures elsewhere; opting to teach in other countries for better salaries. In a recent news article, eloquently titled “Let’s support, not scare off new teachers”, (Verasamy 2015, p. 2 as cited in King 2016) asserts that there “appears to be a disjunction between school’s expectations and the expectations and needs of novice teachers”. King (2016), further states that teaching is a challenging profession, with a workplace context that demands a range of skills and energies from its practitioners as it involves children, their parents and teachers, as well as the bureaucracy of school (King, 2016, p. 37). In addition, Moosa and Bhana (2017) describe the seemingly unfair assumptions that newly graduated teachers are expected to possess an in-depth curriculum and classroom management knowledge, a mastery of school policies, structure and functions. They go on stating that novice teachers “will have some theoretical knowledge, yet the context of implementation, referring to the practical aspects, is still lacking and can prove to be overwhelming”

It is suggested that one way of addressing the problem of beginner teacher retention is through induction or mentoring programmes (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; OECD, 2012; Waterman & He, 2011). According to Ingersoll and Kralik, (2004), one of the most cited reviews on the relationship between mentoring programmes and teacher retention, established that mentoring programmes have a positive outcome on teacher retention. Similarly, Ingersoll and Strong (2011, p. 201), in their review, which critically scrutinized 15 empirical studies done since the mid-1980, found that most studies reviewed claim that “support and assistance for beginner teachers have a positive impact on three sets of outcomes: teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement” (Ingersoll & Strong 2011, p. 201). For Hobson et al., (2009, p. 213) in their review of international literature, found that “beginner teacher mentoring has great potential to produce a range of benefits for mentees, mentors and schools; yet it is also clear ...this potential is often unrealised” (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 213). Waterman and He (2011, p. 139), in their literature review, which discussed “the non-linearity and complexity of both the mentoring process itself and the study of mentoring on new teacher retention”, however note that “...findings about the connection between mentoring programmes and new teacher retention are inconclusive”

(Waterman & He, 2011, p. 146). It is clear from this discussion that there are varying views on the connection between mentoring and the retention of beginner teachers.

Despite the varying views on whether the mentoring of beginner teachers will lead to better teacher retention, mentoring programmes have been developed in different contexts to address the exodus of beginner teachers from the profession. Carter and Frances (2012), report that in the Australian context, mentoring relationships make valuable contributions to the induction experiences of beginning teachers. Furthermore, mentoring during the initial degree training and induction into a school context, has shown to enhance teachers' professional confidence, identity and their willingness to participate in professional learning (Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, & Wilss, 2008; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010). Fry (2010) asserts that without this type of intervention, some beginning teachers may discover that teaching was not the career for them. Darling-Hammond (2010) concurs that beginner teachers require support during their first few years of teaching.

On the American arena the implementation of mentoring programmes for beginner teachers, proved to produce favourable results and in support of this, Goldfrick et al. (2012) reports that in 1991 in the US, about 61,000 beginner teachers were ushered into the profession through their participation in an induction or mentoring programme and by 2008 this figure of participants increased to 179,000. By 2010-2011, twenty-seven states in America required that some form of an induction programme be put in place for all beginner teachers in the light of the positive reviews. Increasing evidence, largely from the USA, confirms that mentoring programmes for beginner teachers positively contribute to retention and stability, since teachers who have been mentored have been found to be less tempted to leave the profession (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring programmes for beginner teachers is not a new concept on the African continent either. A study carried out in Kisumu East District in Kenya found that it was imperative that teacher mentoring be pursued as an in-service option to address the professional inadequacies in the beginner teacher (Wasinga, Wazare & Dawo, 2015). Wasinga et al. (2015) explored the

mentoring of beginning teachers by looking at the coaching and sponsorship approach as a means to enhance both the career and psychological functions of the beginning teachers. In addition, mentoring programmes are being used in both Botswana (Geber, 2009, p.683) and Zimbabwe (Nezandonyi, 2012). For Nezandonyi (2012) “beginner teachers” induction programmes will develop new teachers and have a positive effect on teacher attrition”. Nezandonyi (2012) concurs that induction is “a process of sustained training and support for new teachers” as the beginner teacher prior to this induction, is an „outsider“ and needs the induction to learn, understand and adapt to the culture of the new community. Furthermore, “beginner teacher induction programs provide the psychological support which enables the new staff to familiarize themselves to the larger teaching community” (Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009, p. 209).

The education system in South Africa, according to Arendse and Phurutse (2009, p. xi), does not have formal structures, policies and strategies for teacher retention. There still remains the concern as to why teachers, especially, beginner teachers, leave the profession in South Africa. It appears that thus far the reasons for the beginner SA teachers abandoning teaching are both multiple and complex. In support of the first year entrant the Department of Education introduced an induction session as one way of addressing the problem of retention (Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009). Darling-Hammond and Wei (2009), recognise the fact that induction is a way of securing an early foundation for ongoing professional growth, which is considered to be a necessary element of successful career development and could provide beginner teachers“ specific attention and support that will build on their initial training, helping to retain teachers in their first year. They are also of the view that having probationary and induction agreements in all nine provinces would “act as a further check on teacher competence” (Bezzina, 2006, p. 413).

More specifically, in the Western Cape, there are mentoring programmes that work with beginner teachers, like the collaborative Primary Science Project (PSP), which has been operative in some of the primary schools on the Cape Flats. Here a structured mentoring programme based primarily on the reflective approach where the participants voluntarily enter into this partnership is conducted and focuses on the mathematics and science learning areas.

This joint mentoring programme is in its sixth year and focuses on the areas of concern which the beginner teachers have identified.

Maringe (2016), of The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), who spoke at the Teachers Upfront Seminar held at the Wits School of Education in 2016, warned that:

There is still no national policy or programme guidelines for the induction of newly qualified teachers in South Africa. Teacher induction, as a field of practice in South Africa is patchy, uncoordinated and under-theorised and tends to be informal (Maringe, 2016, p.120).

Where educational policy makers in first world countries, such as the USA and UK, have encouraged the introduction of mentoring programmes for valid reasons, amongst which are: to increase the supply of teachers during dire times (Feinman & Nemser, 1990); to inspire the retention of newly qualified teachers in the profession (Gaede, 1978; Veenman, 1984); and to introduce mentoring arrangements and a reward system for mentors (Little, 1990), research on mentoring of beginner teachers in a South African context is poorly understood and fairly under-researched. A more comprehensive discussion will take place in Chapter two, where I offer a review of literature on mentoring of beginner teachers, look at what we know thus far about mentoring programmes and the mentortmentee relationship in these programmes acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

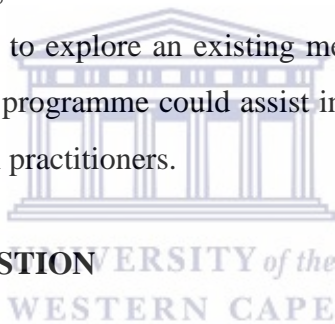
### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The retention of teachers, more specifically beginner or novice teachers in the teaching profession, is concerning nationally, cross-nationally and internationally. Thus far, the identifiable reasons for low teacher retention given by researchers are varied. Xaba (2003), notes that although the reasons could be intrinsic (lack of motivation), extrinsic reasons play a big role (search for better job opportunities abroad). The DoE (2005) narrows it down to systemic problems (disintegration of discipline in schools, insufficient supportive supervision, inter alia). King (2016), however sees the disjuncture between the beginner teacher's expectations and the demands of the school as a possible reason. One suggested way of addressing the problem of teacher retention is a mentoring programme (King, 2016), another is a probationary agreement coupled with an induction agreement (DoE, 2005). Literature highlighted to a certain extent that



research has been done in the UK and the USA on the benefits of having mentoring programmes for beginner teachers from a developed country's perspective (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Waterman & He, 2011). However, research in this area, in South Africa, is limiting. Anderson and Shannon (1988, p. 40) indicate that research in this field is "vague and ambiguous".

For Feiman-Neimser (1996), what is lacking is a conceptualisation of mentors work in relation to novices learning. She places emphasis on the study of the practices of mentoring directly. What we do know from more recent research (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Waterman & He, 2011; Maringe, 2016) is that there is an absence of empirical studies on the mentoring of beginner teachers. Maringe (2016) indicates that research in this field of practice is "patchy, uncoordinated and under-theorised, and tends to be informal" (Maringe, & Osman 2016, p.128). Hence the purpose of this study is to explore an existing mentoring programme at a secondary school and to understand how this programme could assist in the transition of beginner teachers from university graduates to school practitioners.



#### **1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers to make the transition from university graduate to school practitioner

The following sub-questions stems from the main research question:

1. What is the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme?
2. How does the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme assist the beginner teachers to cope with the real school context?
3. How do mentors experience the mentoring programme?
4. How do beginner teachers experience the mentoring programme?

## **1.5 THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of this study is to explore the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers to make the transition from university graduate to school practitioner.

The research objectives are:

1. To understand the nature and consequence of the mentoring programme.
2. To determine how the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme assist the beginner teachers to cope with the real school context?
3. To explore how mentors experience the mentoring programme.
4. To explore how beginner teachers experience the mentoring programme.

## **1.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MY STUDY**

Despite the growing international body of knowledge on the mentoring of beginner teachers and its benefits for teacher retention through the implementation of formalised mentoring programmes, research in South Africa is very limiting. My thesis appears to be one of only a few studies in South African that offers some insight into a formalised mentoring programme aimed at assisting the beginner teacher make the transition from university graduate to school practitioner. In addition, studies that do focus on mentoring programmes seldom highlight the experiences of mentors, mentees and senior management in one study, as my thesis attempted to do, offering a more holistic understanding of the mentoring of beginner teachers.

## **1.7 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

This qualitative interpretive study uses a single case study research design. According to Merriam (2009, p. 54), “Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research”. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations into a specific area in this case the mentoring of beginner teachers and the extent to which these programmes could assist the beginner teacher to adapt to their teaching environment (Wyse, 2011, p. 76). Henning (2004, p. 42) concurs that if “there is a bounded system with a clear unit of analysis, then the



study will warrant a case design”. In this study the bounded case, is the mentoring programme, which comprises of multiple units of analysis or as what Yin (1984) calls “embedded cases”. The multiple units of analysis in my study were the principal, mentors and mentees.

Qualitative data collection methods were used, like semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews, document sources and a comprehensive literature search. The semi-structured interviews were particularly useful in determining the participants’ experiences of their involvement in the mentoring programme. The correct ethical procedures were followed throughout the research process. All methodological considerations will be discussed in more detail in Chapter three, which was devoted to this component of my research.

## 1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research context of this study is in the domain of psychology and sociology. Theoretically, the study is framed around the seminal work of Vygotsky (1978), (working in the domain of psychology) and Lave and Wenger (1991), (working in the domain of sociology) each contributing differently to the way this thesis and the phenomenon under study is understood. Empirically, the unit of analysis is limited to a single case that of a mentoring programme at one secondary school in the Western Cape. The sample, although small, one principal, two mentors and two beginner teachers (mentees), provided a more holistic picture of the mentoring process.

## 1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Beginner teachers** are defined as newly qualified educators who have recently joined the profession and have less than four years of teaching experience. (Arendse & Phurutse, 2009).
- **Mentoring** in the traditional sense is a nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). However, mentoring can also be defined in a multidimensional way as a “democratic culture of collaboration and mutual trust enhancing the professional development of both the mentor and mentee”

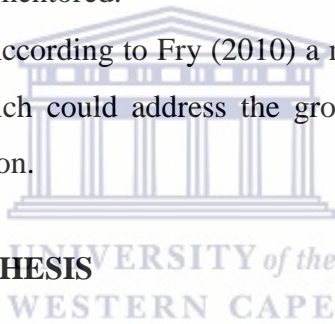
Dixon et al., (2012), supported by Jones (2001, p. 77). In this thesis both the traditional and multidimensional definitions are engaged with.

- **A Mentor** is “someone who helps another person to become what that person aspires to be” (Montreal CEGEP, 1988) develop their mentee’s professional thinking skills and support mentees in aspects of the processes of professional decision making or learning. So, mentors provide typically two kinds of help:

1. Provide general help
2. Provide support for professional learning

In a dyadic relationship the mentor is viewed as the knowledgeable other.

- **Mentee** is a person who is guided, trained, or directed by a mentor. In a dyadic relationship the mentee who is referred to in the context of this thesis as the beginner teacher is the person being mentored.
- **Mentoring programme:** According to Fry (2010) a mentoring programme is considered a timeous intervention which could address the growing attrition rate of the beginner teachers within the profession.



## 1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The study comprises of six chapters. Chapter one, this chapter, gives an overview of the study by giving a brief background of how the study was conceived, the research problem, the rationale for the study and the research questions. It also highlights the significance of the study and how it is structured. The second chapter focuses on the literature review and theoretical frameworks which underpin the study. The purpose of this chapter was to offer both an analysis of literature on mentoring, mentoring programmes and the roles and attributes of both mentors and mentees, and outlines the theories used to frame the study. The third chapter discusses the research design and methodology. It gives an account of the research sample, tools and instruments that were used in data collection, namely semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and document sources. The data is presented in chapter four and introduces the key findings that emerged from the analysis of the data. Chapter Five, the analysis and discussion chapter, discusses the main findings of the study. This is followed by Chapter Six, the final chapter,

which provides a brief overview of the chapters. It looks at the key findings in relation to each of the research questions and offers recommendations for further studies.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter one, I provided background literature highlighting the broader problem of beginner teacher retention and suggested mentoring as a possible way of retaining beginner teachers in the teaching profession. In chapter two, I delve deeper into literature on mentoring and mentoring programmes, and offer a discussion on the theories that framed my study. The theories drawn on were extracted after doing an analysis of the literature. Both theories are commonly associated with literature on mentoring.

Before embarking on this analysis of literature, I first conducted a literature search on EBSCOhost, a multidisciplinary database that hosts other databases, mirroring the way others (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Hobson et al. 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, Waterman & He, 2011) have conducted their literature reviews. My search was limited to scholarly peer reviewed articles between 2009 and 2016. The key search words I used were “mentoring programmes”, “beginner teachers” and “South Africa”. This initial search delivered one hit, an article by Smit and du Toit (2016, p.36), titled: ‘Transforming beginner teacher mentoring interventions for social reform’. Smith and Du Toit’s article focused on peer mentoring as an intervention strategy for the professional development of the beginner teacher. This initial search confirmed the lack of literature in South Africa on mentoring programmes for beginner teachers. I then broadened the search by removing the search words ‘South Africa’ and just used ‘mentoring’ instead of mentoring programmes, retaining the words ‘beginner teachers’ and extending the search period from 1990-2016. This process delivered 34 hits, most of these articles were in a US and UK context, based on reviews of literature and did not add much in terms of the nature of mentoring programmes.

Three articles based on a literature review, in particular, were of interest: 1) Hobson et al. (2009) studied the circumstances that give rise to effective mentoring of beginner teachers and looked at

the advantages of mentoring for both the mentor and mentee; 2) Ingersoll and Kralik's (2004), review focused on mentoring and beginner teacher retention; 3) Strong (2009), did a critical assessment of induction research; 4) Ingersoll and Strong (2016), which expanded on the work done by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) and Strong (2009), provided a more reliable and current review of what is known and not known about the effectiveness of induction and mentoring programmes. These aforementioned reviews were useful in that they informed the questions that guided my literature review, which now follows:

1. How does literature conceptualize the term mentoring?
2. What do we know about mentoring programmes for beginner teachers thus far?
3. How does literature perceive the role of a mentor within the mentoring process?
4. How does literature perceive the role of the mentee within the mentoring process?
5. How can the mentor-mentee relationship within a mentoring programme be understood?

Structurally, this Chapter will therefore be offered in two sections. The first section deals with a review of literature covering the aforementioned literature review questions, and the second section offers the theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.2.1 CONCEPTUALISING THE TERM MENTORING**

Mentoring has been conceptualised and applied in various ways in different professions and contexts. Bozeman and Feenay (2007) argue that the concept of mentoring is a multifaceted and complicated process. Mentoring's historical roots, according to Onchwari and Keengwe (2008, p. 165) as cited in Wong and Waniganayake (2013), dates back to 1750 when a mentor was considered to be a wise and skilled person who serves as a role model. Anderson and Shannon (1988, p. 2), further elaborates on this notion when they reference the mythically figure Mentor, as found in Homer's epic poem, '*The Odyssey*'. In this mythical tale, Odysseus' son Telemachus was advised by a mentor, the royal guardian to the household. This mythical form of mentoring illuminates a more traditional view of mentoring.

Dixon et al. (2012, p. 37), notes that “traditionally, mentoring has been defined as an intense, dyadic relationship in which a more senior and experienced person, called a mentor, provides support and assistance to a more junior, less experienced colleague, referred to as a protégé or mentee”. This view dovetails with the way mentoring is defined by Hobson et al. (2009) who view mentoring as:

The one-to-one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee), by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee’s expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession (in this case, teaching) and into the specific local context (here, the school or college). (p. 207).

Furthermore, this traditional view of mentoring is also advocated by Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) who view mentoring as largely a one-way process and not a negotiated relationship. This ‘one-way process’ is supported by Landefeld (2009, p. 13) who “noted that person-to-person, one-on-one mentoring works best as the mentoring process is really all about personalisation and individualisation”. In the same realm Anderson and Shannon (1988), point to the dyadic relationship of mentoring as follow, “Mentoring is a nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40).

In contrast, Dixon et al’s (2012) study moved away from this traditionalist view of mentoring offering what they call a “multidimensional model” of mentoring, which represents a “shared thinking and feedback across three stakeholder groups: the universities (institution), the mentors and mentees” (Dixon et al 2012, p. 37). Furthermore, they followed a developmental approach to mentoring drawing on the work of Kram (see Kram, 1985, pp 110-112), who identified four phases of mentoring, namely initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Table 2.1 illustrates the four phases of mentoring adapted by Kram 1985.

**Table 2.1: Four phases of mentoring adapted from Kram (1985,pp110-112)**

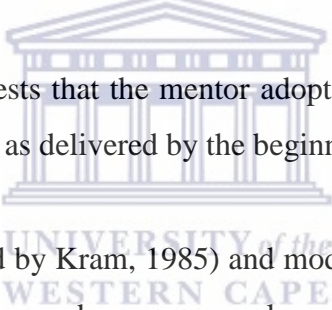
PHASES	PERIOD	DESCRIPTION
Initiation Phase	Six months to a year	The mentor-mentee relationship gets started, expectations are set and the mentoring relationship develops importance.
Cultivation	Two to five years	A range of career and psychosocial functions provided expand to a maximum.
Separation	Six months to two years	The mentee no longer needs guidance but is able to work autonomously.
Redefinition	An identified period after the separation phase	A shift in relationship happens and it marks the end of the mentoring relationship and a more peer-like friendship develops. The period where peer status is achieved.

What we draw from the table (Table 2.1) is that the mentoring process cannot be a once off process. It also shows a shift in the mentor-mentee relationship as well as the intensity of the relationship over time.

This multidimensional or developmental view of mentoring, put forward by Kram (1985) and expanded on by Dixon et al (2012), is supported by Jones (2001, p. 77), who views mentoring as a “democratic culture of collaboration and mutual trust enhancing the professional development of both the mentor and mentee” (Jones, 2001, p. 77). Besides these phases in the mentoring

process, Jones (2001) provides three models of mentoring which could be useful in understanding ways in which beginner teachers are mentored. These models include

1. **The apprenticeship model** depicts the experienced teacher to be the ‘master’ guide whom the beginner teacher needs to emulate. This is similar to Lave and Wenger’s ideas of mentoring as apprenticeship. People usually consider apprenticeship to be a relationship between a student and a master, but studies of apprenticeship disclose a more complex set of social interactions through which learning takes place mostly with more advanced apprentices. (Jones, 2001, p. 77)
2. **The competence model** asserts that the mentor relates training and assessment to predetermined standards of practice. (Jones, 2001, p. 77)
3. **The reflective model** suggests that the mentor adopts the role of the critical friend who assists in the evaluation of teaching as delivered by the beginner teacher (Jones, 2001, p. 77).



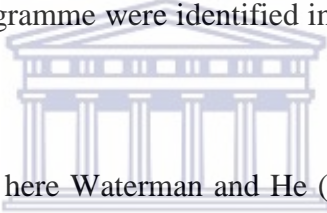
In addition to the phases (suggested by Kram, 1985) and models (suggested by Jones, 2001), the concept mentoring has also been used synonymously with other concepts. Shannon and Anderson (1988, p. 42), explore mentoring as ‘Sponsorship’. They describe “Sponsoring”, as “a process which involves three important essential behaviours, namely protecting, supporting and promoting”. Petty (2011, p. 12 as cited in Pairman, 2016) explores mentoring under the term “coaching”. Pairman (2016) suggests that coaching can be considered as being interchangeable and that the roles differ depending on the plane wherein which it will be used. It is a process during which people’s potential is maximised and it helps them to learn rather than teaching them. Coaching in this aspect is a type of mentoring that relates more to the business field. Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005, p. 4), note that the term mentoring is often used interchangeably with the term induction. In this thesis it is viewed as two separate concepts, where induction is mainly a once-off event of orientating the beginner teacher and inducting him or her into the profession and mentoring is a multifaceted and highly complex on-going process allowing the beginner teacher to gain in confidence and become a full participant within the teaching



community. (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lave & Wenger). Following, is a discussion on what we know thus far about mentoring programmes for beginner teachers.

