AN IMPROVED MENTORING MODEL FOR STUDENT TEACHERS ON PRACTICUM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR EDUCATIONIS in the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Port Elizabeth South Africa

PROMOTER: Dr A.J. Greyling

Port Elizabeth 2013
DECLARATIONS

I, Ishmael Jeko (s210016779), hereby declare that this thesis, submitted towards the obtainment of the degree of Philosophiae Doctor Educationis at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, is my own work and has not been previously submitted for assessment or the completion of any postgraduate qualification at another tertiary institution for another qualification.

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Ishmael Jeko
November 2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank God the Almighty for affording me the opportunity as well as the intellectual and emotional strength to pursue and stay the course of my doctoral studies, my long-cherished dream.

However, for me a PhD would undeniably have remained a pipedream without the unstinting and unconditional support of my promoter, Dr. A.J. Greyling, who always went out of her way to ensure that I kept focused on the target as I walked the cheerless and toilsome journey of a doctoral study. *Vasbyt!* I remember this catchword from her with particular fondness and it inspired me to persevere in the face of the demands of a PhD. I cannot conceive of myself having a better supervisor. I will remember you, my dear mentor, for the rest of my life and the relationship I had with you did not only congenially impact on me academically, but it was also personally edifying and transforming, as I have learnt to relate to fellow human beings with more sensitivity and benevolence.

To my spouse, Plaxedes Mazorodze-Jeko, I owe gratitude for enduring long periods of my absence from home, and foregoing conjugal companionship with stoic patience.

My little boys, Kombo Ayatollah (Cuban Pombo) and Prometheus Dzimbabwe, I am thankful to you for your patience, as you bore long periods of living with a single parent. I distinctly recall your little voices in the background carpingly inquiring about my whereabouts every time your mother phoned me.

Dr. Wonderful Dzimir and Mr. Canisius Manyumwa, I am grateful to you for standing by me when negotiating leave of absence from work and for doing my work for me when I was away pursuing my PhD. Ezron Mangwaya, brother, fellow doctoral candidate and countryman, I thank you for allowing me to frequently use you as a critical friend and sounding board as my ideas painfully took shape.

To my long departed young brothers, Tinavo and Mhesiasi; too young to sleep forever, who died without achieving their dreams. It may be that you can get vicarious fulfillment from my attainment of the PhD. Lastly, my long departed father, I thank you for
bequeathing to me the never-say-die attitude, without which it would have been difficult to complete this degree.

“*So many worlds, so much to do, so little done, such things to be.*”

*Tennyson, Lord Alfred* (In Memoriam, A.H.H)
ABSTRACT

As part of a drive to improve the quality of teachers, Zimbabwe introduced a school-based mentoring model in 1995, a move which regrettably seems not have borne fruit. Therefore, this study sought to propose an improved mentoring model for initial teacher training for primary school teachers. Efforts to improve the current mentoring could, however, be facilitated if they were informed by an empirically-based understanding of the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for student teachers and teachers.

In order to attain the above objective, this study adopted a multisite case study design, guided by the interpretive paradigm. A core of nine primary schools, drawn from the rural, urban and peri-urban areas of the Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe, was purposively selected to participate in the study. In the participating schools, key participants were student teachers and mentors, while school principals participated when they had time. A secondary group of primary schools were also identified to be used as validation of findings in a wider setting. An in-depth literature study on teacher education and mentoring was also carried out and this, combined with empirical data, illuminated the issues being investigated.

The empirical data were primarily gathered through focus group and face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews, while participant observation (used in conjunction with informal unstructured interviews) and questionnaires were used to verify and triangulate data collected through the interviews. To safeguard the ethical integrity of the study, ethical approval from the relevant university committee, as well as the official consent of educational authorities, was obtained beforehand, as was the informed consent of individual participants.

The research established that the support rendered to student teachers in the participating primary schools was largely inadequate and of a shallow mode, focusing primarily on facilitating the mastery of technical skills and the provision of psycho-social support, while being sorely deficient in empowering the student teachers with the skills and attitudes to reflectively and critically engage with their own and others’ teaching practices. The mentoring was taking place in the context of field experience, organised
along the apprenticeship model, hence located in an outmoded traditional paradigm of field experience, something which is regrettable at a time when international best practices seek to move towards a reflective-inquiry-oriented paradigm. Secondly, the research found that the participating schools were not structurally or culturally ready to take significant teacher training responsibility; hence the schools, in their present state, could be seen as constraining the smooth functioning of the mentoring model. Thirdly, some mentor-based factors also seemed to inhibit the functioning of the mentoring model. These included teachers who were attitudinally indisposed to accept student teachers as their professional colleagues, preferring to relate to them hierarchically and vertically, thereby limiting the emergence of a culture of professional collaboration and reciprocal learning relationships. In similar vein, the mentors’ lack of training limited their capacity of mentors to perform the extended range of mentoring functions necessary for supporting student teachers trained in 21st century schools.

The above conclusions and implications point towards the following recommendations: Mentor support for student teachers should be extended from the present superficial level to include functions that are oriented towards reflective practice. However, for this to happen, some adjustments will need to be made in the schools. These include, most importantly, making time available for mentoring activities. In order for the mentors to be able to perform their mentoring functions knowledgeably, they must be made fully aware of what they are supposed to do by providing them with the official documents spelling out mentoring expectations in schools. Additionally, the commitment of mentors to their duties could be made more sustainable by putting in place a clearly defined reward structure that is fully recognized officially and integrated into the employee grading system. To make school environments more propitious towards mentoring, schools must be structurally modified and re-cultured to create slots for mentoring activities, provide opportunities for informal professional interaction among teachers, as well as establish professional engagement forums, such as school-based learning circles. The research also suggests that student teachers should be allowed to choose their mentors through providing them with opportunities for early contact with their prospective mentoring partners. In an attempt to close the gap between college-based modules and
field-based school experiences, the research further recommends that college-based modules be delivered in a way that ensures that they are fully integrated with student teachers’ field experiences. Finally, mentoring could be better facilitated if schools and colleges adopted a partnership arrangement that is more aligned to mentoring. This implies provisionally shifting from the present separatist to the HEI-led partnership model, while preparing for the adoption of a fully-fledged collaborative partnership in the long term.