### **2.2.2 MENTORING PROGRAMMES FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS- WHAT WE KNOW THUS FAR:**

It is clear from the literature search to which I alluded to earlier, (see introduction of this chapter), that literature on mentoring programmes in a South African context is scant. Waterman and He (2011, p. 204) assert that, “what kinds of mentoring programmes exist and under which circumstances they help, are important questions which researchers consider”. In addition, Mathipa and Matlabe (2016, p. 45) found that “a mentoring programme with visibly identified, defined and attainable targets is vital to any mentoring venture”. Four major common mentoring components for any mentoring programme were identified in Waterman and He’s (2011) review study:

- 
- a) Mentoring characteristics – here Waterman and He (2011) looked at two crucial mentor characteristics: 1) mentors paired with their novices by subject area and grade level, and 2) mentors who received formal mentoring training. Hobson et al., (2007) and Smith and Ingersoll (2004) concur that mentoring tends to be more effective when mentors teach the same subject specialisation as their mentees. Landefeld (2009, p. 3) add that “a critical aspect to any planned mentoring programme is pairing the mentor with the mentee”. For Landefeld, “this match is the heart and soul of the mentoring process” Landefeld (2009, p. 3). This dovetails with Hobson et al (2009, p. 211), who argue that “mentoring is more likely to be successful where decisions about mentor-mentee pairing take account of the mentees’ strengths and limitations”.

Studies also found that “mentoring is less effective in cases where the mentors are also the mentees head teacher or deputy head teacher”, arguing that “... senior leaders generally tend to be less able to find sufficient time for mentoring and/ or beginner teachers tend to be more inhibited where their mentors have a higher status within the school” (Hobson, 2012 p. 212).

Christensen, (1991, p. 12) asserts that “the relation between Mentor and Mentee is of utmost importance for the development of the mentee”. Hall (2008, p. 331), emphasizes “that poor partnering of mentor and mentee can have negative repercussions and even though this intervention can have its advantages, the opposite can result if the mentor selection is not well planned and monitored”.

- b) Facilitative Administrative Structures – The emphasis here is that mentoring should take place “...in the context of learning communities in which administrators and veteran teachers shared decision-making and planning so that newcomers to the profession felt welcomed and encouraged to participate” (Waterman & He, 2011, p. 143). Furthermore, (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 211) concur that “beginner teacher mentoring is more likely to be effective where it takes place within schools characterised by collegial and learning cultures”, suggesting the importance of “contextual support for mentoring” to ensure a successful mentoring programme. In addition, they found “inconsistent views on the effects of mentoring where mentors were exempted from full-time classroom duties compared to those involved in classroom duties” (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 211).
- c) Frequency of Support – In the 14 studies reviewed by Waterman and He (2011, p. 144), “there was agreement regarding an optimum time that might have positive effects on teacher retention”. They however found that novices were often apprehensive to compulsory meetings with mentors and that novices, who intermittently met with their mentors, were more likely to stay in the profession opposed to those who daily met with their mentors (Waterman & He, 2011, p. 143).
- d) Professional Development and Training – Waterman and He (2011, pp. 143-144) assert that “the nature of mentor training range from an orientation early at the beginning of the year to on-going workshops or several professional development initiatives”, such as: full-time coaching, bi-weekly professional development.

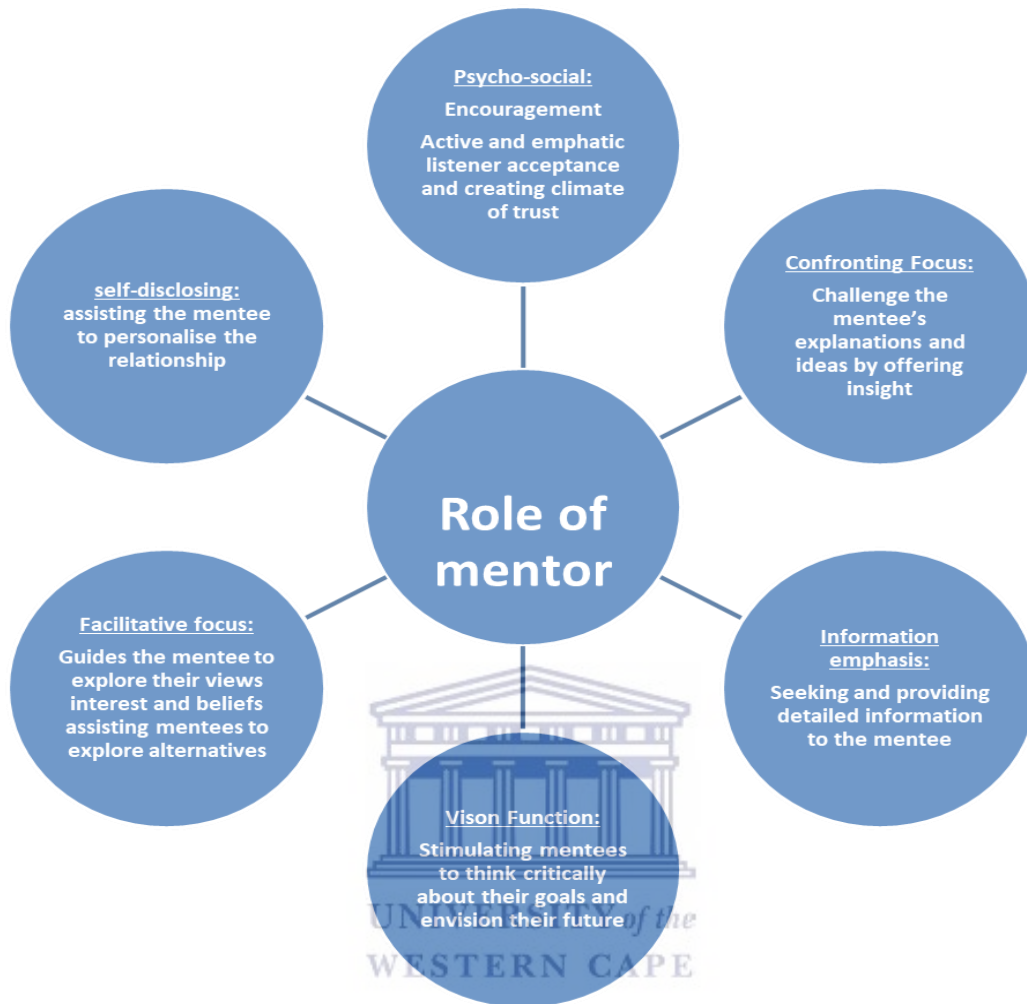
These four major common mentoring programme components offer a lens from which to view mentoring programmes for beginner teachers, even though Waterman and He (2011) warn that “none of these components stands out as clearly important for new teacher retention” (Waterman & He, 2011, p. 144).

### **2.2.3 THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE MENTOR IN THE MENTORING PROGRAMME**

Literature suggests that the role of the mentor is considered as being more diverse and is located within diverse conceptual paradigms. (Dixon et al., 2012, p. 38) found that “there is little research on mentoring from the mentors’ perspective particularly in education”. A useful starting point is provided by CochranSmith and Paris (1995, p. 183) who argue that a mentor’s role should include: “Orientating the beginner to school and higher education policies, procedures and expectations and providing “feedback, coaching and support” where interactions should be sensitive, non-judgmental and supportive” (Dixon et al., 2012, p. 38).

The following figure (Figure 2.1) adapted from Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010, p. 48) focuses on six interpersonal functions or roles which the mentor performs.





**Figure 2.1: Six interpersonal functions and roles of the mentor adapted from Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010, p. 48)**

The discussion on the role of the mentor is extended by Mathipa and Matlabe (2016), who note that:

Mentors provide extrinsic motivation that can ignite the mentee's intrinsic motivation and interest. ... A relationship based on motivation, mutual respect, trust and understanding is key to empowering the mentee by helping them develop the knowledge and skills in a career (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 40).

Mathipa and Matlabe (2016) place emphasis on motivation as “key to the mentoring process” (2016, p. 40).

In addition to these roles, studies show that mentors have certain attributes in common. According to Janković (2016), successful mentors display the following attributes:

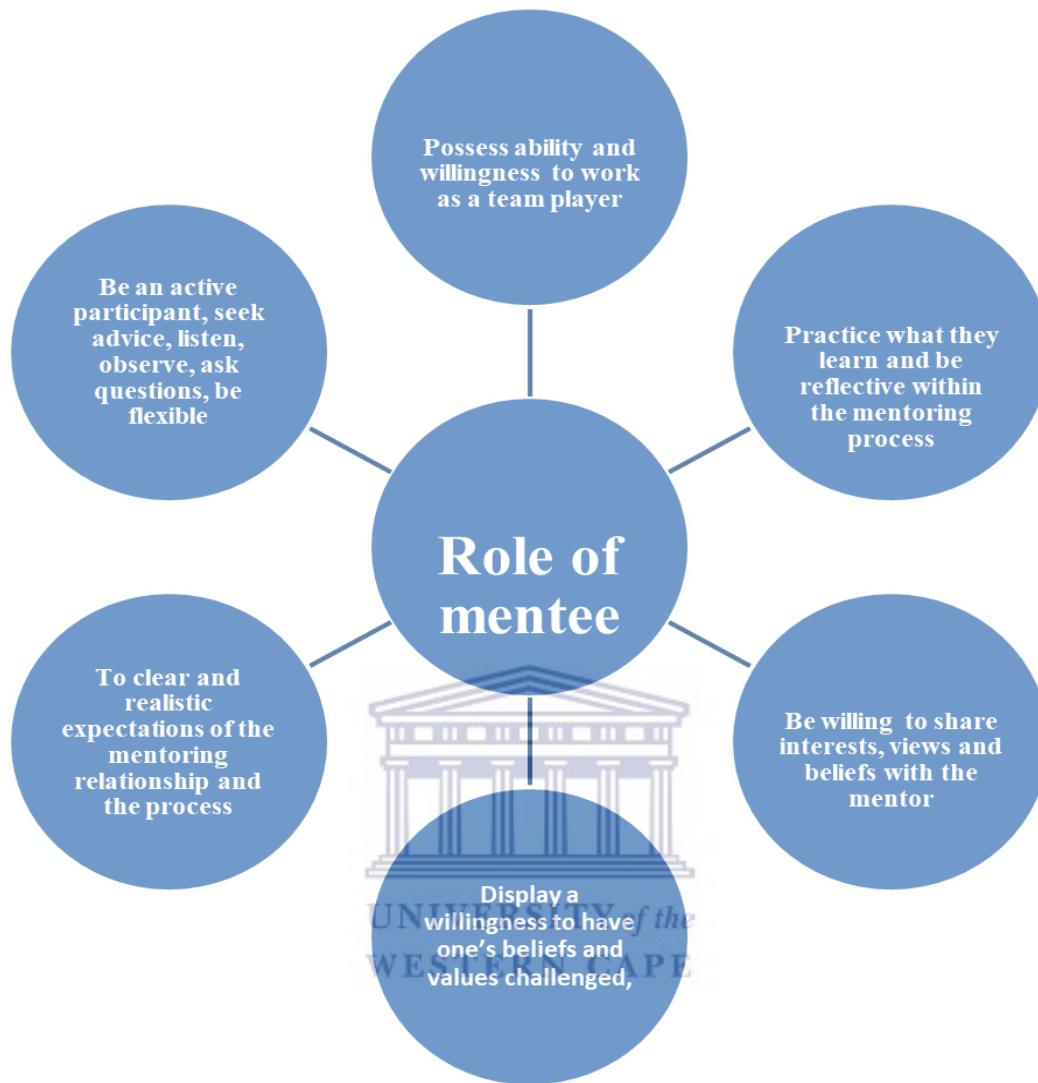
A mentor needs to be emphatic, a person who gives energy, a guide, mediator, discrete adviser, sincere friend and someone to rely on. An inspiring person ready to help the younger ones and always a discrete trustful person. Furthermore, the most complex is a role of adviser or consultant due to the highest burden of obligations as a collaborator and leader, who gives important information about administrative procedures, (Janković, 2016, p. 33).

Mentors are able to adopt a range of mentoring strategies focusing on practices and mentee attributes (Hudson, Skamp & Brooks, 2005).



#### **2.2.4 THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE MENTEE WITHIN A MENTORING PROGRAMME**

Mentees, like mentors have particular roles to play within a mentoring process, and they need to possess particular attributes in order for the mentoring process to be successful. Literature reviewed by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) suggests that there has been relatively limited research with regards to the role of the mentees in the mentoring relationship. Following, in figure 2.2, is an illustration depicting the multiple roles and responsibilities of a mentee:

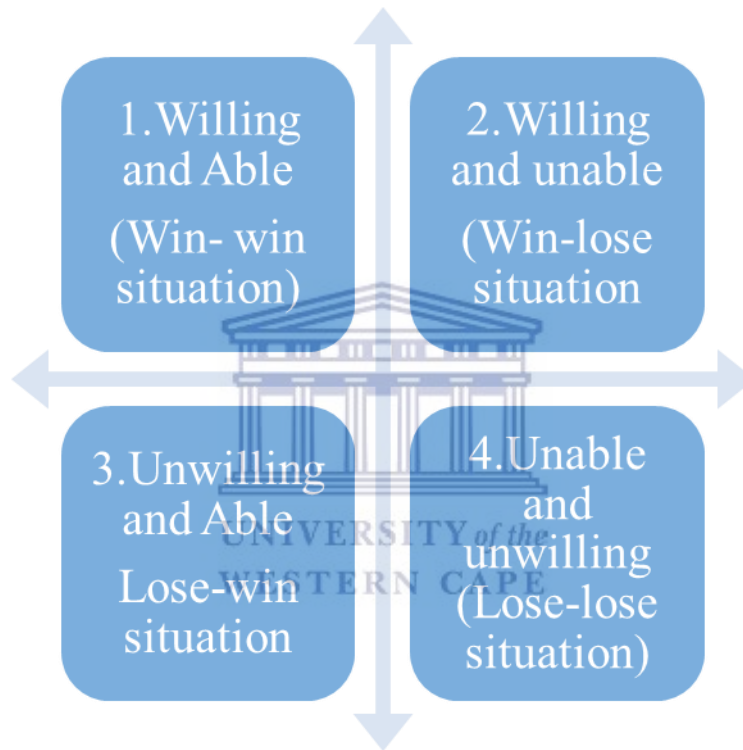


**Figure 2.2: The roles and responsibilities of the mentee. Adapted from Galbrath and Waynn (2004) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) Mentoring Programme.**

Of all the mentee roles being reflective whilst involved in the mentoring programme was considered as the most important attribute. I now turn to the mentor-mentee relationship, since it is through the engagement and interaction of the mentor and mentee that more insights into the roles of the mentor and mentee are uncovered.

## 2.2.5 MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP WITHIN A MENTORING PROGRAMME

According to Galbraith and Waynn (2004) “good mentorship is a distinctive and powerful process enhances intellectual, professional and personal development through a special relationship characterised by highly emotional and often passionate interactions between a mentor and a mentee” (p. 699). In the figure (Figure 2.3) below, Johari Window’s illustration on four possible mentoring relationships is presented.

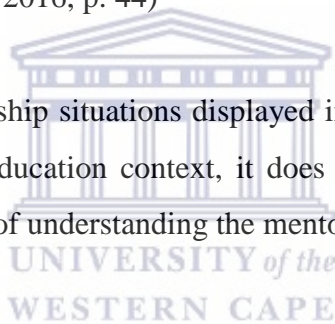


**Figure 2.3: A quadrangle illustrating possible mentoring relationship adapted from Luft and Ingham (1955) as cited in Mathipa and Matlabe (2016, p. 40)**

Figure 2.3, illustrates how the mentor-mentee relationship is influenced by the emotional investment of both mentee and mentor. The variable ‘willingness’ represents “the environmental factors associated with either intrinsic or extrinsic types of motivation which influence a mentee to achieve on a higher level” (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 42). Whereas the variable “ability”, represents a mentee’s natural ability, which the mentor will access to achieve optimal results. Following is a discussion of each mentoring situation or scenario:

- **Quadrant 1: Willing and able** – a mentor who is willing and able to assist, guide and support a willing and able mentee is likely to enhance a mentee’s skills, knowledge and practices. (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 44)
- **Quadrant 2: Willing and unable** - a mentor must be well equipped to deal with challenges that arise when the mentee is willing but not necessarily capable of mastering the required knowledge and skills. (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 44)
- **Quadrant 3: Unwilling and able** – the mentee has the ability to achieve but is unwilling to cooperate or be helped by the mentor. (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 44)
- **Quadrant 4: Unable and unwilling** - this situation holds little promise for the mentoring relationship because the mentee is unwilling to be mentored or receive support from the mentor, and the mentor does not have the capacity or knowledge to fulfil the required tasks. (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 44)

Although these mentoring relationship situations displayed in Figure 2.3 were used by Mathipa and Matlabe (2016) in a higher education context, it does hold significance for mentoring in other contexts, especially in terms of understanding the mentor-mentee relationships in schools.



The literature analysis provided in the first half of this chapter does not only provide us with the conceptualization of mentoring, it also provides insights into mentor-mentee roles and relationships within a mentoring programme. In the next half of this chapter, I outline and discuss the theories used to frame the study.

## 2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.3.1 INTRODUCING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical lenses which framed this study are Vygotsky’s Social Development Theories of learning (1978), more specifically his constructs of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), mediation and scaffolding, and Lave and Wenger’s, views on situated learning and their constructs of Community of Practice (CoP) and Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). Both Vygotsky and Lave and Wenger’s constructs will be explored in the sections below.



### 2.3.2 VYGOTSKY'S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory of Learning is derived from Bandura's (1977) Social Learning theory that suggests that people's learning occurs through the, observation, imitation, and modelling of one another. The theory has often been called a "bridge between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories" because it incorporates attention, memory, and motivation. It lends itself to the possibility that learning promotes a variety of internal developmental processes able to only operate during interaction between individuals in a specific environment and in collaboration with peers. This is what pushed Bandura (1971, p. 1) in his endeavours to inquire "why people behave as they do?"

Vygotsky's theory provides a good basis for understanding learning as a process of social negotiation and collaborative sense-making (Zhu, n.d., p. 822). There are three constructs in Vygotsky's conceptual toolbox that will be used in this study to understand the nature of a mentoring programme; a) The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), b) Mediation and Mediation tools, and c) Scaffolding.

For Vygotsky, ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The ZPD is the most widely and most popular of Vygotsky's scientific productions. It is often simplified as "what the child (adult) is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211). Palinscar (1998, p. 317) notes that the ZPD is "probably one of the most used and least understood constructs to appear in contemporary literature".

Chaiklin (2003, p. 43) offers an overview of common perceptions of this theoretical construct. He speaks about *Generality Assumptions* (relevant to learning all subject matter), *Assistance Assumption* (Learning is reliant on interventions by a more competent other), and *Potential Assumption* (Property of the learner that allows for the best and easiest learning). These assumptions need to be taken into consideration when working within the ZPD, since for

Chaiklin (2003, p. 43) “it is not the competence per say of the more knowledgeable person that is important; rather it is to understand the meaning of that assistance in relations to...learning and development”.

It is through the concept of mediation that Vygotsky made his most important and unique contribution to how people learn. According to Vygotsky, mediation is the process of arming children with mental tools, which they will apply for mediating their mental processes. Mediation starts with adults including children in the course of mutual activity, with the objective of solving a problem. In the setting of this activity, the adult provides the child with a sort of mental model that will make it possible for them to solve the problem. The children will initially, apply their acquired mental instrument under the supervision of the adult. Steadily, the adult passes greater and greater responsibility to the child facilitating the child’s assimilation of the newly attained tool. As a result, the child progresses from, what began as a shared child-adult activity, mediated by an external tool, turns into an independent activity which is now mediated by the child’s internalized representation of the mental tool. Once this is achieved, the process of Vygotskian mediation is successful and complete (Karpov, 2003, pp. 46-53).

Clifford and Greene (1996) suggest that teaching is a mediated activity founded on social interaction which dovetails with Bandura’s social learning theory. Bandura believed that people learn through interaction with other individuals within certain situations. He believed that “human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling and observing others. One forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for one’s own action” (Bandura, 1977 p. 22).

Mediation can only happen through mediating agents since it is through these agents...that higher mental processes can be stimulated (Kozulin et al., 2003). One of the main lessons that we learn from Vygotsky’s concepts is its link to the Social Cultural dimensions of learning which are conceptualised by Vygotsky through the notion of psychological tools (symbolic tools) and mediation. Kozulin (2003, p. 35) notes that “symbolic tools have rich education potential but

they remain ineffective if there is no human facilitator to facilitate their appropriation of the learner” (Kozulin, 2003, p. 35). Scaffolding, to which now turn, is a mediational concept.

According to Benson (1997, p. 126) “Scaffolding is in essence a bridge used to develop what students already know to arrive at something which they do not know” (Benson, 1997, p. 126). Furthermore, Benson notes that the scaffold would act as an enabler and not a disabler. Verenikina (2008, p. 163), points out “that scaffolding is to operationalize the concept of teaching in the ZPD”. Some scaffolding techniques include; demonstration, the division of tasks into simpler more manageable ones, providing guidelines, keeping focused attention as well as supplying examples and questions (Rasmussen, 2001).

Dickson et al. (1993, p. 100) asserts that “effective scaffolding must gradually be dismantled; if the scaffold is removed too quickly learning will not occur”. The term scaffolding therefore describes an effective learning strategy and tactic, which allows one to access the ZPD.

Although Vygotsky’s theory is more prominent in child development and understanding how children make sense, as is evident of the discussion above, it could also be used to understand the learning relationships between adults. In this study this learning relationship takes place between a mentor and a beginner teacher (mentee) within mentoring programme. Where Vygotsky (1978) provides an understanding of the dyadic relationship between a mentor and a mentee, Lave and Wenger, to whom we now turn, offers a more multidimensional (collegial) model to understand this relationship and how learning happens in learning communities through their constructs of Community of Practice (CoP) and Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LLP).

### **2.3.3 LAVE AND WENGER’S COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION AND BOUNDARY CROSSING**

#### ***2.3.3.1 Community of Practice***

The term “Community of Practice” (CoP) is considered to be a relatively recent coinage, even though the phenomenon has been a commonly used one. It was first coined by Anthropologist Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in 1991 while studying apprenticeship as a learning model. Its

origin is rooted in Social Learning Theory and has been explored by social scientists for a variety of analytical purposes. The concept explores useful perspectives on knowing and learning, since for Lave and Wenger (1991) learning is necessarily situated. It is a process of participation in a Community of Practice.

Lave and Wenger (1991) describe Communities of Practice (CoP) as a group of people who share common concern or a passion for something, who interact regularly and who interact in a process of collective learning in a shared domain. It does not necessarily happen intentionally and could be a spontaneous coincidence. According to Wenger (1998), some CoP's are deliberately designed (Wenger, 1998, p. 244). They are "institutionally intended – whilst others have an emergent quality, forged through interaction and negotiation" (Grawford & L'Hoiry, 2017, p. 4). Wenger, Trayner, and De Laat (2011) warn that "not everything called a community is a community of practice and that even though a neighbourhood is often called a community it is not necessarily a CoP" (Wenger, Trayner, and De Laat 2011, p. 9). For Wenger et al. (2002, pp. 23-41), all CoP's share a basic structure in that it possesses three interlocking and mutually constitutive elements: the domain, community and practice:

- **A Domain-** Is the shared enterprise that the community is engaged in. Members of a particular domain interact and engage in shared activities (teaching) and construct relationships which allow them to learn from each other. In order for a CoP to be formed, there needs to be people who interact and learn together.
- **The Community-** Refers to those who engage in the shared enterprise articulated by the domain; it represents the topic that the community is committed and focused on, simultaneously embodying the community's identity. Members create their shared identity through continuous interaction and contributing to the practices of their communities.
- **Practice-** is a shared list of resources; "a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles" and ways of addressing recurring problems (Wenger et al. 2002, p. 29). It establishes the specific knowledge – through language, stories and documents – which are shared by its

members. “It is by developing these three elements in parallel that a community of practice is cultivated” (Crawford and L’Hoiry 2017, p. 4).

In addition, for Wenger (1998), when individuals engage in a CoP it always entails a process of negotiation of meaning, which takes place when two processes converge, namely participation and reification. “Participation involves acting and interacting, and reification involves producing artefacts, such as tools, word, symbols rules, documents, concepts theories, and so on, around which the negotiation of meaning is organized” (Smith, Hayes & Shea, 2017, p. 212). Wenger, White and Smith, (2009, p. 57) asserts that a CoP “requires both participation and reification to be present and in interplay”. Furthermore, it is through participation and reification that participants of a CoP develop and negotiate “a set of criteria and expectation by which they recognize membership” (Wenger, 2010, p. 180). According to Wenger (2010) the set of criteria includes:

- joint enterprise – a collective understanding of what the community is about
- mutual engagement – interacting and establishing norms, expectations, and relationships
- shared repertoires – using the communal resources, such as language, artefacts, tools, concepts, methods, standards (Wenger, 1998, pp.73-85).

These criteria refer to above, can be used by communities to establish guidelines as to what it is to be a proficient participant, an outsider, or somewhere in between, which is crucial for learning to take place in a CoP (Wenger 1998).

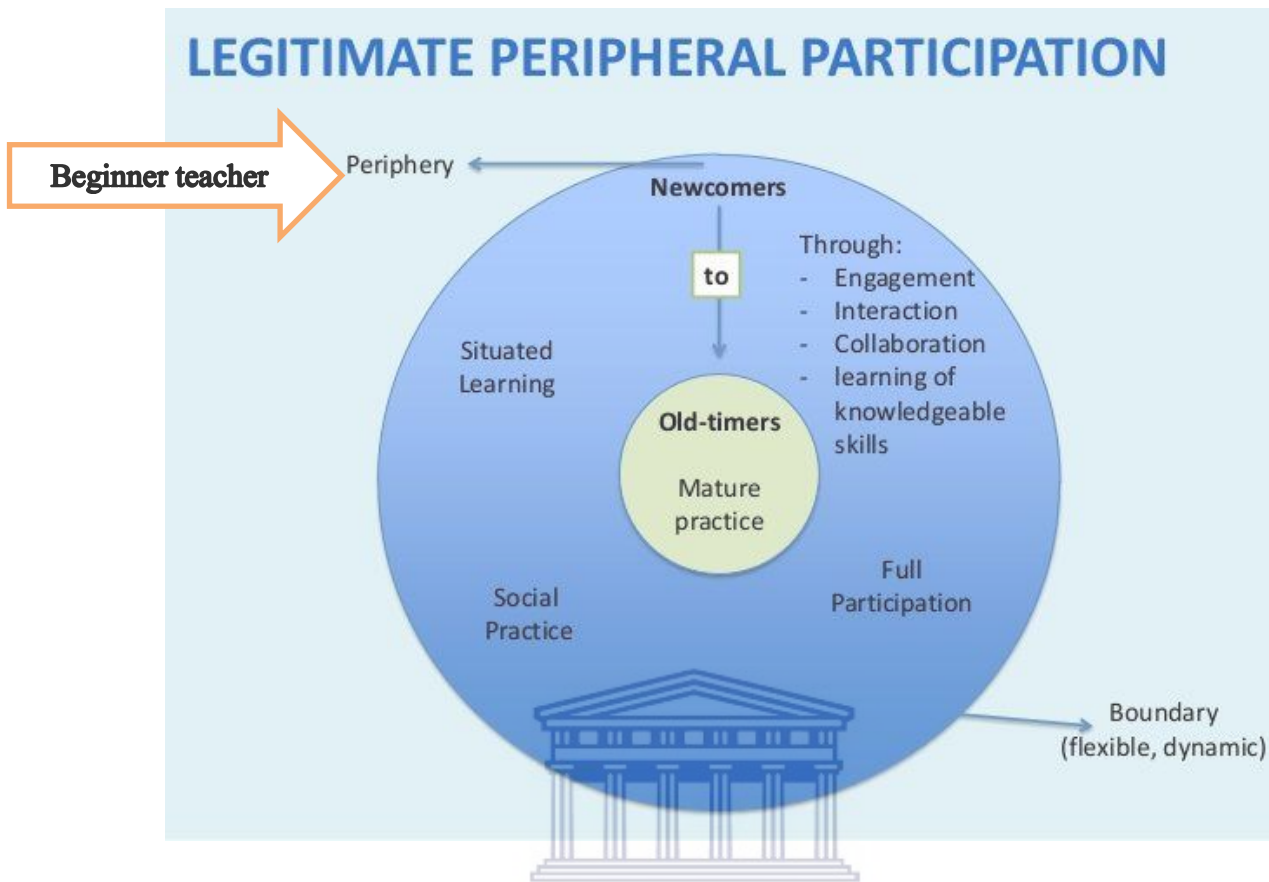
The knowledgeable question to ask is: How do participants, involved in a CoP, make sense of their involvement and engagement within the CoP? According to Wenger (1998) the concept of practice can be useful in addressing this question. Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life. For Wenger (1998), the negotiation of meaning is important to understand practices. Human engagement in the world is first and foremost a process of negotiated meaning. Furthermore, negotiation is a continuous interaction of gradual achievement and of give and take. It is through negotiated meaning that beginner teachers get to understand the practices within the community and are able to move from what Lave and Wenger (1991) gain full

participation and legitimacy within a profession, which the authors explain through the concept of LLP and the notion of boundary crossing, which follows.

### ***2.3.3.2 Legitimate peripheral participation and boundary crossing***

Another important construct, which relates to the notion of CoP, is what Lave and Wenger (1991) call Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). LPP is described as a form of situated learning, “a process which reiterates the focus that learning is fundamentally a social process rather than solely psychological” (Couros, 2003, p. 9). It is through the concept of LLP that one gets to understand “how newcomers enter, learn from and contribute to an established community of practice over time” (Cuddpah & Clayton, 2011, p. 63). Key to understanding this concept is the idea of full participation- how a newcomer in the community learns to “think, act, speak and be a full participant (Cuddpah & Clayton, 2011, p. 63). For Lave and Wenger (1991), “Legitimate Peripheral Participation provides a way to speak about relations between newcomers and old-timers, about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). The following illustration (see Figure 2.4) is a diagrammatical representation of Lave and Wenger’s LPP.





**Figure 2.4: Legitimate Peripheral Participation Source (peripheral participation.**  
<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/149604018849270186/>)

Figure 2.4 illustrates that a newcomer’s participation in a CoP often starts at the periphery – “a region that is neither fully inside nor fully outside” (Wenger, 1998, p. 117) and leads towards the centre through increased involvement. This process of moving from the periphery to centre is characterised by the concept of legitimate peripheral participation. In Wenger’s writings, the notion of legitimate peripheral participation is referred to but it does not take centre stage. Instead it serves as important pre-requisite for newcomers become included in a CoP. “Wenger’s contribution to the development of this notion lies in his articulation of the special measures (e.g., observation, special assistance, close supervision, etc.) that may be taken to open up a practice to newcomers. He continues, “No matter how the peripherality of initial participation is achieved, it must engage newcomers and provide a sense of how the community operates” (Wenger, 1998, p. 100). Lave and Wenger’s concept provided me with a valuable analytical tool

to explore the complexities surrounding ways in which beginner teachers (newcomers) through their involvement in a CoP (the mentoring programme) could gain legitimacy and full participation.

According to Wenger (2000, p. 232), “shared practices by its very nature creates boundaries”. The boundary of the CoP is both flexible and dynamic. Furthermore, he adds that these flexible, fluid and dynamic boundaries create “new learning to a variety of dimensions”. In the extract below, Wenger (2000) explains the way communities and boundaries impact learning:

Communities of practice can steward a critical competence, but can also become hostage to their history ... oriented to their own focus ... boundaries can create divisions and be a source of separation ... yet they can also be areas of unusual learning places where perspectives meet and new possibilities arise (Wenger, 2000, p. 233).

It is through coordination (practices are shared across boundaries), transparency (dimensions of analysis and evaluation) and negotiability of perspectives (such as one-way or two-way connections) that boundaries are bridged. The ability to have voices across several communities is the influence of boundaries linking communities (Wenger, 2000, p. 234). There are three major types of bridges across boundaries, which include brokers, artefacts, otherwise referred to as the boundary objects themselves and interactions that occur across different communities and their participants (Wenger, 2000, p. 234). He describes brokers as individuals that apply practices between communities which occur in different modes, “such as a focused boundary or sharing knowledge across a single relationship between individuals in differing communities” (Wenger, 2000, p. 234). Another way to cross boundaries through brokering services is to “serve as a butterfly, flitting across boundaries and sharing knowledge in the process, or to serve as a bee, buzzing news into different communities” (Wenger, 2000, p. 236). Boundary objects, serving as artefacts, common language and shared processes, can be valuable for more than one CoP (Wenger, 2000, p. 236). The last major bridge is the boundary interactions, which sustains the boundary.



Both Vygotsky and Lave and Wenger's constructs, which I eluded to in the second half of this chapter, formed an integral part in how my study was framed. Each of these theorists provides different ways in which the mentoring of beginner teachers can be understood. I therefore drew on both Vygotsky's dyadic approach (one-on-one mentoring model), as well Lave and Wenger's multi-dimensional approach (collegial model) to offer a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter, chapter two, provided both an analysis of literature, as well as discussion of the theories that framed the study conceptually and methodologically. The literature analysis (review) illuminated the complexities relating to mentoring, mentoring programmes and the mentor-mentee roles and relationships. In addition, it highlighted a traditional dyadic relationship of mentoring, as well as introduced a more modern multi-dimensional model of shared thinking, acting and doing. Furthermore, the literature analysis pointed to the fact that literature into the nature and consequences of mentoring programmes in SA is very limiting warranting this study.

The second half of this chapter I devoted to the theories that underpinned my study. Vygotsky's constructs: ZPD, mediation and scaffolding, and Lave and Wenger's notions of CoP, LPP, and the value of boundaries where new learning arises, provided the conceptual direction for this study. In addition, it allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how beginner teachers transition from university graduates to the teaching profession through their engagement in a mentoring programme, which is the central focus of this thesis. The next chapter, Chapter three, is devoted to methodological consideration of the thesis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, Chapter three, details the methodological considerations of my study. In chapter one, I briefly introduced the methodological paradigm and research design (see Chapter one, section 1.7) used to frame my study methodologically. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), state that selecting the methodology in research largely influences the way in which the researcher, perceives and observes knowledge in the world, and from these observations the researcher will form an opinion or ontological assumption. The researcher's ontological assumption, in turn impacts on the researchers' epistemological understanding. This epistemological understanding, in turn, has an impact on the methodological decisions which further influences the selection of instruments used to gather the required data. Therefore, as researcher I understand that there are multiple realities, multiple ways of understanding and knowing the truth. My opinion is that one cannot view this phenomenon (mentoring of beginner teachers) in isolation of the context in which it is bounded.

I start this chapter by offering a brief discussion on the research paradigm in which my study is located. An explanation of the research design, sampling procedures, production of data (data collection methods and strategies), and data analysis, then follows. I will end this chapter by offering a discussion on: how I ensured rigour and reliability throughout my research, the limitations and challenges relating to data production, and finally, I discuss the ethical considerations which pertained to this study.

#### 3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

My study is situated within a qualitative interpretivist research paradigm. According to Merriam (2009, p. 54) "Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations into a specific area". For Babbie

and Mouton (2001, p. 270) qualitative research refers to “a generic research approach in social research which takes the insider perspective on social action”. Furthermore, “qualitative researchers attempt always to study human’s action from the insider (emic) perspective” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 52), which investigates or tries to understand rather than explain or predict human behaviour. In addition, qualitative researchers apply themselves to investigate human actions from the perspective of the actors themselves, (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This implies that, qualitative research takes into account the natural setting as their main point of departure in terms of understanding and interpreting human behaviour.

Interpretivism, a major anti-positivist stance, asserts that natural reality and social reality are different and therefore require different kinds of methods. Interpretive studies, like mine, “seek to explore peoples’ experiences and their views or perspectives of these experiences. Interpretive studies are typically inductive in nature and often associated with qualitative approaches to data gathering and analysis” (Gray, 2008, p. 36). Furthermore, a “qualitative interpretive paradigm does not concern itself with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but seeks to produce descriptive analyses that emphasise deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena” (Henning, 2004, p. 2). This ties in with my study since the idea is to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and consequence of an existing mentoring programme, and to elicit the mentors’ and mentees’ experiences and perceptions of the programme, “from the standpoint of their unique contexts and background” (Henning, 2004, p. 92) Unlike the positivist orientation that assumes that reality exists out there and it is observable, stable and measurable. In keeping with the above-stated claim Merriam (2009) asserts “Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 44).

A major advantage of conducting a qualitative study lies in its flexibility, since this design allows you to modify your research plan at any time and adapt your methodology, time frame, and other aspects of the study to suit the object of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 309), which “increases the validity of the findings” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 309).

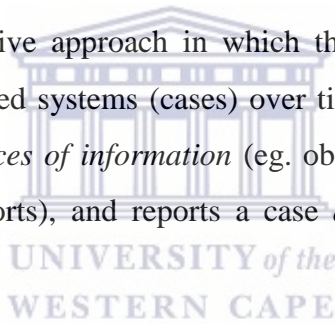
### 3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in this study is a Qualitative Single Case Study. Case Studies are a common way to do qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1988). In general, a case study is an empirical inquiry which:

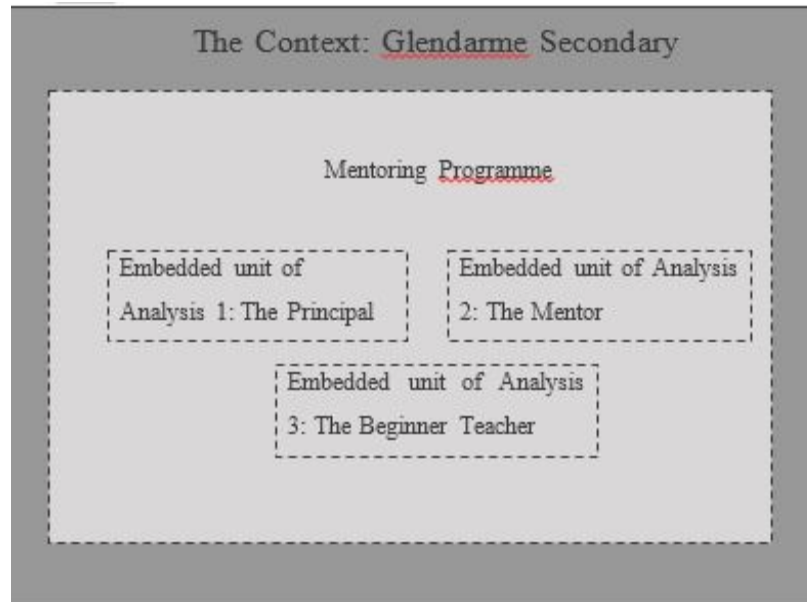
- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
- The boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident; and in which
- Multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2008, p. 18).

Besides Yin's description of a Case Study, Creswell (2007) offers a more detailed description of what case study research is, as he puts it:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (eg. observations, interviews, audio visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007, p. 43).



In my study the “bounded system” or “unit of analysis” is a single case (the mentoring programme). In order to understand this case, I used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document sources. In addition, data was extracted from multiple sources, the principal, two mentors and two mentees. These sources formed multiple units of analysis which I refer to as the embedded cases as illustrated in figure 3.1, which is a diagrammatical representation of the bounded case and its embedded cases.



**Figure 3.1: A diagrammatical representation of the multiple units of analysis adapted from Yin, 1984, p. 46**

Qualitative case studies, according to Merriam (2009, pp. 43-44), have three distinct characteristics. It is characterised as being particularistic – (focusing on a particular phenomenon), descriptive (using thick descriptions to describe the end product), and heuristic (illuminating the readers’ understanding of the phenomenon under study). As previously mentioned, my study sets out to explore the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme (an educational phenomenon), making it particularistic. In addition, this thesis used thick descriptions to report on the findings, making it descriptive, and like Du Plooy (2016, p. 74), my intention with this study “is not to generalise the findings but to extend the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study”, making it heuristic.

### **3.4 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

According to Merriam (2009, pp. 81-82), “two levels of sampling are usually necessary in qualitative case studies. In case studies, then, sample selection occurs first at the case level, followed by sample selection within the case”. The case in this study was a given, it had to be a mentoring programme for beginner teachers, which is the focus of the study. Glendarme

Secondary (a pseudonym) was purposively selected since it was identified by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), as having a functional mentoring programme for its novice (beginner) teachers. Patton (2002) notes that:

the logic and power of purposeful sampling, lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. *Information-rich cases* are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry...” (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Glendarme Secondary, which served as this study’s information-rich case (having a functioning mentoring programme for beginner teachers), is an Article 21 (fee-paying) school situated in the Northern suburbs in the Western Cape. The school is approximately 70 years old and serves a diverse learner community of +/- 900 learners who are being taught by 31 teachers (18 WCED permanent staff and 13 contract staff). Glendarme Secondary School is a quintile 3 school meaning that it is fairly well resourced, as it is evident from table 3.1 (Infrastructure of the school). The quintile system in South Africa stems from the National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1999 (NNSF). It relates to issues of school funding and was instituted to address disparities which existed as a result of Apartheid. Table 3.1, that follows, provides infrastructure of the school.

**Table 3.1: The infrastructure of the school**

Academic staff	Administrative Staff	Support Staff	Building
18 WCED	1 WCED	9	28 Classrooms
13 SGB	3 SGB		1 Library
			1 Staff Room
			1 Reading Room
			1 Art room

The second level of sampling was the selection of information-rich cases within the case, in other words the embedded cases. As mentioned, the case is the mentoring programme and the embedded cases consist of the principal, two mentors and two mentees. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the purposively selected embedded cases.

**Table 3.2: An overview of the embedded cases**

Criteria	Principal	Mentor 1	Mentor 2	Mentee 1	Mentee 2
Age	62	29	29	24	26
Institution where they studied	Peninsula Technicon UNISA and UWC	University of Technology	University of Technology	University	University of Technology
Teaching Qualifications	Advanced Technical Education and ACE	B. Ed and Honours	B. Ed	PGCE	B. Ed
Post level	4	2	2	1	1
Subject Specialization (method subjects)	Business Economics, Accounting and Typing	Business Studies	Accounting and Computer Application Technology (CAT)	Mathematics and Accounting	Business Studies, Economics and EMS
Subject they currently teach	NONE	Business Studies	Accounting and CAT	Mathematics	Business Economics and EMS
Years of teaching experience	41 years	6 years	7 years	1 year & 6 months	6 Months
Number of years involvement in the mentoring programme	7 years	3 years	3 years	1 year and 6 months	6 Months



### **3.5 PRODUCTION OF DATA (DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND STRATEGIES)**

Three data collection methods were used to collect data, namely: semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group interview and document sources. Each of these I discuss in more detail in the following section.