The research was, however, by no means carried out perfectly. It was somewhat limited by its failure to take into account the view of officials from the Department of Education, as well as the input of colleagues in teacher education. In similar vein, the researcher felt that a more nuanced and fine-grained picture of the participants’ mentoring experiences could have emerged if he had spent more time in the field, something which limited resources and work commitments did not allow him to do.

Some significant issues arose from this study, but which it could not pursue. These include exploring the possibility of coming up with a model of teacher education that integrates ITE and CTPD in the context of mentoring, as well as conducting a similarly designed research into the mentoring that is taking place in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Teacher Education and Training, Teaching Practice, School based Practicum.
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<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>CATE</td>
<td>Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPTD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Teacher Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGI-M/SC-A/R</td>
<td>Focus Group Interview-Mentors/School-A/Rural</td>
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<td>FGI-ST/TR/SC-F/U</td>
<td>Focus Group Interview-Student teachers/School-F/Urban</td>
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<td>ITT</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Training</td>
</tr>
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<td>MENT-4/SC-C/R</td>
<td>Mentor-4/School-C/Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIITEP</td>
<td>Malawi Integrated In-service Programme</td>
</tr>
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<td>NCATE</td>
<td>National Council for the Accreditation Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
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<td>NSE</td>
<td>Norms and Standards for Educators</td>
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<td>PDS</td>
<td>Professional Development School</td>
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<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate in Education</td>
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<td>PLP</td>
<td>Personal Learning Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-U</td>
<td>Peri-urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>QTS</td>
<td>Qualified Teacher Status</td>
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<td>TDA</td>
<td>Teacher Development Agency</td>
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<td>TTA</td>
<td>Teacher Training Agency</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
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<td>ZINTEC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course</td>
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<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION TO STUDY, PROBLEMSTATEMENT, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO STUDY

In January 1995, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe introduced school-based mentoring for student teachers (Chiromo, 2007:60). This move was motivated by a desire to improve the quality of teaching (Chiromo, 2007:60; Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education [MOHTE], 2001:1). Zimbabwe had, since attaining independence in 1980, followed quantity-oriented models of teacher education that focused on producing large numbers of teachers, as opposed to quality education (Ndawi, 1996:58).

Between 1980 and 1989, school enrolment in Zimbabwe grew to unprecedented levels (Machinga, 2000:115). This stemmed from increased access to educational opportunities extended to Blacks as part of Universal Primary Education commitments, following independence in 1980. Predictably, the demand for qualified teachers outstripped the country’s immediate training capacity (Machinga, 2000:115).

In response to this urgent need for qualified teachers, the government pragmatically adopted a mass production model of teacher education (Chiromo, 2007:35; Machinga, 2000:115). “Crash courses” in teacher education were introduced to try and alleviate the critical teacher shortage in schools (Mkondo, 1999:35). In this regard, Lewin (2004:3) similarly reflected that shortages in teacher supply in both Zimbabwe and Malawi led to the introduction of some radical measures to meet the growing demand. Cases in point were the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC), while Malawi Integrated a similar In-service Training Programme (MIITEP).
As Lewin (2004:3) further notes, under both programmes, student teachers spent only a short initial period at colleges, in induction and general orientation, followed by lengthy periods at schools. At the schools, student teachers received occasional residential and distance tuition in the theoretical aspects of teaching. However, the structure of the training programmes implemented at the schools did not afford the student teachers a positive professional training environment. A key impediment to effective training in the schools was the fact that student teachers were required to take full charge of classes and assume full teaching workloads (Chikunda, 2000:16). This left them with little or no opportunity to truly internalise the theoretical aspects of teaching or practise the skills of good teaching, guided by excellent models.

The absence of qualified, more experienced teachers in the classroom meant that student teachers had to teach without anybody giving them any practical guidance or demonstrating good teaching skills. However, some contemporary research suggests that the school-based training of student teachers ultimately means that they do receive some practical knowledge from their more experienced counterparts (Cain, 2009:57). Therefore, in terms of the ZINTEC model under review, student teachers missed out on valuable opportunities for professional development and were not getting the most from their time spent in schools.

The researcher, having been involved in teacher education at both university and teachers’ college levels for over six years now, agrees with scholars such as Chiromo (2007:40) and Ndawi (1996:62) that Zimbabwe is a good example of a country in which teacher quality deteriorated after the implementation of mass production models. Two commissions of inquiry into Zimbabwean education and training in the 1990s similarly lamented the decline in the quality of teacher and school education (MOHTE, 2001:1; Nziramasanga, 1999:457, 507). These sentiments grew, until consensus was reached among Zimbabwe’s teacher education policy-makers on the need to address quality issues (MOHTE, 2001:3; Nziramasanga, 1999:457).
It is important to note that this prioritisation of quality education was not confined to Zimbabwe alone. During the same decade, educational quality and accessibility were clearly identified as the twin challenges of educational provision internationally at major international educational events, such as the World Conference on Education for All in Jomitien, Thailand (1990), the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, and the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) (Westbrook, Shah, Durrani, Tilky, Khan & Dunne, 2009:437). At those fora, it was emphasised that Universal Primary Education (UPE) did not simply require the enrolment of learners in schools, but also ensuring that the education provided was of high quality. In this context, improving teacher quality was considered to be the key to improving the quality of teaching and pupil learning (Brady, Hebert, Barnish, Kohmstedt & Welsh, 2011:329; Steyn, 2011:212; Westbrook et al., 2009:438; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2005:1; Lewin, 2004:2).

The concerns and discourses about quality in teacher education formed the context to and to some extent the rationale for introducing the school-based mentoring of student teachers in Zimbabwe (Chiromo, 2007:60; Mudavanhu & Majoni, 2003:44; Chiromo, 1999:65). Much optimism marked the introduction of this model. The confidence in the capacity of the school-based mentoring model to address quality issues in teacher and school education was based on precedents in England and the United States of America (U.S.A.), where similar models had been successful in improving the quality of education (Ten Dam & Blom, 2006:647; Warren, 2006:16; Sands & Goodwin, 2005:818). Other developed countries, such as Australia and Hong Kong, followed suit, with similar positive results (Toomey, Chapman, Gaff, McGilp, Walsh, Warren & Williams, 2005:24).