#### **3.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Interviews are commonly used to collect data in qualitative research. DeMarrais (2002, p. 55) defines an interview as “a process in which the researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions relating to a research study”. For Merriam (2009, p. 88), interviews are especially necessary “when we cannot observe behaviour, feelings or how people interpret the world around them”. It was crucial for my study that I understood the inner workings of the selected mentoring programme from different perspectives. Merriam (2009, p. 89) distinguishes between three types of interviews: highly structured interviews (based on predetermined questions), semi-structured interviews (guided by an interview guide or schedule where all questions are used flexibly) and unstructured interviews (more like a conversation, no predetermined questions needed). I used semi-structured individual interviews.

All interviews were conducted using an interview schedule as a guide (see consent forms Appendix D, annexes D1-D3 and Interview sheets E1-E4). Interviews lasted about 45 minutes and they were audio-recorded.

The principal was interviewed as part of management. It was important to gauge her views on the need for the mentoring programme, the mentor-mentee pairing, benefits and challenges relating to the programme, amongst other things (see Appendix E, Annexe E1). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 282) “the unit of analysis [in my case the mentoring programme for beginner teachers] in case study research is rarely isolated from and unaffected by factors in the environment in which it is embedded (see Figure 3.3). The principal’s interview also provided a more holistic picture of the school context, the nature of the mentoring programme and insights into the school’s institutional culture.



Two mentors (Mentor 1 and Mentor 2) were individually interviewed. It was important to get their views on their ‘lived experiences’ of the mentoring programme regarding: their initial expectations, roles and responsibilities, problems encountered, inter alia, (see Appendix E, Annexe E 2).

Two mentees (Beginner Teachers: BT1 and BT2), were individually interviewed. Similarly, to the mentors, their ‘lived experience’ of the mentoring programme was important. The focus here was on their initial expectations, mentor-mentee relationship, amongst other things (see Appendix E, Annexe E 3).

### **3.5.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

As a method of research, focus group interviews, is defined as “an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 94). In addition, Patton (2002) explains:

Unlike a series of one-on-one interviews, in a focus group participants get to hear each other’s responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say. However, participants need not agree with each other or reach any kind of consensus. Nor is it necessary for people to disagree. The object is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others (Patton, 2002, p. 386).

The focus group interview I conducted composed of the principal, the mentors and mentees, and followed the one-on-one interviews. Aspects from the latter, that needed clarity and further probing were explored in the focus group interview (refer to Appendix E, Annexe E4- for the focus group interview schedule).

Watts and Ebbut (1987) have acknowledged the following advantages and disadvantages of the focus group interview technique to gather data:

### **Advantages of focus group interviews:**

- Offers a greater opportunity for discussion on a set topic with the distinct prospect of feedback, in this case the experiences of both the mentor and the mentee within this programme were the topic of discussion.
- It allows for better understanding from the participants based on the responses gathered from the one-to-one interviews
- It could be considered as being less time consuming and can be conducted in a shorter period of time than the one-to-one interviews.
- The researcher is able to gather data in a shorter period of time and could therefore be considered as being more cost effective

### **Disadvantages of focus group interviews:**

- There could be one participant who might tend to dominate the discussion or interview
- This type of interview strategy is not ideal for use when you are dealing with sensitive subject matter as this would strain interaction or responses
- This platform does not allow for individual probing
- The researcher, during this type of interrogation, has less control over the data which is being generated
- This type of interview requires for a skillful researcher which is adept to conduct focus group interviews.

Besides semi-structured interviews and the focus group interviews I also used document sources to acquire data, to which I now turn.

### **3.5.3 DOCUMENT SOURCES**

Merriam (2009, p. 139), notes that “documents are...a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator”. For Yin (1984, p. 102) documents are stable in that they can be repeatedly reviewed. It is unobtrusive –not created as a result of the case study and contains exact names, references, and details of an event. In this study the documents outlining the mentoring programme of Glendarme Secondary School, and other supporting documents served as a valuable source to corroborate and augment evidence obtained

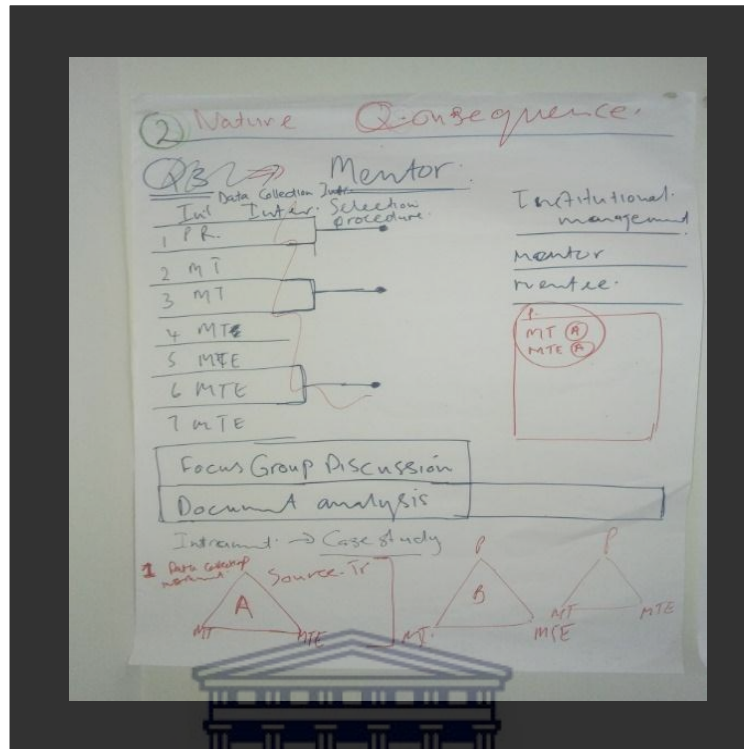
through interviews. As Yin (1984, p. 103) puts it: “because of their overall value, documents play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case studies”. However, Merriam (2009, p. 156) warns that because documents are produced for various reasons and not only research, “they may be fragmentary, they may not fit the conceptual framework of the research, and their authenticity may be difficult to determine” (Merriam, 2009, p. 156).

### **3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

For Henning (2004) the competence of the researcher will become obvious during the analysis and interpretation of the data which has been gathered as this requires analytical craftsmanship and the ability to understand the writing and transcribing of the data. Furthermore, Henning (2004, p. 19), describes the analysis process as being the “heartbeat” of the research process and that it requires quality of thinking on the side of the researcher. Merriam (2009, p. 176) concurs by adding that “data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data to abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation”. Yin (1984, p. 127) explains that “data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining evidence, to draw empirically based conclusions”. Following is a step by step process of how data was analysed in my study. These steps were informed by Merriam (2009, pp. 178 – 207). Included in this data analysis, discussions are snapshots of my actual work- a sense making exercise.

#### ***Step 1: Planning phase***

In figure 3.2, I provide a snapshot of the planning stages of the data analysis process. At this stage I merely outlined what was done in terms of data production and tried to make sense of how I was going to work with the sample -multiple ‘information-rich’ cases. Merriam (2009, p. 203), warns that the case study researcher can be seriously challenged in trying to make sense out of data. Attention to data management therefore crucial.



**Figure 3.2: Planning phase**

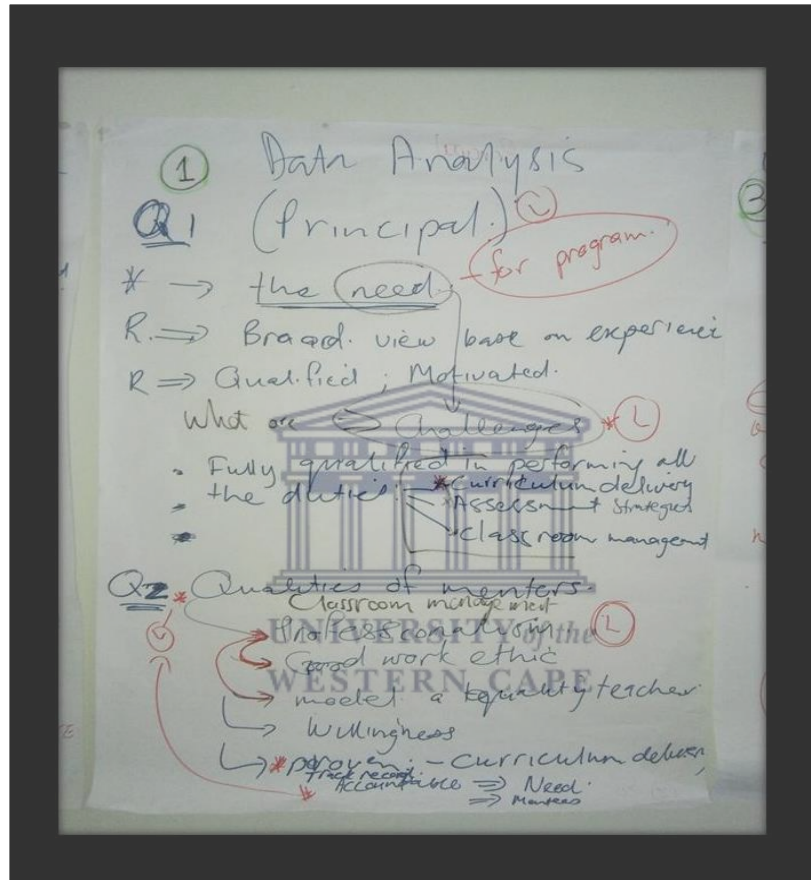
Furthermore, to begin “all the information about the case should be brought together” Merriam (2009, p. 203) – in my study this meant bringing together all transcripts of individual and focused group interviews, as well as the document sources that formed part of the data production.

***Step 2: Category Construction - Moving from open coding to analytical coding***

The transcripts of interviews became the “text data”. By listening to the audio recordings over and over again and reading the transcripts, I could ‘jot down’ preliminary notes on similarities and differences.

Merriam refers to this ‘beginning stages of analysis’, as “rudimentary analysis”. The following snapshot (see Figure 3.3) represents my actual notes and depicts my initial coding of the data. It was extracted from the first data set, namely the principal. This allowed me to make notations

next to bits of data which strike as potentially relevant for answering the research questions, which Merriam, (2009, p. 178) calls “coding” or category construction- a form of open coding. The latter involves identifying useful segments of data, making notations (jotting down notes) in order to start making sense of the data.

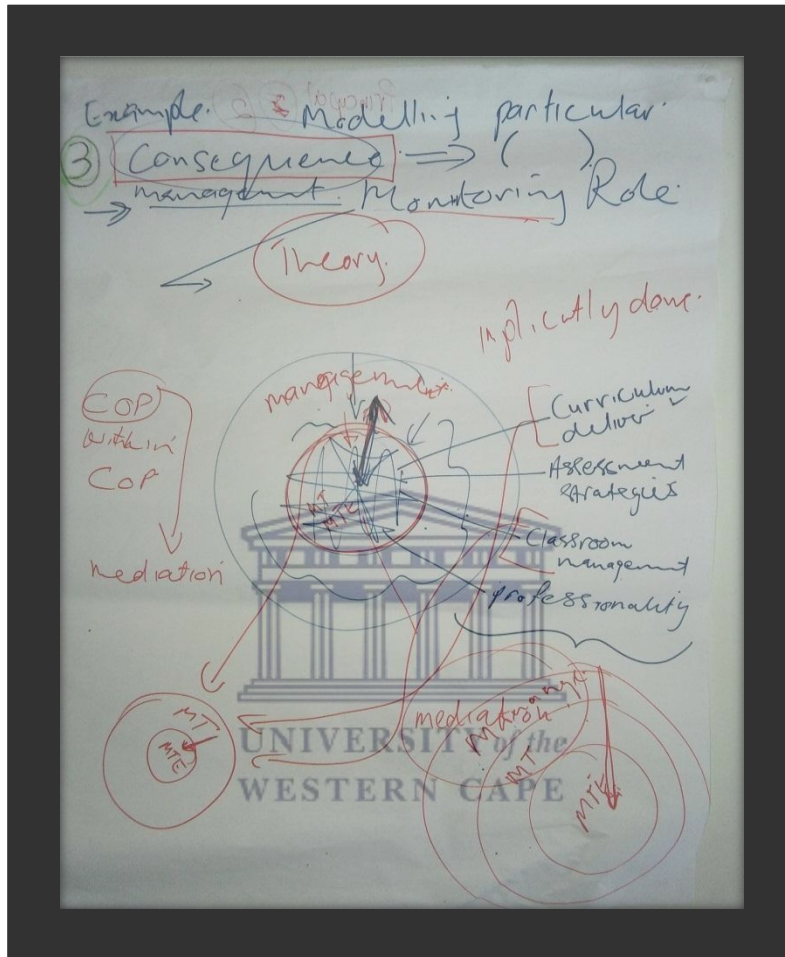


**Figure 3.3: Category construction – open coding**

**Step 3: Moving from descriptive coding to analytical coding**

The descriptive codes of step 2 are then categorised further into broader categories. By labouring in this way: “breaking text into segments, writing notations and assigning codes to text made it easier to see linkages (patterns) within and across the data sets” (Du Plooy, 2016, p. 105). An interpretative thematic approach was used for the analysis of data allowing for dominant themes

and patterns to emerge across the tests. Figure 3.4 below provides a snapshot illustrating an example of modelling of a particular theme, which emanated from the analytical coding process.



**Figure 3.4: Moving from descriptive to analytical coding**

It is at this time that the open descriptive codes were now replaced with more analytical codes.

### **3.7 RIGOUR, TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Merriam (2009) suggests a number of strategies to enhance the rigour and trustworthiness of a qualitative study. In the following table 3.3, I extracted the strategies for promoting credibility and trustworthiness that applied to my study; in other words, what I did to ensure rigour in my research.



**Table 3.3: Strategies for promoting credibility and trustworthiness**

Strategy	Description
Triangulation	<p>I used two different types of triangulation: 1) Data triangulation – using three different sources of data (the principal, two mentors and two mentees)</p> <p>2) Methodological triangulation – using more than one method to collect data (semi-structured individual interviews; focus group interviews; document sources)</p>
Peer review/ examination	<p>Discussion with two colleagues regarding the process of the study, talking through emerging themes and making tentative interpretations</p>
Rich, thick descriptions	<p>Providing enough description to contextualise the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context, hence, whether findings can be transferred.</p>

*Source: adapted from Merriam, 2009, p. 229*

For Merriam (2009, p. 216) triangulation remains a principle strategy to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study also depends on the credibility of the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Stark (2005, p. 459) states that “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict”. Taking this into account, I followed ethical procedures throughout the research process. I received ethical clearance to conduct this research from the University through the Senate Higher

Degrees Committee after submitting all relevant documentation. In addition, I applied to the WCED to gain permission to access the school (see permission letter in Appendix A) and wrote a letter to the school and SGB asking permission to conduct research at the school. The information sheet (see Appendix B), which outlined all relevant aspects of my research were shared with all research participants prior to conducting the research. All participants were briefed on the rationale of the study prior to them signing the consent forms. The consent form (refer to Appendix C) was explained to participants. All participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study during the research process if for any reason they felt that they no longer wished to participate in this research.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss all methodological considerations of this study. I dealt with issues like: the research paradigm and research design, situating this study within a qualitative interpretative paradigm based on a single case study (an existing mentoring programme). Embedded in this single case were three embedded cases: the principal, two mentors and two mentees, the sample which were purposefully selected. This was followed by a discussion of the data collection instruments (semi-structured individual and focus group interviews and document sources), the analysis strategies employed and the strategies for promoting the validity and reliability of the study. The chapter ends with the ethical considerations aimed at ensuring the credibility of my study. The next chapter, Chapter four, details the data that emerged from the analysis process.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. It deals with the themes that emanated from the three embedded cases: 1) The Principal, 2) The Mentor (MT) and 3) Beginner Teacher (BT) or mentee. The data used was extracted from semi-structured individual interviews, focus-group interviews and document sources.

The analysis of the interview data and document sources were logically formulated and interpreted as the subjective responses of participants viewed against the context of the school. Hence the analysis gives a thematic view of the way participants do things based on their local knowledge and give meaning and make meaning of their local experiences. My exploration of the participants' interpretation (their verbatim responses) allowed for the uncovering of the conceptual structures which informs the participant's action to become visible or be uncovered (Denzin, 1989, p. 110). In the sections that follow, I engage with each data set (three embedded cases) individually and then provide an overview of the findings and the analytical themes that emerged from the inductive analysis process.

#### **4.2 ENGAGING WITH MULTIPLE UNITS OF ANALYSIS – THE THREE EMBEDDED CASES**

##### **4.2.1 EMBEDDED CASE 1: THE PRINCIPAL**

The following themes emanated from the principal's interview:

- a. Classroom management
- b. Curriculum delivery and assessment strategies
- c. The qualities and responsibilities of the mentor (MT)
- d. Monitoring

e. Benefits and perceived challenges

**a. Classroom management**

The principal mentions that there are areas lacking when the BT enters the school. These shortcomings prevent the BTs from functioning at their optimum potential. She, as part of the school's management team (SMT), acknowledges the potential which can be unlocked in the BT through his or her involvement in a mentoring programme, as for her:

*“...new teachers starting are very enthusiastic and well qualified. But once they are in the classroom they struggle a lot with managing that classes. Ill-discipline of learners breaks a new teacher's enthusiasm and even though they are well qualified they would lose; the teaching profession would lose them because they become despondent”.*

These challenges such as classroom management, of which ill-disciplined learners is a major contributor can account for BTs becoming despondent and leaving the profession. The principal observed, *“because they [BTs] are inexperienced they don't know how to handle them [learners]”*. Learners, according to the principal, are always trying to *“test the waters or whatever”*. For her *“...all of them all of those BTs had problems with discipline”*. The principal therefore suggests that one way of addressing the issue of classroom management and dealing with ill-disciplined learners so as to retain BTs in the profession, is by means of a mentoring programme, as she puts it *“...the teaching profession would lose them[BTs] because they become despondent. So let me try and fill that void by trying to establish a mentoring program”*.

Besides ill-disciplined learners, the principal also identifies other challenges that BTs face, as novice teachers, like curriculum and assessment related matters to which we now turn.

**b. Curriculum delivery and assessment**

As mentioned, the principal acknowledged that the BT comes into the teaching profession *“fully qualified”* but she also noticed that many of them in her words,

*“are not fully qualified in performing all the duties that go with teaching...teaching is not only about delivering curriculum it's about drawing up question papers. It's how do you interpret the CAPS, how do you simplify your lessons and how do you prepare for a lesson to make it interesting, how do you manage your classroom”.*

These curriculum matters coupled with assessment are the duties that she feels go with teaching, which the university does not appear to prepare them thoroughly for. As she puts it, *“I just felt that in the training somehow, maybe that is missed”.*

To ensure that the mentoring programme addresses the inadequacies identified by the principal, the selection of the MT was paramount.

### **c. The qualities and responsibilities of the Mentor (MT)**

The selection criteria of the MT were considered important to address the gaps which existed in BTs training. The following extract from the principal's interview expresses the qualities which she felt mentors must possess in order to participate in the mentoring programme:

*“A passion for teaching ... professional work ethics because if you are going to teach somebody else then you need to be a professional yourself. And I can tell you professional work ethics is a big challenge for young teachers coming in. Number one, I'm old school so dress code is very important to me. So those finer things that you need is important so it is the passion. It is them being professional. It is also them knowing their own curriculum. They must have proven to me that they can deliver the curriculum successfully and then also they must be willing to participate in a mentoring program because you find you you're you've got very good teachers but they're not willing to share so, so you don't force them,”*

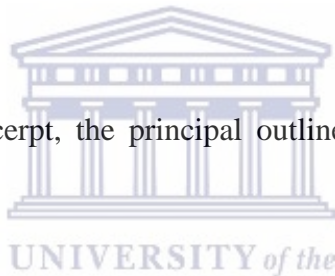
In addition, in the focus group interview, the principal further expressed the importance of selecting the mentor. For her

*“the selection of the mentor plays a big role in the success of the mentoring programme...I select a person that is already proven to have those qualities you*

*would like to rub off on another teacher...so there would be some colleagues with all due respect that I would not think is suitable for mentoring. Look at X [referring to a mentor] I would use her without a doubt because she is so focused; the work ethics that she portrays, but there would be other people that I would never approach”*

These qualities of a mentor, which for the principal are ‘a passion for teaching’, ‘professional work ethic’, ‘being focused’ and having a proven track record of curriculum delivery, could enhance the mentoring programme and constructively address the areas lacking within the BT’s initial teacher training. The principal carefully observes experienced teachers on her staff to see whether they have mastered the required qualities she deems necessary for MTs to possess. After that she would engage with the mentor to ask whether they would be willing to participate in the mentoring programme, avoiding the experienced teacher feeling compelled that they should participate.