Watts and Lawson (2009:610-11), Schön (Rossouw, 2009:235) and Moore (2004:100) agree that reflective practice implies the capacity to adopt a critical stance towards one’s professional practice, constructively interrogating and evaluating it with a view to improving its quality and effectiveness. The concept of a reflective practitioner seems to represent the contemporary ideal of teacher quality (Watts & Lawson, 2009:610-11). It constitutes a significant departure from the model of teacher quality in the 1970s through to the 1990s, in terms of which teacher professionalism was defined in terms of the technical mastery of certain competencies related to classroom effectiveness.

A popular view emerged in terms of which a good teacher was considered one who demonstrated thoughtful and adaptive flexibility in the face of the unpredictable challenges of the 21st century classroom (Reid & O’Donoghue, 2004:564; Darling-Hammond, 2000:7; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000:55; Yost, Sentner & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000:34). This ideal of teacher quality was embodied in the new vision for Zimbabwean teachers, as pronounced in the MOHTE (2001:5), indicating that Zimbabwe was also trying to move beyond the then prevailing competency model of teacher education (Taruvinga, 1996:101). Confirming this, Hargreaves and Fullan (2000:56) contend that 21st century teachers ought to have the capacity to work in the unpredictable context of the new age, marked by a rapidly changing social geography that causes institutional
boundaries to collapse, constantly creating new roles for and making new demands on the teacher. Under such circumstances, a teacher prepared only on the basis of a competency model could easily find her- or himself out of her or his depth, as the rapidly developing situations could render her or his competencies irrelevant and outdated.

Given the above thrust towards producing reflective practitioners in Zimbabwe, a school-based mentoring system was perceived as a way of realising that goal (MOHTE, 2001:5). In terms of this model, student teachers began to spend at least one of the three years of their training in schools, learning how to teach under the guidance of experienced and qualified teachers (Chiromo, 1999:59). The latter are generally referred to as mentors. In contrast to earlier models, under this mentoring model, the teaching load of student teachers was significantly reduced to create more time for work-based learning and reflection. Under this model, mentors are also required to play a central role in ensuring the quality and availability of learning opportunities for student teachers (Chikunda, 2000:25; Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000:314).

The mentoring model clearly gives schools significant responsibility for facilitating the learning of student teachers. This assumes that the schools and teachers are adequately prepared for the implementation of this model. However, literature suggests that a problem exists around lack of preparedness, jeopardising the effectiveness and credibility of the school-based mentoring model. In this regard, a study by Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:304) confirms the scepticism voiced by Chiromo (1999:68) about the effectiveness of the model; with the majority of participating student teachers reporting that they had not benefitted much from the mentoring offered at their schools.

Chauraya (2006:398), Mavhunga (2004:67) and Chikunda (2000:25) note that mentors in Zimbabwean schools generally lack training in mentoring skills and identify this as a key reason why the mentoring model has been ineffective.
Furthermore, literature suggests that there seems to be a lack of systemic preparedness on the part of schools to implement the mentoring model. Mtetwa and Kwari (2003:275) also note that there is no culture of sharing and collaborative teaching and learning in Zimbabwean schools. Such a socio-cultural orientation is incompatible with the value orientation of mentoring, which essentially implies collaborative teaching and learning. In this regard, Hargreaves (Day, 1999:79) argues that a culture of individualism among teachers retards professional development and that the resultant lack of a collaborative culture could serve as a potential barrier to the effective implementation of a successful mentoring model.

Chikunda (2000:17) laments the fact that schools seem not to readily appreciate and accept their roles as facilitators of the student teachers’ work-based learning, with the latter continuing to be treated not as learners, but as quasi-qualified teachers. As a result, student teachers are effectively thrust into situations in which they are required to take on full teaching loads, without the necessary experience or knowledge, although, officially, they are not supposed to do so. This potentially detracts from the developmental learning student teachers should experience.

In addition to the above challenges, Mukorera (2002:61) notes that there is no clearly defined framework of understanding for mentoring between the partners in teacher education, namely the schools and colleges, as mentors are reportedly neither aware of what is expected of them nor of what they should do (Mavhunga, 2004:54; Chiromo, 1999:68). It is therefore difficult to see how mentors can provide appropriate advice and direction to the learning of student teachers when they themselves are not aware of the expectations held of them. Such a situation erodes the capacity of these partners to adopt a coordinated approach to the implementation of an effective mentoring model.

Given the above, it seems there are preliminary grounds for scepticism regarding
the success of the school-based mentoring model in Zimbabwe as it is currently constituted in terms of its capacity to improve the quality of teachers, as envisaged at its introduction. This suggests that quality teacher education in Zimbabwe may still be a long way from being realised, despite the noble intent of the mentoring model. However, despite all the aforementioned concerns, school-based mentoring remains the primary option to address quality issues in teacher education in Zimbabwe. This is particularly so when the teacher quality sought is linked to the notion of a reflective practitioner tradition.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The quest for quality in teacher education in Zimbabwe is closely linked to the proper functioning of the school-based mentoring model. Yet the issues implied in the scenario described in the previous section seem to suggest that the school-based mentoring model is somewhat dysfunctional. If this is the case, then it is unlikely to have the capacity to adequately address quality issues in teacher education.

The foregoing scenario implies that the full year of practicum may be wasted time for both student teachers and the educational authorities in Zimbabwe. Given such a state of affairs, it will be difficult to justify the scale of investment in teacher education in terms of time and fiscal and human resources. Furthermore, since the quality of school education is dependent on the quality of teacher training (Westbrook et al., 2009:438), the effectiveness of the mentoring model is likely to be a key for government and an emotional issue for parents whose children are of school-going age. It is therefore understandable that the matter needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

In order to make informed recommendations in relation to improving the mentoring model, an empirically based evaluation of the situation must be obtained. This will ensure a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the
implementation of this model. Regrettably, the available literature on the mentoring model and teacher education in Zimbabwe does not seem to provide a clear and objective picture of the situation. It seems as though most, if not all, of the research studies on these issues have utilised a survey design, which cannot capture the context in which the mentoring model currently operates in Zimbabwean schools to its fullest. In fact, the studies undertaken to date do not seem to offer a valid evidential base for suggesting solutions to the dysfunctional nature of the mentoring model. In order to appreciate the full context of the implementation of the mentoring model, as a base for recommending modifications for improvement, the following research questions have been formulated.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Primary research question

- How can the existing mentoring system in Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher education model, be improved?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

- What are the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for students as it is at present applied at Zimbabwean primary schools?
- How can the difficulties being experienced by teachers in mentoring prospective teachers at Zimbabwean primary schools be adequately addressed?
- What support systems can be developed to improve the mentoring system at Zimbabwean primary schools?

From the above questions, the following objectives were derived.
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Primary research objective

- To determine how the existing mentoring system as part of the teacher training model at Zimbabwean primary schools can be improved.

1.4.2 Secondary research objectives

- To determine the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for students as it is at present applied at Zimbabwean primary schools.
- To determine how the difficulties being experienced by teachers in mentoring prospective teachers at Zimbabwean schools could be adequately addressed.
- To determine the support systems that could be developed to improve the mentoring experience at Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following is a brief description of the key concepts that will be referred to in this study. The concepts include: student teachers, teachers, mentoring, teacher education, microteaching and practicum

1.5.1 Student teachers

These are students enrolled at teachers’ training colleges who are studying towards a professional teaching qualification to become fully-fledged teachers. In this study, student teachers can also be interchangeably referred to as mentees, by virtue of the fact that they learn to teach in school settings under the mentorship of experienced and qualified teachers.
1.5.2 Teachers

Teachers are qualified and experienced classroom practitioners in the primary schools. In this study, teachers can also be interchangeably referred to as mentors, by virtue of the fact that they are charged with the responsibility of mentoring student teachers when they are on the teaching practicum in the schools.

1.5.3 Mentoring

For the purposes of this study, mentoring refers to social interactions or relationships involving mentors and student teachers that have the potential of bringing about career-related and psychosocial benefits to both parties (Hu, Thomas & Lance, 2008:727; Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000:103).

1.5.4 Teacher education

In the context of this study, the term teacher education refers to systematically organised HEI-based or school-based programmes to equip prospective teachers, as well as serving teachers with knowledge, skills and positive dispositions so that they can become effective educators and facilitators in both the formal and informal education situations (Richter, Van der Walt & Visser, 2004:7; Tatto, 1997:405).

1.5.5 Microteaching

As understood in the proposed model, microteaching involves providing student teachers with opportunities to learn to teach in circumstances that approximate authentic professional contexts of practice, but have been simplified in terms of class size (Grossman & McDonald, as cited in Zhang & Cheng, 2011:345). Unlike its use in the traditional paradigm, where the teaching task was simplified by focusing on micro-skills or specific teaching skills (Francis, 1997:208), microteaching, as used in the proposed model, will contrastingly focus on broader dimensions of teaching, such as
strategies and personal learning theories held by the student teachers (Francis, 1997:208), primarily valued as through-put into the subsequent collaborative reflection on teaching. This approach seems to be more in line with the reflective-inquiry oriented paradigm of organising teaching practice in which the proposed model is anchored.

1.5.6 Practicum

The practicum is the experiences to which student teachers are exposed during field placements in classrooms and schools (Schoeman & Mabunda, 2012:24; Smith & Levi-Ari, 2005:289; Marais & Meier, 2004:221). In this study, the practicum can be interchangeably referred to as teaching practice.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

1.6.1 Research design

This research study dealt with the perceptions and opinions of people who experienced frustration and despondency due to the failure of the system of mentoring, implemented to improve the existing teacher training model, as the relevant system of school mentoring did not seem to yield the desired outcomes. In order to capture the views and lived experiences of the mentor teachers, student teachers and school principals who participated in this study, a qualitative research design, informed by an interpretive paradigm, was utilised.

1.6.2 Research methods

1.6.2.1 Case study method

This research study adopted the form of an evaluative and multiple-instrumental case study. The idea of a case study is based on the concept of a ‘case’, hence it may be
helpful to first clarify the concept. Stake (2000:23) defines a case as ‘… a constituent member of a target population’.

By describing a case study as involving an in-depth investigation of an example of a phenomenon, McDuffie and Scruggs (Mertens, 2010:233) build on ideas regarding a case study by several researchers, postulating that a case study is based on two key characteristics, namely a limited socio-geographic scope and an in-depth focus on the case under investigation. Thus, a case study could be seen as an investigation that focuses deeply and holistically within a bounded system.

What seems to emerge clearly from the above views is that a case study mainly relates to the scope and focus of an investigation. This agrees with Stake’s (Blaikie, 2010:187; Mertens, 2010:233) view that a case study is concerned more with the object of a study than with its methodology.

The use of a case study approach allowed the researcher to examine nine samples of similar cases intensively in order to develop a body of substantive knowledge that accurately describes mentoring practices in these specifically selected contexts (Babbie, 2005:293; Fouché & De Vos, 2000:272). Such a body of knowledge potentially provides an arguably solid base for recommending evidence-based solutions to improve the existing mentoring model implemented at Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.6.2.2 Sample and sampling procedures

Every research study involves some form of sampling, because logistical and resource considerations make it difficult for the individual researcher to investigate the entire range of possible units of analysis (Blaikie, 2010:171). Sampling involves the selection of a small part of a broader phenomenon, which is seen as representative of the whole (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2006:472). For this reason a purposive sampling procedure, as suggested by Patton (Merriam, 2009:77), was employed in this study. Earlier, Creswell (2005:203) also described purposive sampling as the selection of people or
sites seen as potentially helpful in gaining an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Based on Creswell’s suggestion, the major criterion guiding selection in purposive sampling in this study was the potential richness in information and data that may be obtained from chosen participants. The purposive sampling strategy was also considered to be the most suitable sampling strategy for this study, as it allowed the researcher to focus deeply on a few carefully selected institutional contexts in which mentoring was taking place.

The following forms of purposive sampling were combined, namely the typical case and maximal variation sampling. Typical case sampling involves the selection of cases that represent the norm or average of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2005:204). The criterion of typicality was the consistency with and the period over which a school participated in the mentoring programme. Variation was provided by selecting case units that represented the variety and diversity in the physical settings of the phenomenon under study, as suggested by Merriam (2009:79). The fact that all the selected schools were geographically accessible made the sample partly one of convenience.