Furthermore, in the following excerpt, the principal outlines the MT’s responsibilities in the mentoring programme by saying:



*“First of all, play a supportive role to the mentee because many a time when teachers start off especially when they are not struggling they become despondent and they might lose hope. So the first thing is what I asked my mentors to do is to provide support and to encourage encouragement to make them feel, that you know they have the potential and that they are there to do to improve and enhance whatever they have”.*

In addition to offering support and encouragement the principal further alludes to processes or ways of doing, by adding:

*“... I would ask that they tend to every aspect that the teacher has to do. Go in and look at how they teach in the class and if it addresses the curriculum in the proper way. See in which way can you assist in making the delivery of the curriculum more effective and to me more simplistic because what you do with what delivering curriculum is to make it as simplistic as possible and also to provide them with guidance in terms of you know what is what or what are your focus areas when you when you deliver curriculum... Teach them also how to*

*draw up question papers. Moderation is a very big thing in our school. Moderate the question papers to guide them in terms of where did they go wrong and what can what must be done... And also instilling them a sense of accountability that if you are responsible for delivering this curriculum if things are going wrong they you cannot move and shift the blame to someone else. You need to accept, accept full responsibility”.*

From the above excerpt one can derive that in addition to playing a supportive and encouraging role mentors are also tasked to make sure that the curriculum is delivered effectively, part of which includes dealing with issues of assessment. The emphasis is on making things “simplistic”, which is a gradual process; working through things gradually, offering guidance. It also appears to be about motivating and instilling a sense of accountability in the BT.

#### **d. Monitoring**

From the principal interview data, it emerged that there is no formal training given to MTs to skill them in mentoring. In the following extract, the principal alludes to how monitoring within the programme takes place. She notes that

*“... In my top structure meeting which I have weekly, I would ask them [MT] to give me feedback. I specifically focus on the new teachers. I would ask them [MT’s]: “So what is your findings with miss X?... and what do you see at the moment are her shortcomings?”. So that we can collectively, collectively decide how we can address and what type of support we can provide that specific challenge”.*

It appears from the extract that weekly meetings are held for the purpose of feedback- relating to what the MTs found in terms of their one-on-one engagements with BTs. The purpose of the one-on-one engagements, which takes place when the MT enters the classroom of the BT, is to determine gaps in their practices or what the principal calls “shortcomings”. It is in these weekly feedback meetings that MTs must report on the progress made on the initial shortcomings of the BT and report if the gap is being bridged. From the data the feedback given does not inform whether the MTs are allowed to give feedback on how they experience the mentoring

programme or whether they are allowed to offer amendments which will impact on the nature of the programme. In these meetings, the focus is on the BT's experiences or shortcomings or as the principal puts it: *"I specifically focus on the new teachers"*. Furthermore, what I am observing, is that the MT's normally work on an individual basis with their BT's, addressing their individual needs however, as noted from these weekly monitoring meetings that the principal holds, the challenges that arise out of the BT's individual needs are addressed collectively, as the principal expressed *"...collectively, collectively decide how we can address and what type of support we can provide that specific challenge"*. The latter suggest a more collegial or collective approach to mentoring.

#### **e. Benefits and perceived challenges**

For the principal the involvement in a mentoring programme holds certain benefits but also resulted in unforeseen circumstances. One of the major benefits is how the BTs based on their involvement in the mentoring programme gains in confidence, as explained by the principal:

*"The principal concurs by saying benefits would be that it builds their confidence. If I look at when they started you know how insecure they were and I look even six months down the line. If you look at them now. I mean Miss X\* is n" sprekende voorbeeld." [A good example]. She's the person that struggled with classroom discipline as she was also in my office crying and in tears. Now I'm grooming her to serve on the management team. She's just gained confidence and she's just you know glowing. So I do think though that the greatest benefit is that they have trust in themselves... they have gained confidence and they are enthusiastic about teaching"*

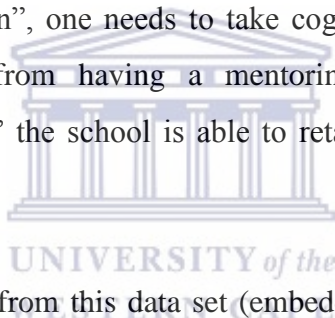
Although the principal narrated on the benefits of the BT's involvement in the mentoring programme, she warns about an unexpected negative consequence of the mentoring programme. She reports by noting:

*"Look as a result of the enhancement in their performance, being part of the mentoring programme. I number one want to add I discovered that my teachers are becoming very marketable and that's why other schools are now tapping into stealing them away from me... I feel I should be very pleased with the fact that I could groom them that other people now want to make use of their services. So I need to accept that. So I just have to think of another plan to cover myself when they have to leave the nest"*

In the extract the principal alludes to the fact that the BTs, as a result of their engagement in the mentoring programme, not only gain in confidence, but they also become marketable which ends up them being head-hunted for positions by other principals and schools. This then forced her to think of alternative ways of retaining the BTs. She explains:

*“I’ve decided my next step is developing a management developmental group. So I want to gear all those young teachers that we are busy developing together and I want to tell them look I see the potential of leadership in you and I want to know are you interested in being developed for management so that we can develop you so that you can now shadow a manager so that we can groom and gear you for management “.*

So even though, in the principal’s own words “there are many positive spin-offs...which far outweigh the effort that you put in”, one needs to take cognizance of the fact of the negative consequences that could arise from having a mentoring programme. By developing a “management development group” the school is able to retain teachers by grooming them for management positions.



In brief, the themes that emerged from this data set (embedded case 1) outlined the need for a mentoring programme which arose out of the shortcomings that exist in the beginner teacher; gaps that have not been addressed in the initial teacher training. These identifiable gaps, which we get from this data set, are: Curriculum delivery, assessment and classroom management, of which ill-discipline of learners was major cause of concern. The data set also provided the attributes and responsibilities of a mentor, highlighting the importance of the „right fit „between the mentor and beginner teacher. It also highlighted the ‘positive spin-offs’ of mentoring and in addition reveals the negative and unforeseen consequences, which opens up possibilities for new forms of learning creating new possibilities in terms of adding an additional CoP. Following is the presentation of data from the second embedded case.



## 4.2.2 EMBEDDED UNIT OF ANALYSIS 2: THE MENTOR

Two mentors were subjected to a semi-structured individual interview and formed part of a focus group interview to elicit their overall experiences in the mentoring programme. See Table 3.2, Chapter three, one derives that both mentors are fairly young (both 29 years old), have less than 10 years teaching experience (Mentor 1-six years and Mentor 2-seven years), both are HOD's (occupy Level 2 posts) and both had experience in being mentored. Following is a discussion on the themes and subthemes which emerged from this data set.

- a. Addressing the Gap
- b. Time Management
- c. Willingness and compatibility
- d. Mentor-mentee relationship
- e. Accountability

### a. Addressing the gap.



The data showed that both MT's could identify with the BT, because of their own experiences of being mentored and drawing on when they were novice teachers. MT1 saw her own experience as a beginner teacher, as a starting point which enabled her to act as a mentor. The following two extracts speak to the shortcomings and inadequacies in the initial teacher training of the beginner teachers as identified by their mentors.

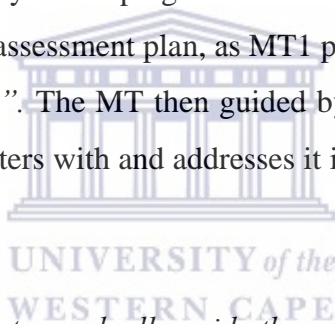
**MT 1:** *“I think what helped me with my mentoring abilities is, the gaps that I saw when I entered the school, the things that I had to learn for myself because the university prepares you in one direction and you enter the school and it is a different reality”*

**MT 2:** *“Very, very little of the things that they cover in university you actually apply, except for the content knowledge but the day to day coping with the class, coping with the content, coping with the workload and actually setting those papers and those things, they not there to teach you and for me it was trial and error. So, when someone comes new into my department I want to try and make their life as easy as possible”.*



From the extract one can derive that a clear gap exists the BTs initial training at the university and the realities they encounter when they enter the school. MT1 puts it very eloquently by saying “the university prepares you in one direction and you enter the school and it’s a different reality”. From the university you get what MT2 observed as “content knowledge” but for her the school also requires an understanding of practice- “day to day coping” with the class, content, workload and assessment.

Reflecting on her own experience, MT1 starts the mentoring process by conducting a pre-assessment of the BT’s teaching ability through observation to identify the areas which needed to be addressed in the BT. This initial beginning phase in the mentoring programme is governed by questions such as, “...*what level are you on, how much growth do you need, what do you need to develop?*”. This is then followed by developing a custom made developmental plan for each of the BTs which stems from the pre-assessment plan, as MT1 puts it: “...*each one’s developmental plan that we have here is different*”. The MT then guided by the developmental plan addresses the identifiable gaps that the BT enters with and addresses it in the following way, in MT1’s own words:



*“...my role as a mentor is to gradually guide the new person and my mentee into being able to complete the tasks they do need to be able to do. So that ... when I'm done with them they can perform these tasks on their own. But it's all about gradually phasing it in and assisting. A massive part of mentoring except for the workload, is just being there as someone that they can talk to.”*

In addition, MT1 notes that:

*“My whole idea of a mentor is you've got to get that person to the place where they can kind of replace you where they can take your role. So even when I'm mentoring my people it's not just mentoring in being able to do their job. I'd like to mentor them even as I'm a HOD to do a HOD job so they can take that role. I want them to feel that they can replace me because how else am I empowering you? So I want them to feel like they can walk into my office sit in my chair and do my job.”*

The narrative account displayed in this extract outlines the mentoring process which appears to start gradually addressing issues and engaging in task identified from the initial phase of the developmental plan with the purpose of “empowering” or moving the beginner teacher towards competencies that will eventually lead to them to ‘taking over’ – performing the role of the HOD.

## **b. Time Management**

In the previous data set the principal highlighted classroom management (dealing with ill-disciplined learners), as a major deterrent for beginner teachers. However, in this data set, the MT highlights time management as the biggest challenge facing BT’s. MT2 expresses that,

*“the challenge is lack of time management; they[BT] don’t manage their time correctly. Not keeping to due dates, is one of the biggest problem. Also not managing their time effectively with curriculum although it says two weeks”.*

It appears that BT enters the school with the content knowledge that is prescribed in the CAPS documents. However, the CAPS- cycle requires that a teacher delivers the prescribed content knowledge within a two-week cycle, which the BT struggles to execute. Furthermore, the data shows that the MT also requires a keen command of time management in performing there mentoring duties. Both MT’s expressed that they initially felt that they are not able to meet the needs of the BT’s due to their workload they have as HOD’s. So time management is not only a problem for the BT, but also for the MT. As MT2 explained:

*“...my biggest problem I've experienced is I don't feel like I always get enough time to spend with them or enough time to pay attention to them. And what's really going on because I'm not just the mentor; I run curriculum, I'm assessment coordinator. I'm a grade head. I'm a student. I don't always feel like I have enough time to invest in them that I really want to. I tried but from my side, I feel sometimes I just is not enough hours in the day or, I feel like I can hear you're struggling with a class you're struggling with the grade 9 class and I desperately want to get to you but I have a grade 12 math class in exactly the same time slot and I cannot leave a grade 12 class”.*

HOD's, as mentors, are under tremendous pressure as one can see from the excerpt above, in that they have their own teaching workload. They also manage the curriculum and assessment and still have to find the time to mentor the BT. As a result of their involvement in the mentoring programme both the MT's mentioned managing their time as a problem. They, however, explored alternative ways of managing their workload with the additional task of acting as a Mentor to the BT. MT2 explains how she uses technology (WhatsApp, subject supper and extra-mural platforms) in the mentoring process, to find time to mentor the beginner teacher.

*“... that is where we came into the technologies. So we created little WhatsApp groups where we can talk, where I can give advice without having to leave my class. In the end, it is basically emotional support...and then also you can't fit in everything in a school day. That's why once a month we've got our „subjects“ supper. We write it off as a subject meeting. So we do try to do that and then a lot of times if you do extra mural with the person that you're mentoring that works really nicely as well because you are given that little extra time just to talk about what is going on. How can I assist you? So you have to try and find ways around the school times because there's just not enough between 8h00 and 15h00. Really who stops at 15:00?”*



Both MTs indicate how they needed to explore alternative platforms, in order to mentor beginner teachers and at the same time adhere to their own teaching and leadership commitments.

### **c. Willingness and compatibility.**

From the focus group discussion, one of the mentors noted that in order to be a mentor there needs to be a willingness to be involved in the programme. She notes that:

*“It needs to be a person that wants to mentor someone. You cannot force someone into being a mentor; it needs to be a person that actually feels like they want to invest in someone else. A person that feels that they want to contribute, not just to that person, but to the good of the whole school. So, the person needs to want to pass that knowledge. It's all about if you want to. I think as a mentor, you need to inculcate that wanting to improve the rest, the school plan, the learner, the type of new teachers, develop them. So, it should be a lifelong continuous process”.*

Willingness, according to the response of this mentor, is supported by a strong desire to want to share knowledge and a willingness to bring about improvements in the school as a whole, which appears to suggest a movement away from a once-off engagement towards a more lengthy and continuous process. Furthermore, the compatibility of the MT and BT is an important factor, as expressed by MT1:

*“I think being compatible and understanding one another and building the trust is vital., technically it shouldn't actually be either we compatible or not but if you are compatible and you understand one another, there's trust, good working relationship, the morale of your team sky rocketing, you producing, quality is improving term by term... This is my team and I need to create a sense of belonging”.*

A good match between the mentor and beginner teacher appears vital- creating a sense of belonging, being in a trusting relationship where they work well together, appears not only to improve morale of the staff but also the quality of teaching. She continues that in the event where there is a personality clash and the MT and BT “do not gel” then it is best to have the BT reassigned to a different mentor, as expressed below:

*“...if there is not a link and you don't click and there's no compatibility between you that person is not going to feel that they can come to you with their questions they rather going to keep quiet and sit in the corner and the person needs to feel that they can come to you and it's not always from one side. You need to cover it from both sides and if that doesn't work, you need to try and find another mentor just for that person's survival...rather reassign because that person in the end needs to feel that that's the person that can go to no matter what and if they need to feel a connection”.*

So one gets a strong sense that there needs to be a strong connection between the MT and the BT; they need to be compatible in order for the mentor-mentee relationship to be a productive one. If not, it is best to discontinue the existing mentor-mentee relationship. Therefore, the pairing of the right mentor with the right mentee appears vital to the survival of the mentor-mentee relationship.

#### **d. Mentor-mentee relationship**

Interpersonal skills are an important element in the mentoring process since it will influence the way in which criticism is both accepted by the BT, and given by the MT, as MT1 expressed:

*“I think the most important thing you should have as a mentor is interpersonal skills and have the ability to build a relationship with that person. If all else fails and if that person feels they can come to you then you've succeeded”.*

Linked to interpersonal skills is a challenge which MT1 recounted, and that is the issue of the age gap between the MT and BT and how this can have an impact on the efficacy of the mentoring programme.

*“I'm under the age of thirty and all the people I mentor are either twenty-two, younger than me and sometimes older than me that just started the teaching profession through a PGCE. And it's difficult being young and then mentoring the young and then also perhaps if you socialize together as well. Socializing and finding that okay I'm your mentor now ...I'm your friend now. So that, I was in a situation where, I said this is the mentor mask, this is your HOD, I'm speaking to you with regards to work. Tonight, I will call you... hi friend what's up? By approach I cannot let anything negative impact the learners, the quality or the team or let you be a bad reflection on me or this entire department”.*

There is the risk of not being able to discern between roles given the fact the MT and BT are close in age and at times socialise together. MT1, reflecting on her own experiences, emphatically responded:

*“I just thought you cannot let people go through this. I at least want to make them feel I can listen and support and help like come and cry by me don't go home and feel like you're crying against the wall... So, it's just, it's small things but it's things just to try and help those teachers like to feel like they are not drowning”.*

From data the emotional well-being of the BT is also dealt with within the MT-BT relationship. Addressing the BT's emotional well-being, will prevent them from feeling abandoned and alone. During the mentoring programme the MT sees the support to the BT as a continuous process

which aims to get the BT to the place where they are able to eventually function independently. However, according to the MT, getting the BT to a point where they are well balanced and competent teachers takes them also through emotional challenges, which impacts their own character. These emotional challenges come to the fore, especially when mentors are confronted with resistance from BT's in the mentor-mentee relationship. MT2 reports how she vents and deals with resistance as she explained:

*“This one particular teacher doesn't want to be teaching Afrikaans. And whatever... he doesn't attend the meetings, he doesn't go to the moderation, doen sy eie ding (does his own thing). When I do the moderation and I compare learners” books he did his own work. I went to my colleague and I asked her you know what ek is nou al so dik van die man (I am sick and tired of this man) because no matter if I speak nicely, if I ask, if I send a reminder or ...It's just not working. He's not doing what I want him to do and he came straight to me and he said you know what, I give you permission to implement progressive discipline on me now. He was very cheesed off the fact that I discussed my issue with him, with my colleague. He didn't understand the fact that we are actually sharing best practices. I liaise with the principal. Even some of my colleagues that's not teaching here anymore that's elsewhere... Like wat doen ek, ek het nou al xyz. It's not working so please share your experience or... die was nou al my benadering, I don't know what to do anymore. I've exhausted all my resources so consulting with people either in the same position, senior or more experienced. Them sharing their experiences or knowledge with me then I try and gather all that information. Okay, so which one is best suited for this situation?”*

The above excerpt is indicative of how emotionally charged a mentor-mentee (BT) relationship can become when faced with resistance. This also speaks to an issue of compatibility which I discussed earlier. In addition, what I am also seeing is how this MT moves beyond the boundaries of the immediate mentor-mentee relationship by seeking solutions elsewhere. This approach indicates how the process of mentoring has progressed from one-to-one to a more collegial approach.

Compared to MT2, MT1 deals with the issue of resistance through open conversation in a safe environment.



*“I feel the best way to approach resistance is with openly open honesty. So if I feel that someone is not doing what I recommend. I have a very open honest conversation with a person in my office, not in front of the rest of the staff but it in a safe environment and also my office is not the type of environment where you sit on that side of the desk and I sit on this side of the desk. We sit next to each other”.*

MT1’s open and non-judgmental approach focuses on the emotional well-being of the BT and she affords the BT the space to explain why certain tasks were not performed as she tries to understand the behaviour of the BT. She remains within the one-to-one approach as she uncovers the reason for the BT not doing her duties as is expected.

*“I want to hear what's going on in your head. I have asked you to do these things or look at these things. It's not happening. So I don't want to shout at you. I don't want to scream at you. I'm not here to reprimand you”.*

As MT she offers assistance to see how she is able to address the gap which exists in the BT’s repertoire. She diligently works at the MT-BT relationship with the ultimate aim of being constructive and keeping the BT enthused as this goal is to prevent the BT from feeling inadequate, prone to possibly becoming despondent and giving up. MT1 further adds:

*“How can I assist because in the end a mentor is there to assist that's the biggest part of it? So for me maybe the resistance is there because they don't want to do it which happens very seldom or it can be that something else is going on and that just needs to be addressed first”.*

By being approachable she builds up the MT-BT relationship; discussing the matter and not casting any blame. This MT reformulates and sees how things can be done differently. She further explains:

*“So for me, I haven't had resistance very much very little but if you do get people that resists, I feel the few times it's happened once you have that very open heart to heart about what's going on and then really look at the situation and then reformulate what you're going to do from there...get to that stage of the honesty in the relationship. I'm open, I'm honest they know where they stand with me and I*

*want to know where I stand with them. I want to have a real relationship with you. Not just one built around work because you're trying to please me. That doesn't work”.*

To help the BT deal with the challenges they encounter as they enter the school, it is important that the relationship is continuously developed. The emotional well-being of both the MT and BT is being considered.

#### **e. Accountability**

Accountability, for MT2 starts and ends with her, as she puts it, *“it starts with me and ends with me”* She further explains that what the BT does *“is a reflection of her”*. MTs are responsible for developing the competencies of the BTs, and at the same time meeting their own teaching and leadership responsibilities. This makes them accountable, not only to the BT but also to the SMT. The latter can be observed in the principal’s response to what happens in weekly meetings which I alluded to earlier. MT1 shows how she exercises accountability through the use of what she calls the „paper trail“. She notes,

*“Definitely, accountability and responsibility and I’m going to approach you and the first time I let it slide, the second time I’m going to have a stern conversation with you. Thereafter I need to ensure that my paper trail is in place for progressive discipline. You were warned, I told you that this is the consequences and with me identifying the problem or a challenge or an issue I need to come up with possible solutions. So, if I’ve given you look let’s talk, let’s try and see how we can solve this, or better ways or mechanisms put the mechanisms in place and you not adhering to that then of course I need to follow the paper trail route and build my case against you”.*

The above narration clearly illuminates a different mentoring style. Previously, I indicated a more open and non-judgmental mentoring style. Here, however, a more authoritative and closed relationship comes to the fore. Each of these mentoring styles appears to result in different experiences for both the mentor and beginner teacher.



In brief, the themes that emerged from this data set, (embedded case 2) give some indication of how the mentor experiences the mentoring programme. A number of interesting things surfaced this data set, namely the issue of time management-especially in this school context where certain HODs are selected as mentors and find their own teaching workload interfering with their ability to mentor. What also surfaced is the innovative ways in which mentors deal with accessing beginner teachers, through the use of alternative mentoring platforms for example, the use of technology. Another issue that stood out from this case is the alternative styles of mentoring that mentors adopt when dealing with resistance from challenging BTs and what the outcomes are when different mentoring styles are adopted.