This maximum variation in sampling was used to select a core sample of nine primary schools located in various socio-geographic contexts in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. Three schools were selected from each of the following environments, namely urban, peri-urban and rural settings. An additional sample of eighteen more schools were selected, six from each of the urban, peri-urban and rural contexts.

After the participating schools were selected, the researcher identified the participants. The main participants were mentors and student teachers at the participating schools. At each school, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select two experienced mentors and two student teachers. The researcher ensured that the sample at each school captured the diversity of the mentors and student teachers in relation to mentoring combinations of age, gender and institutions at which the student teachers were enrolled.
In addition, at each participating school, the school principal was also involved, with the implication that at least nine principals participated in this study. By the nature of their positions, the school principals could exercise oversight over the implementation of the mentoring model. Accordingly, they could provide some useful insights and perspectives on the issue of mentoring.

Furthermore, mentors and student teachers from eighteen additional schools were involved. The same criteria used to select those in the core sample were applied to this group. Where it was deemed necessary to broaden the spectrum of views captured in the data, the researcher solicited the views of other human players at the participating schools, such as the school principals, non-mentoring teachers and visiting college tutors. The aforementioned additional complements of participants allowed the researcher to capture a broader spectrum of views on mentoring in Zimbabwean schools, which was used to cross-validate findings from the core sample. As a result, the researcher was able to form a rich and fine-grained picture of the situation in Zimbabwe regarding mentoring, thereby providing a valid body of knowledge from which recommendations could be made on the improvement of the existing model of mentoring at Zimbabwean primary schools.

1.6.2.3 Data collection methods and instruments

Participant observation and interviews were utilised to gather data from mentors, student teachers and school principals in the nine (core) participating schools, while open-ended questionnaires were used to collect similar data from the same categories of participants working in the additional sample of eighteen schools. Focus group interviews with mentors and student teachers were used, together with observation and individual semi-structured interviews across the three schools in each of the three core socio-geographic contexts. Using observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews for the different groups of participants allowed the researcher to cross-validate findings emerging from data gathered through the different methods.
Justification for the use of each of the above methods and instrument is provided below.

- **Observation**

This study used an unstructured and overt observational approach. Creswell (2005:211) explains observation as collecting information by observing people in a specific context. Moyles (2007:237) supports Creswell's view, noting that observation allows the researcher to capture evidence directly, without being influenced by the participants' views.

Patton (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:73) and Adler and Adler (Marvasti, 2004:51) identify types of observational roles that fall on several points of a continuum, ranging from complete observer, through observer as participant and participant as observer, to complete participant. The degree of researcher involvement in the setting increases as one moves from complete observer to complete participant. Mostly operating in the foregoing roles, the researcher also, for short periods of time, assumed the role of relief/support teacher, standing in for teachers who could not be in their classes, strictly for officially valid and approved reasons (see Chapter Four for a full explanation of the nature of and rationale for this role).

An aspect of importance to consider is that observation can be thought of in terms of the degree to which the participants are aware of being observed. During overt observation, the participants have full knowledge of being observed, while during covert observation, the participants may have realised that they are being observed (Foster, 2006:76). This study utilised overt participant observation, as the researcher had ethical reservations about using any form of covert observation.

During observation, the primary focus was on the formal sub-settings in which the mentors and student teachers carried out activities related to mentoring. Additionally, the researcher was also interested in mentors and student teachers' activities and interactions with other human players, such as non-mentoring teachers, in the broader
context of the school. This enabled the researcher to establish the mentoring roles each of them played or did not play, thereby gaining a better understanding of the micro-context of mentoring at Zimbabwean primary schools. Data from observation were recorded in the form of field notes, guided by an observation guide (adapted from Creswell, 2007:136). Consistent with qualitative research, the observation guide was very loosely structured, containing broad sections only, meant to give the researcher general indications of the salient and relevant issues to be captured. The decision to use an observation guide was informed by McMillan and Schumacher’s (2010:353) caution about the complex nature of the interactive social scenes, which makes it difficult for researchers to decide what to focus on and record during the observation, hence the need to use some form of guiding framework, such as an observation guide, in order to remain focused on relevant aspects.

• Interviews

Mukherji and Albon (2010:118) describe an interview as a ‘… method where one person asks questions of an individual or a group of individuals with the expectation of getting answers to a particular question or an elaboration of their views on a particular topic’. An interview can therefore be seen as a social situation in which a person engages one or more people in verbal interaction, with the intention of getting specific information from them.

As implied above, interviews can be broadly categorised into two groups, namely individual interviews with one participant at a time; and interviews that involve small groups of participants (focus group interviews). As Roulston (2010:35) points out, a focus group involves bringing a small group of people together for a discussion on a topic introduced by the researcher. Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robson (2001:5) noted earlier that a focus group allows participants to react to each other’s views on an issue of common interest to them, thereby generating group dynamics in which shared meanings and understandings emerge among group members, a view shared by Scott
and Morrison (2006:113). In this study, the researcher employed unstructured focus group interviews, with the researcher playing the role of a non-directive facilitator.

Individual interviews are equally valuable and can be categorised according to their degree of structuredness (structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews). In this study, the researcher used semi-structured individual interviews, as these represent a compromise between structured and unstructured interviews, to ‘... combine the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points ...’ Thomas (2009:164). Hence, as Mertens (2010:123) notes, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to flexibly adjust the format and questions to suit the developing logic of each interview. Based on this, semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate for this study, as it also sought to deeply explore specific issues relating to the perspectives of mentors and student teachers on the mentoring system.

An audio-digital voice recorder was used to record the semi-structured interviews. Although consent for recording interviews was received, the digital voice recorder, because of its small size and similarity to an ordinary mobile phone, allowed the researcher to record the interview data fairly unobtrusively. In this way, it was possible to minimise any tension on the part of the interviewees.

Unfortunately, the digital voice recorder could not capture the visual aspects of the interview situation. Such contextual details were necessary for the accurate interpretation of the data. Video-recording was not considered a viable alternative, because it would be difficult to safeguard the anonymity of the participants appearing in a video. Under these circumstances, taking down contemporaneous interview notes seemed to be an arguably inescapable action.

The researcher also utilised informal unstructured interviews, in conjunction with participant observation. This type of interview can be seen as the obverse of the structured interview and is not planned ahead. Thus, in this study, informal unstructured
interviews occurred spontaneously when the researcher observed and took part in various activities in different contexts and sub-settings in schools. In such contexts, the researcher obtained access to issues relating to mentoring that were not clear and therefore called for further exploration. When it was necessary, the researcher sought clarification from the participants through engaging in informal conversations, encouraging the conversations to develop in directions that suited the information-gathering intentions of the researcher. The researcher captured the informal unstructured interviews by means of notes written from memory soon after the conclusion of the interview.

- **Questionnaires**

McKnight, Magid, Murphy and McKnight (2000:73) describe a questionnaire as ‘… a set of written questions to which a sample of respondents provide answers’. The questionnaires, mainly composed of open-ended items, were used to collect data from the participants in the additional sample of 18 schools so as to widen the spectrum of perspectives on and insights in the data, thereby enriching the researcher’s understanding of the issues under investigation (Flick, 2006:178).

Another merit of the use of questionnaires is that they are better suited than individual interviews to encourage self-disclosure on the part of the participants, as no interviewer is present to influence or intimidate the participants (De Leeuw, 2008:323). Therefore, the use of questionnaires in this study enabled the researcher to offset some of the weaknesses of interviews and observation. For example, the relatively large sample size (twenty seven schools), coupled with resource and logistical constraints, made it difficult for the researcher to collect data relying on interviews and observation alone. Under these circumstances, questionnaires became a suitable alternative option, as they enabled the researcher to collect qualitative data from the large sample with relative ease.
1.6.2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis gave the researcher an opportunity to directly relate the data collected to the research questions. Merriam (2009:176) sees data analysis as involving taking a close-up look at data, with a view to describing and developing themes or concepts that enable the research questions to be answered.

In this study, the researcher utilised an inductive model of analysis, eclectically informed by the views of scholars such as Merriam (2009:165-188), Ary et al. (2006:490-499), Boulton and Hammersley (2006:246-255), and Creswell (2005:231-243). These scholars commonly see data analysis as comprising three processes, namely data management, coding, and data integration. Data management involves organising and transcribing the data so that it is ready for analysis. However, in practice, these processes overlap and often occur simultaneously. Transcription, as Creswell (2005:233) notes, involves ‘converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data’. The organisation of the data involves coming up with a scheme for storing and managing the database. If data is not organised properly, the researcher may find him-/herself facing a large, unmanageable bulk of data.

As soon as the first interview audio recordings, interview notes and field notes came in, the researcher set about typing them verbatim into a word processing program. After transcription, the data was organised and stored in a way that would facilitate subsequent retrieval. In this regard, separate computer folders were created in a word processing program for the data collected from each of the core nine participating schools.

Coding was done according to Creswell (2005:237), who states that it involves ‘...segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data’. The coding involved breaking down data into units of meaning and rearranging them together into analytical concepts, called categories (Ary et al., 2006:493). For this study, the researcher read each transcript several times to get an overall sense of the data. As
the researcher read through each transcript, he inserted notes, comments, observations, queries, hunches, concepts, ideas and short phrases next to the segments of data, using different colour codes. Thereafter, the notes were grouped into main themes and sub-themes, as axial codes (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:604). The themes were then given labels that reflected their content.

Coming up with a scheme of themes or categories is arguably not adequate enough a level of analysis for a study such as this, which sought to derive at a firm theoretical understanding of mentoring practices. Therefore, the researcher sought to develop a stronger theoretical model of the mentoring practices through interconnecting or integrating the themes, as supported by Creswell (2005:246). Themes appearing from the nine participating schools were also brought into an integrated framework.

The data from the questionnaire was qualitatively analysed according to a model employed by Akyeampong and Stephens (2002:265). This model essentially involved locating similar responses to a question under a single and typical response category. Each new response was allocated to a different category, until an exhaustive list of categories was compiled. Thereafter, the response patterns were tallied and presented on matrix displays and charts, as explained by McKnight et al. (2000:8).

During the final stage of data analysis, the researcher compared and integrated the findings from interviews and observations with those obtained from the self-administered questionnaires. This enabled him to form a rich picture of the mentoring practices taking place at Zimbabwean primary schools, revealing both strengths and weaknesses.

1.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

In this study, the researcher mainly utilised qualitative research methods, such as participant observation and interviews. Such methods typically bring researchers into closer and more prolonged social contact and interaction with participants than those
associated with quantitative research. Therefore, as Punch (2005) points out, qualitative research tends to pose more ethical challenges than its quantitative counterpart. With this in mind, the researcher sought to enhance the ethical sensitivity of the study through adhering to the Belmont Report (1979:4) as an ethics regulatory framework.

The Belmont Report (1979:4) is based on three key principles, namely respect for others; justice; and beneficence. Of these, respect for others seems to be the principle in greatest danger of being violated by the research procedures proposed for this study. According to the Belmont Report (1979:4), respect for others concerns the need to allow the respondents to choose what will or will not happen to them. Participants can make a legitimate choice only if they are informed of the nature of the study. This obliged the researcher to seek the participants’ informed and voluntary consent before conducting the study.

According to Marvasti (2004:139), informed consent involves supplying prospective participants with general information about a research project, so as to enable them to decide whether or not to participate in the study. Further clarifying the concept of informed consent, Fisher and Anushko (2008:99), Marshall (2007:23) and Homan (2002:23) observe that the term ‘consent’ is a well-worn and standard guideline to ensure that the principle of respect for others is upheld in the conduct of research. Simply put, informed consent relates to the requirement that participants in research should not be studied without their prior agreement, based on adequate information.

In this study, the researcher sought informed consent from the Provincial Education Directorate, school principals, mentors and student teachers before carrying out the study (detailed information on how this was done, has been provided in Chapter Four).

In line with the principle of non-maleficence, the researcher had an ethical obligation to protect participants from psychological risk through upholding their confidentiality. Abbot and Sapsford (2006:295), in agreement with Tickle (2002:44), observe that confidentiality involves an undertaking that the participants will not be identified or
presented in a way that makes them identifiable. Such an undertaking needed to be accompanied by specifying and practical measures that the researcher took to safeguard the confidentiality of participants. In this study, the confidentiality and identification of participants was safeguarded through using pseudonyms while schools were given symbols.