#### **4.2.3 EMBEDDED UNIT OF ANALYSIS 3: THE BEGINNER TEACHER**

Two beginner teachers or BTs as they are referred to for analysis purposes were subjected to a semi-structured individual interview and formed part of a focus group interview to elicit their overall experiences in the mentoring programmes. Both BT1 and BT 2 are in their early twenties (BT1 is 24 and BT2 is 26) and both have been teaching for less than three years (BT1 has been teaching for a year and 6 months and BT2 for 6 months). These two BTs entered the teaching profession from different HEIs – BT1 did a PGCE at University and BT2 completed a B. Ed at a University of Technology. A discussion on the themes and sub-themes which emerged from this data set now follows.

- a. Addressing the Gap (challenges)
- b. Mentor-mentee relationship
- c. Willingness and compatibility

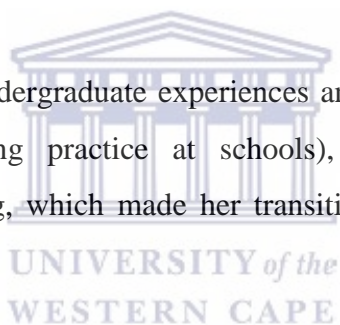
##### **a. Addressing the gap**

As mentioned, the two BTs entered the school from two different institutions with different qualifications. BT1 held a PGCE degree from one of the universities. As a PGCE graduate, she holds a degree and a term of work-integrated learning, which comprises of only seven weeks of teaching practice in the real school context and exposure to teaching in the form of micro teaching classes. In addition to the PGCE she holds a degree in Economic and Management

Sciences (EMS), coming into the profession with a strong content knowledge in her area of specialization (accounting and mathematics), but very little pedagogical knowledge given her lack of exposure to teaching. Reflecting on her experiences of doing teaching practice, as part of her final year, she mentioned: *“It was very, very different during the practical opposed to real life because in real life you can’t sit and do a two-page lesson plan for every single lesson you follow, it’s impractical”*. In addition, BT1’s response to her level of readiness to deal with the challenges of school when she left the university was met with the following response:

*“No...No, definitely not! No, I only had one year... the PGCE. I only had one term of practical, and it was not enough at all. I mean, naturally an undergraduate is supposed to teach you all the theory content that you need, but with the practical side and the other school challenges, I felt like I hit the water so deep...”*.

BT1’s narrative account of her undergraduate experiences and her exposure to teaching during work-integrated learning (teaching practice at schools), points to the shortcomings or inadequacies in her initial training, which made her transition from university to school very challenging.



In addition, teaching at a secondary school, as newly graduated teacher, joining the school she found that there was a relatively small age gap between her and some of the learners whom she was teaching. This was especially prevalent in classes where there were learners who were repeating a grade. In these classes learners often misbehaved which made classroom management difficult for BT1 as she expressed in the following extract:

*“There was a very small age gap between myself and the learners I was teaching and naturally the learners here at the school take full advantage of the newbies [BT’s]... So, I felt that was very challenging and as a result I could not get my content done because I spent half of the lesson shouting. So it was very challenging”*.

The data collected from BT1 further highlighted her unpreparedness to enter the profession when she discussed the issue of assessment and moderation of her question papers by the HOD, as she expressed:

*“I mean setting up papers for the first time and the moderation process and you know having to take that as positive criticism, you know and learning from that. It was terrible”.*

BT2 completed a B. Ed in Economic and Management Sciences with a focus on Business Studies and EMS. During her studies she was expected to participate in teaching practice at school from her first year. She was also exposed to micro-teaching regularly and felt that, as she puts it: *“So we were prepared for each and everything expected of us in the schools. So for me to come here I did have some experiences on what to expect”*. However, even though she felt prepared having had exposure to teaching and therefore better off than BT1 in terms of pedagogical knowledge, she also struggled to manage her classes. She noted that,

*“... the end of the day for your class to keep quiet and do what you tell them to do they need to, you need to inform them, you need to lay the rules. For example, the kids in the school they have case bags and so they just put it on top of the table. So first rule is take the case off the table and put your book on the table. So that is how you make your own rules”.*

Regardless of the varying exposure to teaching practices, as narrated by both BT1 and BT2, classroom management especially dealing with ill-disciplined learners was challenging for both of them. Besides, classroom management there were also other areas that the BTs found challenging, as BT1 expressed in her overview of her experiences of the mentoring process:

*“It started with small things like how to plan your day, because it is impractical to plan according to what you’ve learnt at university. What systems you need to put into place, how much in advance you need to start with your assessments...worked through assessments with me, giving me feedback like this is my feedback, take this from me...adjust it... your words are too strong...shut it down a little bit...I was a bit stupid when I started. I gave homework right, left and centre and it didn’t get done and as a result I used to frustrate myself over it. My mentor stood in and said right this is what we going to do now. You’ve*

*obviously set aside this homework, it needs to be done in order to match the curriculum expectations so we now going to look at so and so procedure and sort of like, (to the learners) if your homework is not done, you going to sit a Friday detention and the she would take that detention”.*

It appears from the extract above that in addition to finding classroom management challenging, issues relating to the curriculum (planning lessons and giving homework) and assessment (providing feedback to learners) were also areas of concern which this BT was not adequately prepared to do during her preservice training. Furthermore, there seems to be a form of incremental learning taking place, where things are introduced step by step and not in large chunks. The MT starts by assessing what the BT knows, is struggling with and finding difficulty in, then steps in and models the preferred practice. In addition, BT1 further explains her inability to manage her time, as she puts it:

*Time Management... I'm a very slow worker and I had to pick up the pace so my mentor showed me now this is how we need to do things, you can't sit for hours it just doesn't work like that and as a result, I've been able I task off certain things much quicker that I would have”.*

#### **b. Mentor- mentee relationship**

It became apparent from this data set, as with the other data sets, that mentor-mentee relationship is an important element in the mentoring of the beginner teacher. The principal's and mentor's data sets revealed the qualities that they assigned to a mentor, which focused more on the professionalism and work ethics and the practicalities linked to teaching (Curriculum delivery, assessments, classroom and time management) whereas the BTs' perceptions of a mentor differs in that they are looking for someone who can offer guidance and support in a caring and nurturing way. What was evident from both the BTs was that the support which they received from their mentors was done in a collegial and compassionate way.

As BT1 expressed “... she is my colleague you know, wonderful mentor who really did guide me, was available for any question I had no matter how stupid it was”. BT2 shared her experience where the mentor was a playing a more caring and nurturing role as she puts it: “She is amazing

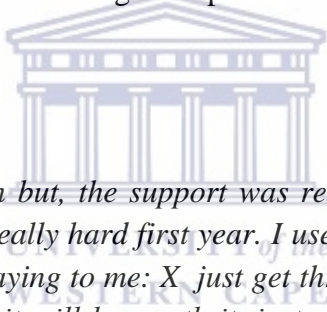
*she's not just a mentor or manager, she's also had that motherhood...she's always there making sure that I do the right thing...giving advice with moderation and how to deal with challenging learners".* For the BT in order to gain trust and confidence, the nurturing and caring quality of the MT was crucial for them to transition into the profession.

Furthermore, they felt that all schools should have mentoring programmes, describing it as "exceptionally necessary". BT1 notes that,

*"I had a friend of mine, who went into the teaching profession, and they left her with nothing, no resources...and she was completely overwhelmed that she ended up leaving the school after a term as there was no support at all".*

Mentor's support is needed to facilitate the BT's smooth entry into the teaching profession as both BT1 and BT2 expressed in the following excerpts:

BT1's response:



*"I'm a very strong person but, the support was really what got me through the first year. I had a really, really hard first year. I used to go home in tears and the support, my mentor kept saying to me: X just get through this year, I promise you just get through this year it will be worth it, just stick with it, just stick with it" and it truly has been worth it. So, it's just I think it just having that motivation. I can't tell how many times my mentor had to say to me: just... Stick it out. After six months I was, I couldn't do it anymore. The first year was horrible".*

BT 2's response:

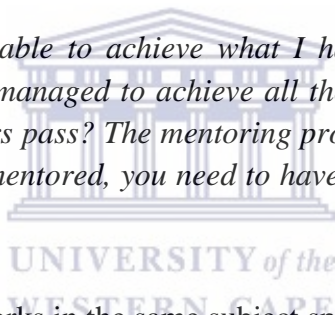
*"Each and every day you learn something. I had issues with some learners in school but she was there... And I was knocking on her door each and every day, her door was open and what she likes about me is that I was always asking. I like to ask because I hate doing something that I don't know because at the end of the day I'll pay the consequence. We had to go to her house the other time because she trained me through what you call the moderation or how to moderate a paper you know. So she's not just a colleague she's just a blessing to me".*

It appears that the mentoring style displayed by the mentor, one which is characterised by openness, always being available to offer support, guidance and motivation, was essential to the overall emotional well-being of the beginner teachers.

### **c. Willingness and compatibility**

From the data it is clear that the BT does not have a choice in terms of participating in the mentoring programme, as BT1 expressed: *“We didn’t have a choice when we start off with we are automatically allocated to a mentor”*. This *“not having a choice”* could be the reason for certain beginner teachers offering resistance when being mentored. Furthermore, the BT must be open minded and demonstrate a willingness to learn, as BT 2 explained:

*“I would not have been able to achieve what I have, if I was not part of the mentoring programme. I managed to achieve all the term goals and managed to make sure that my learners pass? The mentoring programme has helped me know and when you are being mentored, you need to have an open mind and be willing to learn”*.



In addition, it helps that the MT works in the same subject specialization as the BT since it could encourage healthy competition and an attempt of the BT to model or imitate best practices of the MT, as is illustrated from the BT2’s explanation below.

*“She’s (MT) teaching grade 12 and I’m (BT) teaching grade 10. So she manages to achieve 90 something percent and I had 82 percent. Then I wanted to know how did she do it? How did her kids get like 90 something percent? And then she inspired me in her classroom and she had like the top ten learners and then I did the same thing”*.

In brief, the themes that emerged from this data set (embedded case 3) give some indication of how the BT (mentee) experiences the mentor programme. Two things stand out from this discussion. Firstly, it is clear that BTs who have been exposed to yearly teaching practices in their initial training years appear to cope better than those who had less exposure. However, both had emotionally charged experiences with ill-disciplined learners. Secondly the qualities that a

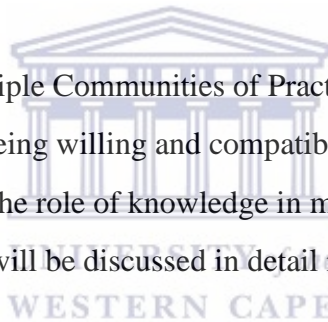
MT needs to possess to help the BTs transition into the teaching profession appear to boil down to having a caring and nurturing disposition. Motivation appears to be key, as is evident from the constant reminder of the mentor to “just stick it out”.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the narrative responses, outlining the experiences of all three data sets (the principal, the mentors and the beginner teachers) embedded within the mentoring programme (the case under study). Common themes that cut across these data sets emerged from the interpretative thematic analysis of these findings. These themes, which make up the analytical or conceptual findings, are:

- The disjuncture between initial teacher education (ITE) and the real school context-the theory-practice divide.
- The interplay between multiple Communities of Practice (CoPs) – crossing boundaries
- Mentor-mentee pairing – Being willing and compatible
- Bouncing-off each other – the role of knowledge in mentoring interactions

Each of these conceptual findings will be discussed in detail in the chapter which follows.



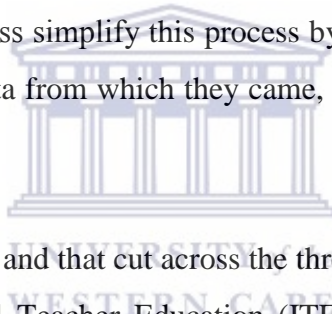


# CHAPTER FIVE

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter four, the data presentation chapter, I provided the verbatim responses of the three embedded cases (the principal, two mentors and two mentees or beginner teachers) who made up the single case (the mentoring programme). Now, in this chapter, Chapter five, I offer a cross-case analysis and discussion of the recurring patterns and themes that emerged in chapter four. For Merriam (2009, p. 181), “the challenge is to construct categories and themes that cuts across your data. It should be clear that the categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves”. Glaser and Strauss simplify this process by noting that these categories have a life of their own apart from the data from which they came, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Merriam 2009, p. 181).



The recurring themes that emerged and that cut across the three data sets are:

1. Disjuncture between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the real school context- the theory-practice divide.
2. The interplay between multiple Communities of Practice (CoPs) -crossing boundaries
3. Mentor-mentee pairing- being willing and compatible
4. Bouncing- off each other – the role of knowledge in mentoring interactions

#### 5.1.1 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 5.1.2 THE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) AND THE REAL SCHOOL CONTEXT- THE THEORY-PRACTICE DIVIDE

From the data one can derive that a disjuncture exists between the Initial Teacher Education that beginner teachers are exposed to at Higher Education Institutions (HEI), like universities, and the real school context, which they enter after completing their studies. Literature, (Arendse &



Phurutse, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Maringe, 2016; King, 2016) referred to in Chapters 1 and 2, offer support for this finding. Arendse and Phurutse (2009), in particular question whether Institutions of Higher Learning do indeed efficiently prepare students for the teaching profession. For Botha and Rens (2018), the disjuncture that exists can be likened to what they call “reality shock”. According to Botha and Rens (2018),

The expectation is clear that they will successfully transition from a theory-orientated pre-service teacher to a well-rounded practice-based teacher within the first few years of employment. Reality shock, however, often quickly sets in for most of them; beginner teachers find themselves to be directly confronted with the gap between theory and practice (Botha & Rens, 2018, p. 1).

The ‘reality-shock’ being alluded to in the quote above points directly to what is commonly referred to as the ‘theory-practice divide’. Prominent studies on beginner teachers highlight the sudden and sometimes dramatic experiences of beginner teachers as they transition from student to novice teachers (Fraser, 2007; Fantilli and McDougall, 2009; Taylor, 2014; Botha and Rens, 2018). This dovetails with my study as is evident from the verbatim responses of beginner teachers and mentors; having to learn through ‘trial and error’ or what Danielson (1999) described as having to “swim or sink in the deep end of the pool”, which stems from coming into schools from varying programmes (B.Ed and PGCE), where beginner teachers are differently exposed to work-integrated learning or teaching practice, as one BT puts it: “the university prepares you in one direction and you enter the school and it’s a different reality”. Universities have often been blamed for not adequately preparing teachers “for the schooling system, due to the academic bias of their teacher education programmes” (Gravett, 2012, p. 2). Gravett (2012) is of the opinion that universities, not preparing teachers adequately for the realities of classroom practices, is not uniquely South African. Smagorinsky and his co-authors say university teacher educators are often viewed as “aloof within the ivory tower, espousing ideals and the principles that govern them” (Smagorinsky et al, 2003, p. 1400). In contrast “school-based teachers engage in practice in the teeming world of the classroom” (Gravett, 2012, p. 2).

Gravett, Henning Eiselen (2011), however, warn that “expectations that universities should deliver a ‘fully prepared’ teacher is unrealistic” (Gravett, Henning, & Eiselen, 2011, p. 130). Furthermore, Gravett (2012, p. 3) argues that “no teacher education programme can prepare teachers for the full complexity of real classrooms, where they take full responsibility for the first time”. (Gravett, 2012, p. 3) A point that Feiman-Nemser (2001) supports by noting that

New teachers have two jobs- they have to teach and they have to learn to teach. No matter how good a preservice programme may be there are some things that can only be learned on the job. The preservice experience lays a foundation and offers practice in teaching. The first encounter with the real teaching occurs when beginner teachers step into their own classrooms. Then learning to teach begins with earnest (p. 1026).

All three data sets alluded to the fact that BTs come into the school system with shortcomings or inadequacies, which stems from their initial training at university. In all three embedded cases, the following shortcomings are highlighted:

- Curriculum delivery- Knowing how to teach, having a strong pedagogical knowledge; so it is less about content knowledge and more about delivery of the curriculum.
- Assessment- setting up question and moderating questions papers and managing the assessment process.
- Time management- working with the CAPS document and planning for the two-week cycle, dealing with homework and feedback are important time-management issues that the BT has to address.
- Classroom management- the handling of ill-disciplined learners and dealing with behavioural problems.

Of these identifiable shortcomings, classroom management, in terms of ill-disciplined learners and dealing with behavioural problems, appears to be a leading cause for beginner teachers feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and despondent. Both Deacon (2016) and the OECD TALIS Report (2012), assert that new teachers spend less time on teaching and learning and more time on classroom management, or as the data shows: “learners take advantage of newbies” which

results in beginner teachers “spending half of the lesson shouting”, and having less time to deliver the curriculum. Beginner teachers in my study attribute this to an „age gap“ (see Table 3.2, Chapter three: An overview of the research participants- the sample); being very close in age to their learners. Learners, according to the principal, are always trying to “test the waters”. She further adds, as mentioned in Chapter four (see 4.2.1) “...ill-disciplined learners break a new teacher’s enthusiasm and even though they are very qualified they would lose; the teaching profession would lose them because they become despondent”. For the principal to “fill the void” she suggests “establish a mentoring programme”. The OECD Report (2012) concurs by stating that the bottom line is “...once a new teacher begins teaching, regardless of what his or her school or classroom situation looks like, there are ways that schools can provide more support”. They suggest “...providing feedback from mentoring programmes and offering professional development around classroom management seem to be areas readily available to improve new teachers’ self-efficacy and help boost their success”.

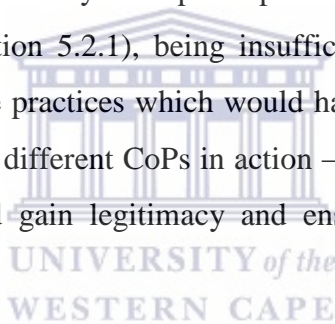
### **5.1.3 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MULTIPLE COPS- CROSSING BOUNDARIES**

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) ideas on learning are crucial to understanding learning as ‘a situated practice’ within the context of a Community of Practice (CoP). It is especially useful in understanding how newcomers, through the process of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LLP) are immersed and absorbed in the new community’s ways of doing (Crawford & L’Hoiry, 2017). These two interrelated concepts, namely CoP and LLP are central to understanding how beginner teachers in this study made the transition from university students to school practitioners. In other words, how they managed, through their engagement in the mentoring programme, to move from the periphery to the centre, where they become legitimate participants in the practices of this community, (moving from newcomer to oldtimer) as shown in the illustration (see figure 2.4).

The CoP, in the context of this study, is the mentoring programme, which as the data shows comprises of overlapping and multiple communities of practice. For Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 38) the CoP is a “set of relations among persons, activity and world, overtime and in relation with tangential and overlapping communities of practice” and the LPP can be seen as a “way to

speak about relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that peripherality and legitimacy are necessary conditions for newcomers' actual participation in a given community of practice (Samimy et al., 2011, p. 559). Peripherality is "an approximation of full participation that gives exposure to actual practices", which can be achieved through "special assistance" and "close supervision" (Wenger, 1998, p. 100).

The beginner teachers in the study (BT1 and BT2) on entering the real school context find themselves on the periphery, somehow excluded on the basis of having certain professional inadequacies (shortcoming) preventing full participation. The findings from all three data sets show that being „highly qualified“ possessing strong content knowledge did not necessarily provide beginner teachers in this study full participation in the teaching profession. The identifiable inadequacies (see section 5.2.1), being insufficiently prepared for the realities of schooling, excluded them from the practices which would have allowed legitimate participation in the community. The data shows different CoPs in action – showing various overlapping ways in which beginner teachers could gain legitimacy and ensure their full participation in the community.



- Firstly, through sufficient mentoring and intervention by their assigned mentors (old-timers). The MT enters into the classroom space of the BT to do the initial needs assessment which results in the BT's personal development plan. This forms the basis for incremental learning, which includes a focus on curriculum delivery, classroom management, time management and assessments (the shortcomings or inadequacies referred to in section 5.2.1), and to provide guidance, motivation and support. In other words, through engagement, interaction, collaboration and learning of knowledgeable skills (as outlined in Figure 2.4). This CoP, which comprises of the MT and the BT, demonstrates a one-on-one mentoring approach. One could use Vygotsky's concepts of ZPD, mediation and scaffolding to explain this mentoring approach given the fact that the mentor is viewed as the knowledgeable other mediating learning within the ZPD of the beginner teacher. From the verbatim responses of the MTs and BTs it is clear that

learning takes place gradually, through questions and demonstrations until the BT is able to perform the tasks on their own. Both questions and demonstrations have been identified as useful scaffolding techniques (Rasmussen, 2001).