Closely related to the principle of non-maleficence is the principle of beneficence. Murphy and Dingwall (Flick, 2006:46) see beneficence as maximising the potential benefits of participating in the research. A study conducted for its own sake would not justify the participants and schools’ efforts to accommodate the researcher in their daily routines. In this study, the researcher attempted to reciprocate by adopting an observer role that was in line with the core business of the school. As indicated previously, the researcher also fulfilled the role of relief/support teacher when the need arose in order to assist the school management team.

1.8 OUTLINE OF STUDY

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study through providing brief information on the following key aspects of the research: background and rationale of the study; problem statement; research questions; research design and methodology; as well as ethical issues. Since it is difficult to investigate the problem without exploring its theoretical foundations, the researcher in Chapter Two situated the problem within related literature on teacher education while Chapter Three explored the theories and models of mentoring. Issues such as the paradigm location of the study, methodology and the instruments used in collecting data, as well as the model of data analysis employed, had been discussed in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, the researcher carried out and documented the process of data analysis, and also presented and discussed the research findings. Chapter Six summarised the entire thesis, drawing conclusions from the findings, and suggested how the existing mentoring model in schools can be modified to make it work more effectively.
CHAPTER TWO
MODELS OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter noted the need to explore the workings of the current school-based mentoring model in Zimbabwe in order to come up with a context-based body of empirical evidence to inform efforts to improve the present system. This task could be facilitated by first establishing what professional literature states about the issues pertinent to this investigation. Accordingly, this chapter will examine the following issues in the hope of finding some insights that may inform this study: the concept of teacher education, dimensions of good teaching, perspectives on learning and teacher education, conceptual models of initial teacher education, the teacher education curriculum, school-based teacher education and models of teacher education in various countries, focusing on teacher education systems in England, South Africa, the United States and Zimbabwe.

2.2 CONCEPT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

The terms teacher education, teacher training and teacher preparation seem to be used interchangeably in literature, suggesting that they are synonymous. Far from it – some ideologically based overtones on the nature of teacher learning are attached to each of these terms. Therefore, the use of these terms ultimately amounts to a discursive practice, taking a position in relation to the nature of teacher learning. In this connection, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:192) note that the use of either teacher education or teacher training necessarily commits one to certain ideological views in the controversy-ridden discourse on the nature of learning to teach and teaching, a point also implicitly raised by Garm and Karlsen (2004:737), Tomlinson (1995:11-12) and Stephens, Tonnessen and Kyriacou (2004:11)
This is a dilemma the researcher would have wanted to avoid, where possible. Admittedly, taking an ideological standpoint on such moot issues so early in the study is indicative of a lack of open-mindedness, which is regrettably so often experienced in academia. However, in order to understand the substantive significance of the terms, it is important to examine the ideological underpinnings of the terms teacher education and teacher training.

Without wading into the controversy over the use of the above terms, the term teacher education, as Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:192) intimate, is an ‘... all-round education and development ... emphasising teaching as a profession involving well-informed judgement’. This ties in with the views of Stephens et al. (2004:11) and Tomlinson (1995:11), who both suggest that the process of learning how to teach is a largely intellectual and complex undertaking, thereby bestowing upon it some prestige and status. Earlier writings about the same issue by Furlong and Smith (1996:1) similarly contend that the term teacher education implies a ‘wider intellectual challenge and enrichment than teacher training’. The same view of teaching is shared by Shulman (1986:1), who picks out the following aspects as the defining features of teaching: understanding, reasoning, transformation and reflection.

By contrast, the term teacher training implies a somewhat intellectually deficient undertaking, primarily defined by the performance of a certain pre-specifiable set of skills seen as essential for classroom effectiveness (Ovens, 2000:179; Tomlinson, 1995:11). Therefore, the use of the term teacher training implies a less enviable and prestigious view of teaching. Following the same line of argument, Cochran-Smith (2000:16) asserts that the term teacher training is generally regarded by scholars as ‘somewhat offensive, implying a narrow kind of behaviour shaping or compliance with pre-established rules for demonstrating rote learning rather than a more expansive education process ...’

What has been said above, suggests that the concepts of teacher education and teacher training cannot be defined in isolation from certain ideological orientations on the nature of teaching and teacher learning. This implies that the concepts can be fully
defined at a substantive level only, where their undergirding ideological orientations are explored and unravelled, and not at a general level. Accordingly, the orientations on learning how to teach that underpin the terms teacher education and teacher training will be considered in the next subsection.

In contrast, the third term, namely *teacher preparation*, seems to be relatively less ideologically and value-laden than the terms teacher education and teacher training. This makes it easier for one to define it at a general level. However, the term teacher preparation is less frequently used in literature. Accordingly, this research avoided using it, preferring to use the term teacher education, minus its ideological appendages, because it is used more frequently in literature.

To revert to the business at hand, Tatto (Reddy, 2009:1161) describes teacher education as a formal programme intended to equip pre-service or in-service teachers with the knowledge and skills required for the teaching job and located in schools or other educational institutions. This definition importantly captures the latest developments in preparing teachers by acknowledging schools as possible and alternative locations for teacher education. Additionally, the above view suggests that teacher education occurs in a planned and structured environment. Emphasising the structured nature of teacher education, Reddy (2009:1161) believes that teacher education involves ‘… the formal and systematic preparation of teachers for professional work’.

The same definition addresses the issue of the content of teacher education, picking out knowledge and skills as two aspects teachers learn in pre-service teacher education programmes. The foregoing view ties in with those of several scholars (Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw, 2010:350; Osguthorpe, 2008:288; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald & Zeichner, 2005:358; Shulman, 1987), who consider good teachers to be knowledgeable about content, as well as skilled in methods of teaching. However, the above definitions seem to ignore the contribution of dispositions to effective job performance by classroom teachers. Yet some scholars acknowledge this dimension as a key aspect of good teaching (Santoro,
This suggests that being an effective teacher consists as much of the dispositions and attitudes of the teacher, as his/her knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, the above definition also considers teacher education as taking place on two levels, namely on pre-service and in-service levels. The former involves student teachers; while the latter is directed at in-service teachers. Making a similar point, Hallinan and Khmelkov (2001:370) view teacher education as essentially taking place at two levels, namely preparing recruits for a successful teaching career, as well as providing serving teachers with opportunities for continuing education. Highlighting the need for continuing teacher education, Bronkhorst, Meijer, Koster and Vermunt (2011:1120) concur with Hammerness et al. (2005:358) that the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for effective teaching occurs beyond pre-service programmes.