- Secondly, through weekly feedback meetings which monitor the progress of the BT, addressing questions “So what are your findings with Miss X [a BT]?” and “what do you see at the moment are her shortcomings?” This CoP therefore comprises of the SMT, MT’s and BT’s offering a more collective response to addressing particular shortcomings. The mentoring approach is more multidimensional and collegial since collectively they try to address the shortcomings identified by the mentor. In addition, BT’s are invited into this CoP to gain exposure to how management operates (new learning opportunities arises from this situation). The principal refers to this type of mentoring as “grooming”; “grooming them (the BT) for management”.
- Thirdly, the WCED acts as a CoP entering the school to offer specific support one of which is the induction programme mentioned in Chapter one (see pp. 4-5). In addition, management often calls on the WCED when certain aspects inside the school need to be addressed.
- Fourthly, mentors (MTs) moving outside of the boundaries of the school speaking to other colleagues for example when they are faced with resistance.
- Fifthly, the ‘Virtual CoP’- using technologies (WhatsApp conversations between the MT and BT) to facilitate the mentoring process.

The following snapshot (figure 5.1), transferred from Chapter three provides a model illustrating the above discussion on multiple CoPs in action.



**Figure 5.1: Discussion on Multiple CoP's action**

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This modelling of an emergent finding, further illustrates what Wenger (2000) refers to as boundary crossing- it models the flexibility and fluidity of the boundaries. Wenger (2000, p. 232) asserts that boundaries create “new learning to a variety of dimensions”. For Wenger (2000) “shared practices by its very nature create boundaries”. Wenger (2000, p. 233), further explains, the way communities and boundaries could impact learning within a mentoring programme, as he puts it “... boundaries can create divisions and is a source of separation... yet they can also be areas of unusual learning places where perspectives meet and new possibilities arise”.

An example of ‘boundary crossing’ in this instance is demonstrated when the mentor is faced with resistance to her mentoring style forcing her to move beyond the boundary of the CoP to other colleagues at neighbouring schools to seek possible solutions. Here the mentor acts as the broker to make sense of the situation and find possible solutions as expressed in the following extract: “I’ve exhausted all my resources so consulting with people [the people she is referring to includes colleagues that once formed part of her community but are teaching elsewhere] ...them



*sharing their experiences or knowledge with me. Then I try to gather all that information*". The purpose for her doing this, in to find, as she expressed: "*which one is best suited for this situation*". This form of knowledge sharing to address a particular problem is essential for the survival of the mentoring programme. Another aspect deemed important to the survival of the mentoring programme is the issue of mentor-mentee pairing to which I now turn.

#### **5.1.4 MENTOR- MENTEE PAIRING- BEING WILLING AND COMPATIBLE**

Literature, discussed in chapter two (sections 2.2.2 (a) and 2.2.3) outlined the importance of mentor-mentee pairing. Landefeld (2009, p. 3) explained that critical to any planned mentoring programme is matching the mentor with the mentee since this match is the heart and soul of the mentoring process". According to Galbraith and Waynn (2004, p. 699), "good mentorship is a distinctive and powerful process which enhances intellectual, professional and personal development through a special relationship characterised by highly emotional and often passionate interactions between a mentor and a mentee". (Luft & Ingham, 1955 as cited in Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 40) illustrate how the mentor-mentee relationship is influenced by the emotional investment of both the mentor and mentee. For them (see figure 2.3), "a mentor who is willing and able to assist, guide and support a willing and able mentee is likely to enhance a mentee's skills, knowledge and practices". They see this as a "win-win situation" (Luft & Ingham, 1955 as cited in Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 40). In cases where both participants are 'unable and unwilling' "this situation holds little promise for the mentoring relationship because the mentee is unwilling to be mentored or receive support from the mentor, who does not have the capacity or knowledge to fulfill the required task" – this scenario is described as a 'lose-lose situation' (Luft & Ingham, 1955 as cited in Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016, p. 40).

The willingness of the mentor to participate in this mentoring programme is considered as one of the determining factors to the success of this intervention. Both the principal and the mentors attested to this. The principal in her interview indicated, "*...they [the mentors] must be willing to participate in a mentoring program because you find you you're you've got very good teachers but they're not willing to share so, so you don't force them*". This sentiment is supported by a mentor, who noted: "*...you cannot force someone to be a mentor. It needs to be a person that*

*actually feels like they want to invest in someone else. A person that feels that they want to contribute, not just to that person, but to the good of the whole school”* (an extract taken from the focus group discussion).

The willingness of the BT to participate is not an option at Glendarme secondary as it is compulsory for all beginner teachers to participate in the mentoring programme, as BT1 expressed: *“We didn’t have a choice when we start off with we are automatically allocated to a mentor. just as a guiding procedure... as a mentor it’s their responsibility to guide the BT as to how a system operates, how an education system operates what the expectations are and so and so forth”*. The not ‘having a choice’ could explain why certain beginner teachers offer resistance to being mentored. Another reason could be mentor-mentee pairing, more specifically an issue of compatibility.

One of the components identified in literature as being ‘common mentoring components for any mentoring programme’ is “mentoring characteristics” (Waterman & He, 2011) where the matching of mentor and mentee is deemed crucial. Christensen (1991, p. 12) concurs that “the relationship between mentor and mentee is of utmost importance for the development of the mentee”. Hall (2008, p. 331) warns “that poor partnering of mentor and mentee can have negative repercussions and even though this intervention [a mentoring programme] can have its advantages, the opposite can result if the mentor selection is not well planned and monitored”. According to Hobson et al. (2007) and Smith and Ingersoll (2004) mentoring tends to be more effective when mentors teach the same subject specialization as their mentees, as is the case in this study.

The data shows that besides both the mentors and beginner teachers’ willingness to participate, they also have to be compatible for the mentoring programme to have the decided results, as one mentor expressed:

*“I think being compatible and understanding one another and building the trust is vital., technically it shouldn’t actually be either we compatible or not but if you are compatible and you understand one another, there’s trust, good working*



*relationship, the morale of your team sky rocketing, you producing, quality is improving term by term... ”.*

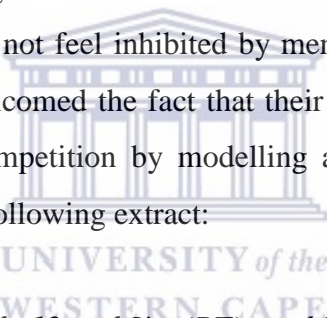
So one gets a strong sense that the MT and the BT need to have some sort of connection, they need to be compatible in order for the mentor-mentee relationship to be a constructive one. In the event where there is a personality clash or the MT and BT “don’t click” then it is best to have the BT reassigned to a different mentor as expressed below:

*“...if there is not a link and you don't click and there's no compatibility between you that person is not going to feel that they can come to you with their questions they rather going to keep quiet and sit in the corner and the person needs to feel that they can come to you and it's not always from one side. You need to cover it from both sides and if that doesn't work, you need to try and find another mentor just for that person's survival...rather reassign because that person in the end needs to feel that that's the person that can go to no matter what and if they need to feel a connection”.*

The data also shows that this ‘connection’ or the lack there of could be as a result of different mentoring styles. Two different types of mentoring styles are evident from the narrative accounts presented across the three data sets in Chapter four. On the one hand, one gets a mentoring style, which I describe as an open-approachable mentoring style where the mentor is an active listener, sensitive to the needs of the mentee, non-judgmental and a motivator (cheerleader). Then on the other hand, you get a mentoring style which is more authoritative where the mentor is seemingly insensitive and judgmental, somewhat distant or impersonal and unapproachable. Each mentoring style could result in different outcomes. It could either strengthen the connection between the mentor and beginner teacher easing their transition into the profession or destroy the mentoring relationship altogether. The latter could be detrimental to the mentoring of the beginner teacher and for the mentoring programme as a whole, as a mentor pointed out *“I at least want to make them feel I can listen and support and help. Like come and cry by me don’t go home and feel like you’re crying against a wall...So, it’s just, it’s just small things but it is things just to try and help those teachers like to feel like they are not drowning”.*

Hobson (2012, p. 212) argues that “mentoring is less effective in cases where the mentors are the mentees head teacher or deputy head teacher”. The reason for this is that “senior leaders

generally being less able to find sufficient time for mentoring and/or beginner teachers tend to be more inhibited where their mentors have higher status within the school” (Hobson, 2012, p. 212). I found similar and contrary results. Similarly, in this study where HODs (head teachers) perform the role of the mentor, time management was a problem. Both mentors complained of not having sufficient time to meet with their mentees as expressed by a MT, in her words: “my biggest problem I’ve experienced is I don’t feel like I always get enough time to spend with them [the BTs] and what’s really going on because I’m not just a mentor”. Being an HOD and a mentor appears to put the mentors under tremendous pressure since apart from mentoring beginner teachers they also have their own teaching workload and are responsible to lead their team, manage the curriculum and assessment in their departments. They have however explored alternative platforms of mentoring through the use of technologies or social media (WhatsApp), subject suppers and meeting during extra-mural activities. On the contrary the data shows that beginner teachers in this study did not feel inhibited by mentors having a higher status as they did. In fact the BT participants welcomed the fact that their mentors were HODs for one BT it appeared to encourage healthy competition by modelling and imitating best practices of the mentor, which is evident from the following extract:



*“She’s (MT) teaching grade 12 and I’m (BT) teaching grade 10. So she manages to achieve 90 something percent and I had 82 percent. Then I wanted to know how did she do it? How did her kids get like 90 something percent? And then she inspired me in her classroom and she had like the top ten learners and then I did the same thing”.*

Furthermore, Table 3.2 (in Chapter three) shows that the mentors and mentees in this case are fairly young and close in age. There is, as mentioned, the risk of not being able to discern between roles given the fact that the MTs and BTs involved in this mentoring programme are close in age and at times socialize together. The extract below extracted from the mentor interview data explains a situation of ‘having to wear two mask’- that of HOD/mentor (professional mask) and that as colleague and friend (personal mask).

*“I’m under the age of thirty and all the people I mentor are either twenty-two, younger than me and sometimes older than me that just started the teaching profession through a PGCE. And it’s difficult being young and then mentoring the*

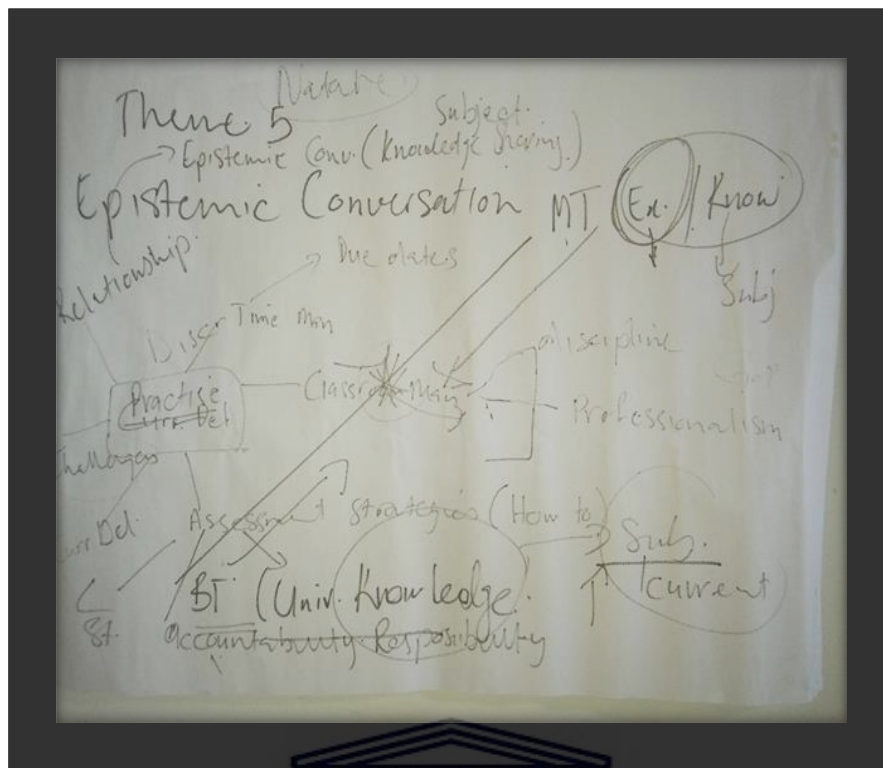
*young and then also perhaps if you socialize together as well. Socializing and finding that okay I'm your mentor now ...I'm your friend now. So that, I was in a situation where, I said this is the mentor mask, this is your HOD, I'm speaking to you with regards to work.*

### **5.1.5 BOUNCING-OFF EACH OTHER- THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE IN MENTORING INTERACTIONS**

When reading across the data presented in chapter four, one is exposed to instances or learning episodes where talk, in mentoring interactions between the mentors and beginner teachers, is used for the purpose of learning or knowledge building. I want to highlight two such „learning episodes“ to illuminate the role of knowledge in mentoring interactions.

**Learning episode 1-** the data shows that the mentor enters the classroom of the beginner teacher to do the needs assessment that will inform the BT's personal development plan. In Vygotskian language the mentor in this mentoring interaction assumes the role of the knowledgeable other working with the BT as the less knowledgeable peer. For Van der Westhuizen (2015) this one way mentoring approach is in line with institutional norms where the mentor is the knower and the mentee the learner. For Van der Westhuizen (2015, p.119) “one would expect mentoring interactions to be dialogical and interactive”. Therefore, one assumes that the mentor is the knowledgeable other, favorably positioned, because they possess certain qualities: ‘a passion for teaching’, ‘professional work ethic’, ‘being focused’ and ‘having a proven track record of curriculum delivery’, whereas the beginner teacher is viewed by the principal as ‘highly qualified’ (coming into this mentoring conversation with strong content knowledge) but deficiently positioned as having professional inadequacies (see section 5.2.1) and not being able to deal with the realities of schooling and is therefore seen here as less knowledgeable.

**In learning episode 2-** illustrated in the following snapshot taken from my rough notes (see figure 5.2)



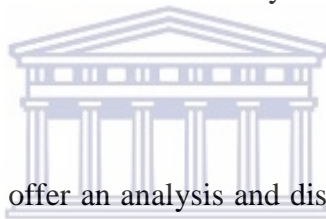
**Figure 5.2: A sketch depicting an epistemic conversation**

The sketch in figure 3.4 shows a shift in roles especially as both the mentor and beginner teacher meets at the centre of this ‘epistemic gradient’. The sketch shows the initial positioning of the mentor and beginner teacher. At the one end of the ‘epistemic gradient’ (Heritage, 2013) the mentor is favourably positioned having experience in the real school context with strong pedagogical content knowledge, and being viewed as the „more knowledgeable“. At the other end is the beginner teacher (entering the profession) deficiently positioned as having professional inadequacies but qualified in terms of possessing strong content knowledge, thus the ‘less knowledgeable’. In Lave and Wenger’s (1991) language of description the mentor in this case is the „old-timer“ positioned at the centre and the beginner teacher the ‘newcomer’ positioned at the periphery. Heritage (2013) introduced the notion of ‘territories of knowledge’ which can be depicted in terms of an ‘epistemic gradient’ (as shown in figure 5.2) ranging from the more knowledgeable (K+ ) to the less knowledgeable (K- ) in terms of what status is presumed. Although they start off differently positioned there comes a point, where in the mentoring interaction and through an ‘epistemic conversation’ (Heritage, 2013) or through a ‘learning conversation’ (Van der Westhuizen, 2015), they both intersect at the middle to ‘bounce-off’

ideas from each other. Van der Westhuizen (2015, p. 1) refers to this idea of ‘bouncing-off each other’ as ‘turntalking’ since “mentoring interactions are essentially forms of talk-in-interaction (as described by Schegloff, 1997), and characterised by conversational practices of turn-talking, sequencing of utterances as social actions...” At the mid-point of the ‘epistemic gradient’ where the mentor and beginner teacher intersect roles change since the beginner teacher is now positioned as the knower –the newcomer has now gained legitimacy and is viewed as a full participant.

The above discussion highlights the interactional nature of learning and focuses on ways in which participants in this mentoring programme used their mentoring conversations to build knowledge. Furthermore, it afforded the newcomer (the beginner teacher) to gain legitimacy and move from the periphery to the centre which is ultimately the aim of a mentoring programme.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION



The purpose of this chapter was to offer an analysis and discussion of the findings that resulted from chapter four. From this analysis and discussion one can derive that beginner teachers enter the teaching profession with professional inadequacies which is as a result of their initial teacher training. They therefore come into the teaching profession insufficiently prepared to deal with the realities of schooling. It is then through various mentoring interactions in overlapping and multiple CoPs that learning or knowledge building takes place. Furthermore, the discussion illuminated the importance of mentor-mentee pairing in terms of willingness to participate and compatibility. Two different mentoring styles were uncovered each producing different results. Lastly, I also showcased the interactional nature of learning- how learning or knowledge building comes about through talk or dialogue within mentoring interactions which results in the beginner teacher moving from the periphery and becoming a full participant in the profession. In the final chapter, which follows, I offer conclusions, implications of the study and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of the study, summarises the findings in relation to the research questions and, considers the implications of the study and offers recommendations for further studies.

#### 6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This dissertation sets out to explore the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers make the transition from university graduates to school practitioners. The literature showed that research in SA on mentoring and mentoring programmes is fairly under-researched even though it achieved global attention. In other words, there is a strong knowledge base on mentoring and mentoring programmes especially in the UK and the US and this is not the case in SA. The main aim of this study was to explore the nature and consequences of an existing mentoring programme aimed at assisting beginner teachers make the transition from university graduates to school practitioners.

Methodologically, this study was situated in a qualitative interpretivist paradigm based on a single case study. The unit of analysis, the mentoring programme, comprised of three embedded cases: the school principal, two mentors and two mentees. Theoretically, the study is situated in both the psychological and sociological domain. The theories that underpinned this study both methodologically and theoretically were Vygotsky's (1978), Theories on Learning and Lave and Wenger's notions of Situated Learning. Both of these theories are situated in the domain of Social Learning Theory. Vygotsky's constructs: ZPD, mediation and scaffolding, and Lave and Wenger's notions of CoP and LPP, provided the conceptual direction for this study and allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how beginner teachers transition from university graduates



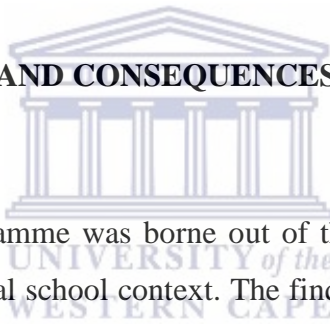
to the teaching profession through their engagement in a mentoring programme, which is the central focus of this thesis.

The following key findings emerged from the data collected. The findings are discussed in relation to each research question:

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme?
2. How does the nature and consequences of the mentoring programme assist the beginner teacher to cope with the real school context?
3. How do the mentors experience the mentoring programme?
4. How do the mentees experience the mentoring programme?

#### **6.3.1 WHAT IS THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME?**



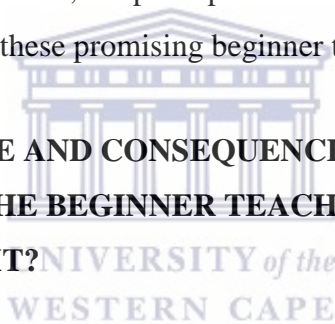
The need for the mentoring programme was borne out of the disjuncture that existed between initial teacher education and the real school context. The findings clearly show that the beginner teacher comes into the profession with a strong theoretical base in terms of content knowledge. However, they struggle to cope with the day-to-day realities of teaching (the pedagogical know-how – curriculum delivery and assessment, time management and dealing with ill-disciplined learners). The mentoring programme at Glendarme Secondary was instituted mainly to ‘fill this void’. Mentor-mentee pairing is crucial to the success of this mentoring programme. Mentors are selected based on the following criteria: ‘a passion for teaching’, ‘professional work ethic’, ‘being focused’ and ‘having a proven track record of curriculum delivery’. The mentoring process starts with an initial meeting between the mentor and beginner teacher (mentee) and is used to conduct a needs assessment and to develop the beginner teacher’s Personal Development Plan (PDP). The PDP forms the foundation for further mentoring engagements.

Various mentoring interactions between the mentor and beginner teacher will follow using one or other mentoring approach –one-on-one (dyadic mentoring approach) or a more collegial (multidimensional) approach –where multiple CoPs are in action. Learning and knowledge

building happens through incremental learning or scaffolding. The mentoring conversation forms an integral part of this programme since it is through talk, questions and ‘bouncing ideas off each other’ that learning happens.

Regular feedback meetings are held which comprises of the SMT (Principal and HODs) some of whom are selected mentors, and beginner teachers. These feedback meetings are used to monitor the mentoring of Beginner teachers, where their shortcomings are identified by the mentors and addressed collectively by the entire management team. Furthermore, the feedback meetings are also a way of ‘grooming’ beginner teachers for management since one of the unforeseen consequences of the mentoring programme is that teachers, after they have gained in confidence (gained legitimacy as full participants) they become marketable and the school might lose them to more affluent schools. To counter this, the principal has a management mentoring programme, aimed at identifying and grooming these promising beginner teachers for management roles.

### **6.3.2 HOW DOES THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME ASSIST THE BEGINNER TEACHER TO COPE WITH THE REAL SCHOOL CONTEXT?**



The key to answering this question lies within the mentoring interactions. Two approaches to mentoring are revealed in these interactions.

- 1) The dyadic approach (one on one) where the mentor assumes the role of the knowledgeable other working with the beginner teacher as the less knowledgeable peer. Furthermore, the mentor (the knower) is favourably positioned as possessing certain qualities: a passion for teaching, professional work ethics, being highly focused and having a proven track record of curriculum delivery. In this mentoring interaction, the beginner teacher is deficiently positioned as lacking in something and therefore, seen as the less knowledgeable. This one on one mentoring approach is in line with Vygotsky’s theories of learning. The dyadic mentoring interaction is needed to fill the shortcomings experienced by new teachers when they enter but it still does not explain how they are able to make the shift into the profession.



2) Is the multi-dimensional (collegial approach) to mentoring. Although beginner teachers start off differently positioned, there comes a point within the mentoring interaction, where the mentor and the beginner teacher intersect, they bounce ideas off each other since mentoring interaction is in essence talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, it is at this point, where the beginner teacher assumes the role of a knower, similar to that of the mentor. The newcomer has now gained legitimacy and can now be viewed as a full participant in the teaching profession. The latter is in line with Lave and Wenger's notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation. In other words, it is here where mentoring interaction between the mentor and the beginner teacher is used for the purpose of learning and knowledge building. This new-found confidence, gained by full participation, results in improved teaching practices which ultimately improves the teaching and learning environment in the school as a whole.

### **6.3.3 HOW DO THE MENTORS EXPERIENCE THE MENTORING PROGRAMME?**

As mentioned, being an HOD and a mentor appears to put the mentors under tremendous pressure since, apart from mentoring beginner teachers, they also have their own teaching workload in addition to, curriculum, assessments and monitoring the deliverables of the rest of the team in their departments. In other words, time management (not finding enough quality time to mentor), is a huge problem. These mentors have however explored alternative platforms of mentoring through the use of technologies or social media (WhatsApp), subject suppers (subject meetings held after-school hours) and meeting during extra-mural activities (mentoring on the sports field). The mentoring style of the mentors is crucial since not all mentoring styles will have the desired outcomes. A mentoring style one which is characterised by openness, always being available to offer support, guidance and motivation, was essential to the overall emotional well-being of the beginner teachers. A mentoring style which is more authoritative where the mentor is seemingly insensitive and judgmental, somewhat distant or impersonal and unapproachable is often met with resistance. In addition, the mentors and mentees in this case are fairly young and close in age. There is, as mentioned, the risk of not being able to discern between roles given the fact that the MTs and BTs involved in this mentoring programme are close in age and at times socialize together. This could mean that mentors find themselves in a

situation of ‘having to wear two masks’- that of HOD/mentor (professional mask) and that of colleague and friend (personal mask).

#### **6.3.4 HOW DO THE MENTEES EXPERIENCE THE MENTORING PROGRAMME?**

Mentees (beginner teachers) welcomed the mentoring programme as a way of dealing with the professional inadequacies that resulted from insufficient pre-service teacher training programmes. The findings show that beginner teachers, especially in the first year, become overwhelmed, emotional and despondent but having the guidance, assistance and constant motivation from the mentor teacher helped them to grow in confidence. One of the huge challenges they faced was classroom management dealing with ill-disciplined learners, especially because of the age gap between the beginner teacher and some of the learners. They describe this time period as being ‘horrible’ and they often end up ‘crying’ finding themselves in ‘deep waters’. Through good mentoring (based on the mentoring style alluded to earlier) and constant mentoring interactions (asking questions and showing a willingness to learn) they were able to make the shift from the periphery to the centre. By gaining in confidence through good mentoring they were able to improve their teaching practices which in turn meant improved learner achievement levels.

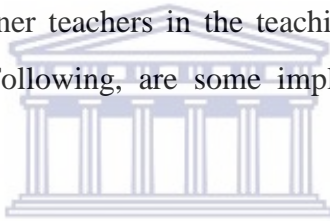
#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

For Wierma (2000) limitations are those issues over which the researcher has no control and which limits the breadth of the study. Following, I highlight some of the limitations which delineated the parameters under which the study was done. The study was limited to 1 principal, two mentors and two mentees. This sample size could be considered as small and not large enough to make an impact in this area of research. However, according to Masson (2010, p. 1) sample size in a qualitative study “are generally smaller than in quantitative studies since more data does not necessarily mean more information”. Due to the latter one cannot therefore claim that the study’s findings can be generalised. The aim therefore is not to generalise the findings but to extend the reader’s understanding of how a formalised mentoring programme could benefit new teachers’ entry to the profession to make the transition from university graduate to

school practitioner. In other words, allowing the readers who are from similar settings to read themselves into the study and take from it what applies to them. Furthermore, given the time constraints the study was limited to conducting interviews and drawing on document sources. It would have been richer to use non-participant observations of the mentoring of beginner teachers in action; observing interactions between mentors and beginner teachers in the different spaces where they were engaged in the mentoring process. Empirical studies using observations could be considered for further studies.

## 6.5 IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Whilst this study focused on a single mentoring programme at a secondary school within a particular school context, the findings hold various implications for teaching in general, more specifically the retaining of beginner teachers in the teaching profession, which opens up the possibilities for further studies. Following, are some implications and recommendations for further study:



1. At the heart and soul of any mentoring programme is the mentor-mentee relationship. For the mentoring programme to have the desired effect the pairing of the mentor and mentee is a deciding factor.

**Implication:** Where mentors and mentees are incompatible this could have negative consequences as seen in this mentoring programme especially when mentors were faced with resistance.

**Recommendation:** Schools who decide to institute formal mentoring programmes should consider the selection criteria of the mentor and compatibility between the mentor and the BT. Pairing mentors with mentees in the same subject area would be favourable.

2. The findings show that beginner teachers enter the profession with professional inadequacies, brought about by variations in their initial teacher training at HEI.

**Implications:** Although they are viewed as highly qualified, having a strong theoretical base, this does not afford them full participation in the teaching profession, since they cannot deal with the realities of schooling, especially how to deliver the curriculum and deal with ill-disciplined learners. Beginner teachers often become emotional, overwhelmed and despondent and in certain cases opt to leave the profession.

**Recommendation:** The WCED should consider offering formalised mentoring programmes at all schools as a way of retaining young teachers in the profession. Furthermore, HEI could consider offering courses in ‘teacher well-being’ and ‘classroom management’ in the initial teacher education programmes.

3. Not all experienced teachers make good mentors. They must possess a willingness to participate, have particular attributes and adopt a particular mentoring style in order to be effective.

**Implications:** HOD’s, who are forced to be mentors, could do more harm than good. Those who are willing and able will be more effective. Furthermore, the findings show that a mentor with a more open-approachable mentoring style, one who treats the mentee with sensitivity, is nonjudgemental and is a motivator, will have the desired outcomes.

**Recommendations:** The WCED offers training and some sort of incentives to teachers who possess these mentor attributes and who show a willingness to mentor. This will not only help beginner teachers’ deal with the ‘reality shock’ of teaching but also add value to the school as a whole.

## 6.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This final chapter aimed at providing an overview of the thesis by revisiting the initial objectives, looking at the findings in relation to the research questions, highlighting the limitations to the study and providing recommendations for further studies. I came to realise that not enough is being done to retain beginner teachers in South African schools and that very little is known about mentoring programmes as a way of retaining teachers in their early teaching careers.

Reality is that the teaching profession is at risk as globally beginner teachers, opt to leave the profession. From this dissertation, a mentoring programme is suggested as a possible means of intervention to support the beginner teachers to be better prepared to deal with realities of the SA schools. Structured mentoring programmes for beginner teachers, could aid towards the holistic development of the beginner teacher resulting in a more pedagogically prepared educator less prone to abandon the profession, in essence, addressing the teacher attrition rate.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: PERMISSION FROM THE WCED



## APPENDIX A

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSION FROM WCED

5 Aaron Figaji Street  
Glenhaven  
Bellville South  
7530  
16 March 2017

Directorate Research  
Dr Audrey Wyngaard  
Private bag x9114  
Cape Town  
8000

Dear Dr. Wyngaard

#### **RE: Request to conduct research at school**

I am a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. My Thesis Title is "A case study of an existing mentoring programme for beginner teachers in a public school in the Western Cape" and hereby wish to request permission from the WCED to conduct this study at Goodwood College which is part of the EMDC North.

Subsequent permission will be requested from respectively the Principal of the school Mrs. V Africa as well as the Governing Body of the school before this data will be collected.

My appointed supervisor, Dr L. Du Plooy will be guiding me during this process to ensure that I follow the prescribed protocol.  
I trust that this application will be favourably considered.

Yours in Education

R.A.S. Daniels (Student Number 9045399)

Mobile: 0822155411



# Appendix B: PERMISSION REQUEST FROM THE SCHOOL AND GOVERNING BODY



## APPENDIX B

### APPENDIX B: PERMISSION REQUEST FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND GOVERNING BODY

5 Aaron Figaji Street  
Glenhaven  
Bellville South  
7530  
16 March 2017

Dear Principal and Governing Body

#### RE: Permission to conduct research at your institution

I am a Masters Student (student number: 9045399) registered at the University of the Western Cape, in the Faculty of Education. My thesis is "A case study of an existing mentoring programme for beginner teachers in a public school in the Western Cape". I am currently conducting research as part of my study and hereby request permission to conduct this study at Goodwood College in Ruyterwacht.

The main purpose of the research is to explore the beginner teachers' experiences in being involved in the mentoring programme and how their involvement could possibly address the retention of teachers in the profession. My data production will be based on the mentoring programme which is being conducted at your school and will include the participation of the Mentors as well as the Mentees.

The method of data collection will include the following: Activity	Estimated time allocation	Proposed time frame	Format of Data collection
Participate in an individual semi structured interview Observation within a focus group	45 minutes	April- July 2018	Audio recordings and Written notes

- The interviews will be done over a period of four weeks during the month whilst collecting data at the school.



- Data will be gathered through interviews, Focus group interviews of mentors and mentees and principal.

The Data sourced will be used for research purposes only. The findings of the research aim to understand the dynamics of the process of mentoring in an attempt to understand the role which mentors and mentees play in the mentoring programme and how this will aid towards the enhancing in the professional lives of the educator. Permission is also requested of you to for the publication of the findings in my dissertation.

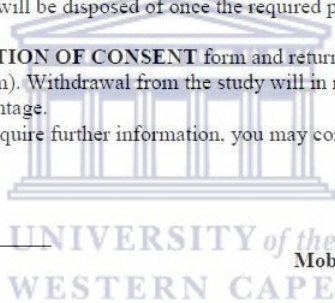
I..... <b>grant permission the conversation conducted during this interview may be audio recorded for transcribing purposes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
--	------------	-----------

Approval of this research has been requested from the EHD, WCED and the Governing Body of the school which I shall be conducting the research at. The anonymity in terms of the participant's response, evidence and documentation used in the research will be guaranteed. Further to this, Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of all the participants. All Audio recordings will be secured in an encrypted file on the Google Drive and written documentation will be disposed of once the required period of time has lapsed.

Kindly complete the **DECLARATION OF CONSENT** form and return to the researcher (R.A.S Daniels) (see attached form). Withdrawal from the study will in no way result in any form of discrimination or disadvantage.

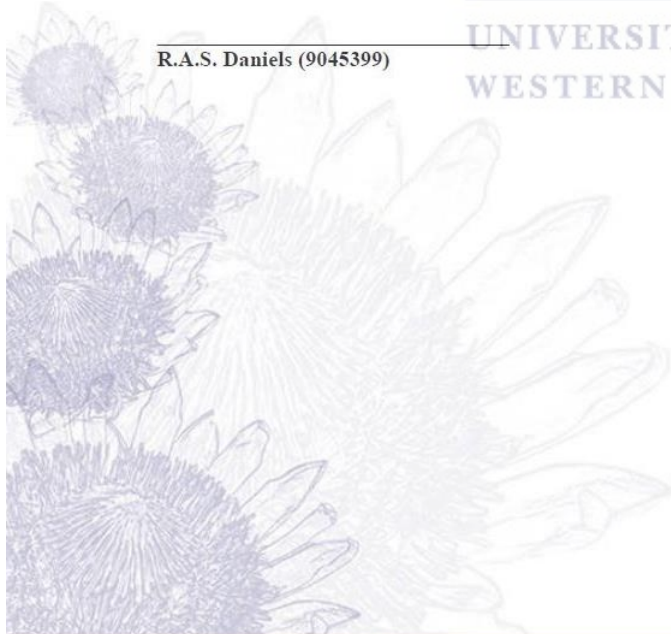
Should you have any queries or require further information, you may contact me at 0822155411.

Sincere thanks



R.A.S. Daniels (9045399)

Mobile: 0822155411





## Appendix C: INFORMATION SHEET



### APPENDIX C

#### APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

My name is **RUBEN DANIELS** and I am currently an M.ed student at the University of the Western Cape. My research, titled above, focuses on the transition which the beginner teacher makes from being a university graduate to becoming a professional entering the school and the effects which mentoring could bring about whilst they are in the transitioning process. It will be an honour for me to have you participate in this research project.

Please note that your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the project at any time. You will be asked to participate in one or more of the following processes:

- An interview
- To complete a questionnaire
- To be observed in the classroom

My research will not interfere in any way with the normal functioning of the school or with learning in the classroom. **In addition, the confidentiality and anonymity of both the school and all participants in the study is herewith guaranteed.** Permission to conduct the research will be obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. This will be to enhance the transition of graduate teachers as they enter the profession and is not aimed to negatively impact on the individual or the institution in any way.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information about this research project.

Researcher: Ruben Daniels  
Contact details email: [rudaniels@uwc.ac.za](mailto:rudaniels@uwc.ac.za)  
Phone no: (021) 951 7656 / 021 9594524/0822155411  
Faculty of Education  
Institution: University of the Western Cape

## Appendix D: CONSENT FORMS

### *Annexe D1: Consent form for Principal*



## APPENDIX D

### D1 -CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPAL

#### APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORMS

#### D1 -CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPAL LETTER OF CONSENT

**RESEARCH TITLE:** A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Ruben Daniels

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may refrain from answering any or all questions which might make me feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:.....on.....this day .....at .....



*Annexe D2: Consent form for mentors and mentees and focus group*



## **D2-CONSENT FORM FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES AND FOCUS GROUP**

### **D2-CONSENT FORM FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES AND FOCUS GROUP**

#### **LETTER OF CONSENT**

**RESEARCH TITLE:** A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Ruben Daniels

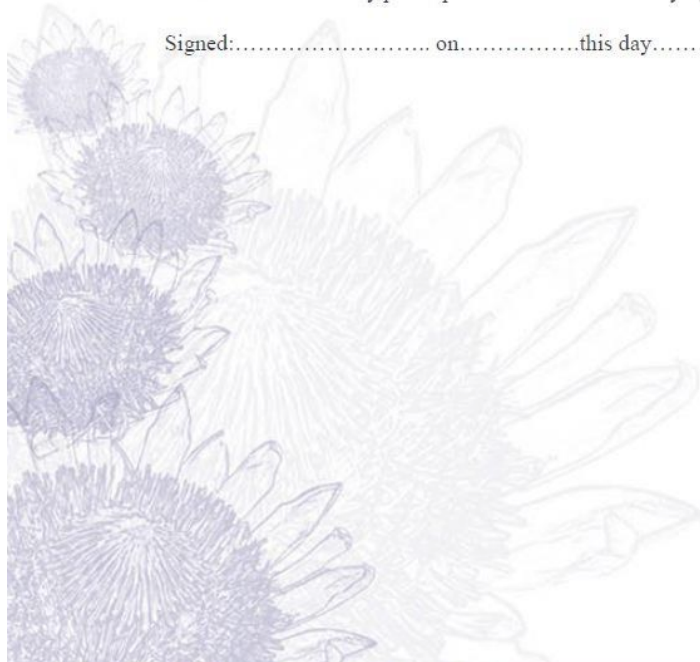
I hereby give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded. I also give my consent to complete the teacher questionnaire.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may refrain from answering any or all questions which might make me feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:..... on.....this day.....at.....





*Annexe D3: Consent form for mentors and mentees*



## D3-CONSENT FORM FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

### LETTER OF CONSENT

**RESEARCH TITLE:** A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE.  
**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Ruben Daniels

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded. I also give my consent to complete the teacher questionnaire.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may refrain from answering any or all questions which might make me feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:..... on.....this day.....at.....

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

## Appendix E: INTERVIEW SHEET

### *Annexe E1: Principal interview sheet*



#### APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SHEET E.1 PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SHEET

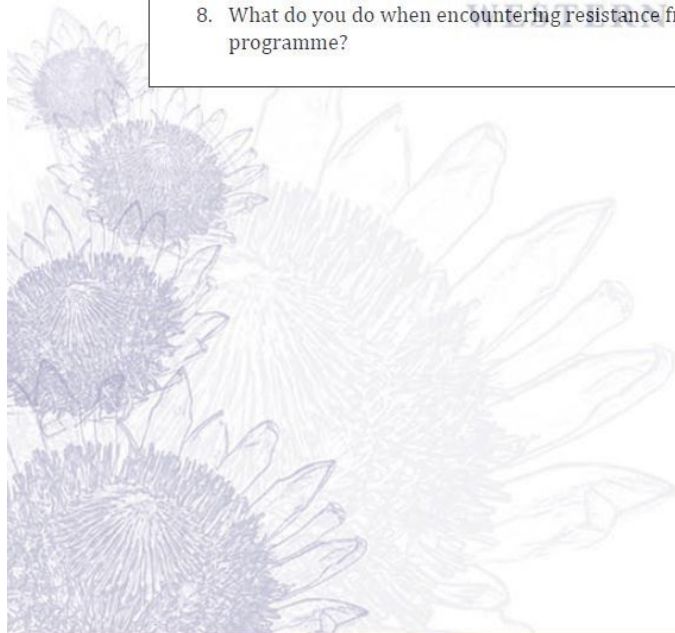
1. Could you provide a brief history of your teaching career and include courses which you have completed that contributed towards your professional development.
2. Why do you think there was a need for a mentoring programme for beginner teachers at our school?
3. Describe the selection criteria used to appoint the mentors
4. What was the nature of training which the mentors received and do you feel that the training provided proved to be sufficient?
5. What was the support which the school received from the WCED and the district official towards the mentoring programme at your school?
6. How would you describe the benefits and challenges encountered by the beginner teacher whilst on this programme?
7. Would you recommend such a mentoring programme for beginner teachers to others schools within the District and elsewhere and why?
8. Your school having offered this assistance to the beginner teachers, what enhancements have you made from having offered this intervention since its

## *Annexe E2: Mentors' interview sheet*



### E.2 MENTORS' INTERVIEW SHEET

1. Could you provide a brief history of your teaching career and include courses which you have completed that contributed towards your professional development.
2. What were your expectations on entering the mentoring programme as a mentor and to what extent were these expectations met?
3. How would you describe your role and responsibilities as a mentor?
4. In your opinion, what competencies and knowledgeabilities should one have as a mentor?
5. From your experience having been a mentor, what are some of the common problems which you encountered whilst being involved in this programme?
6. With reference to the above question 5, which strategies did you apply when faced with these challenges or problems?
7. How important is compatibility between mentor and mentee to the success of such a programme?
8. What do you do when encountering resistance from mentees whilst involved in this programme?



## Annexe E3: Mentee interview sheet



### E.3 MENTEES INTERVIEW SHEET

1. Tell me about your background and the reason why you chose teaching as being your profession?
2. What were your experiences of entering the school from the university and in your opinion, did the university prepare you for what you encountered once you entered the school?
3. What were your expectations when entering the mentoring programme and to what extent were these expectations met?
4. Why did you agree to participate in this mentoring programme and from your experience, do you think there is a need for such a programme for the beginner teacher?
5. What type of competencies did you acquire whilst being mentored and how did it add to your level of development?
6. In which way did this programme either facilitate or impede your entry into the profession.
7. Elaborate on your relationship with your assigned mentor teacher.
8. Having been engaged in this mentoring programme, would you recommend this intervention for all beginner teachers? Substantiate your choice of answer.

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



## Annexe E4: Focus group interview sheet



### E.4 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

1. What coaching was given to you to become a mentor?
2. How would you describe the Programme which your institution follows?
3. In the school set-up, what would you describe as the limitations, if any which exist?
4. Is the mentoring approach a one-to-one approach or is a communal venture?
5. Could you describe the cycle of mentoring at your school focusing specifically on the mentee, ultimately becoming the mentor?
6. What would you describe as the best practice at Goodwood college and would it be effective in other schools or is its efficacy limited to the school?



FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

## Appendix F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE HSSREC OF UWC



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948  
F: +27 21 959 3170  
E: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)  
[www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)

04 October 2017

Mr R.Daniels  
Faculty of Education

**Ethics Reference Number:** HS17/5/24

**Project Title:** A case study of an existing mentoring programme for beginner teachers at a public school in the Western Cape.

**Approval Period:** 04 October 2017 – 04 October 2018

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josias', is written over a faint background of sunflowers.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**

## Appendix G: ETHICAL CLEARANCE WCED



Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)  
tel: +27 021 467 9272  
Fax: 0865902282  
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
[wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

**REFERENCE:** 20170418-29  
**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Ruben Daniels  
5 Aaron Figaji Street  
Glenhaven  
Bellville South  
7530

Dear Mr Ruben Daniels

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL: A CASE STUDY OF AN EXISTING MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNER TEACHERS AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **20 April 2017 till 28 February 2018**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN**  
**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.  
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard  
**Directorate: Research**  
**DATE: 24 August 2017**

---

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

# Appendix H: TURNITIN REPORT

1/30/2019

## Turnitin Originality Report

 Turnitin Originality Report

A case study of an existing programme for beginner teachers in a public school in the Western Cape by Ruben Daniels

From Masters in Education (Masters in Education)

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