As indicated above, the terms teacher education and teacher training can be fully understood at a substantive level only by exploring and unravelling the ideological orientation that underpin them. We now turn to this task.

### 2.2.1 Approaches to teacher education

The specific values and beliefs that shape people’s views on the nature and purpose of teacher education or training are highlighted in different approaches. As suggested by Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:2), the orientations are as follows: academic, practical, technical, personal and critical inquiry. In an effort to clarify these terms, each orientation will be explored in some depth in the sub-sections below.

- **Academic approach**

According to Andersson (2002:256) and Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:2), the academic approach to teacher education emphasises teachers’ mastery of the academic disciplines. This approach, therefore, prioritises the intellectual mastery of subject content, as well as learning strategies, echoing what Cochran-Smith and Lytle
(1999:50) refer to as the *knowledge-for-practice* view of teacher learning, which similarly considers formal knowledge as a key aspect of the teacher education curriculum. In the same vein, Sockeyt (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010:393), in the context of a compound model of teacher education, proposes a view of the teacher as a scholar professional, whose hallmark is academic capability, based on immense disciplinary learning. Such a view sees disciplinary knowledge as typically purveyed in a transmission mode by teacher educators based in higher education institutions. Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006:1021) see such an academic approach as underpinned by a theory-into-practice view of teacher education, whereby student teachers receive campus-based lectures in educational disciplines and methods, after which they enter schools to practically implement what was learnt in the university lecture room. In terms of the foregoing view, teacher education is primarily oriented towards producing scholar-teachers and intellectuals. This seems to tie in with Schwab’s (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:106) notion that a high level of subject knowledge is the key prerequisite to effective classroom performance by teachers.

However, research in teacher education has since demonstrated the limited nature of such a view. For instance, scholars such as Korthagen (2010:99), Zeichner (2010:90), Korthagen et al. (2006:1021) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999:2) point out that theory learnt at a the university is hardly transferred to and utilised in schools during the practicum creating a fundamental disconnect between the campus-based and school-based components of teacher education. Making the same point, scholars such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Schön (1983, 1987) and Shulman (1986, 1987:8) note that effective teaching performance requires more than the mastery of disciplinary theory. For example, Shulman (1987:8) suggests in a then ground-breaking study that effective teaching primarily hinges on the possession of pedagogical content knowledge. This form of uniquely teacher knowledge is generated from the interaction between subject knowledge and the demands of the classroom. The foregoing echoes Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999:250) knowledge-in-practice, which is acquired knowledge in the context of inquiry-oriented practice. Also, implicitly arguing against an academic approach to professional learning, Lave and Wenger (1991:49) consider
knowledge to be socio-culturally situated, suggesting that it cannot be effectively acquired in isolation from contexts of authentic professional practice. This resonates with the views of scholars such as Boughey (2011:45) and Ezer et al. (2010:393), who call for a teacher knowledge base or theory that emerges from practical experience.

- **Practical approach**

In contrast to the academic approach, the practical approach considers teaching to be mainly concerned with teachers’ practical skills performance in the classroom, echoing the thrust of what Andersson (2002:255) terms the traditional paradigm of teacher education. Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt (2003:195), in agreement with Pitton (2006:2), similarly argue for the need for student teachers to be provided with the context to develop and sharpen their skills. In the context of such an apprenticeship mode, this practical view of teaching prioritises the mastery of classroom techniques, rendering teachers as craftspersons, adept at executing effective techniques. Such views almost completely remove teaching from the intellectual domain (Arnon & Reichel, 2007:447). Often, the proficiency is demonstrated shallowly at a practical level, and teachers are likely to be incognisant of the principles that underlie their practices. Hence, such teachers lack flexibility to adjust their practices in the light of the changing needs of students, as well as the changing goals of education. Possibly, this is the reason why scholars such as Beyer (2001:151) deem a purely practical approach as inadequate for developing fully-fledged professional teachers.

Contrary to the practical approach, authors such as Schön (1983, 1987) and Shulman (1986, 1987) have demonstrated that teaching does indeed involve a considerable measure of intellectual engagement with a variety of aspects during the teaching-learning situation, suggesting that practice and theory cannot be isolated from each other. Affirming this line of argument, Taylor (2008:66) notes that teaching is basically a practical exercise; hence student teachers can begin to build their repertoire of practical skills and educational theories only when they are given the opportunity to teach in the classroom. For example, in this connection, Schön (1983) moots concepts such as reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action to illustrate the close relationship between
thinking, reflection and action in professional practice. For this reason, the practical orientation seems to represent a simplistic and limited view of teaching and teacher education.

- **Technical approach**

Like its practical counterpart, the technical approach to teacher education considers teaching to be a mainly practical exercise. However, in contrast to the practical approach, the technical approach advocates that effective teaching practice performance should be based on the mastery of sound teaching and learning principles, as both knowledge and skills are considered equally important in a teacher education programme (Moore, 2004:77; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997:2). This approach is similar to Reid and O’Donoghue’s (2004:562) professional standards approach, in terms of which teachers are educated and trained in and assessed against a prescribed set of competencies composed of skills, knowledge and attitudes.

The skills or competencies focused upon in this approach are purportedly arrived at through scientific research. Following a behaviourist model, prospective teachers are systematically drilled in, and assessed against, the needed competencies (Moore, 2004:80; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997:2). This seems to have been the ruling paradigm of teacher education during the 1990s in countries such as South Africa (Samuel, 2008:6), the USA, England and Wales (Moore, 2004:77). For example, in South Africa, the Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education, 2000), as a policy framework on teacher education, is based on a technical interpretation of teacher education. In England, the Competencies, now known as the Standards, also seem to be based on a technical orientation to teaching and teacher education (Malm, 2009:83; Moore, 2004:80).

The technical approach furthermore seems to erroneously suggest that a cookbook-like set of competencies can be identified and effectively and suitably applied across all school contexts. Moore (2004:82) makes the same point, contending that itemising and prescribing a rigid and universal set of competencies implies a simplistic view of teaching, ignoring its responsive and personal aspects, as well as the variability in
teaching contexts. Earlier research on teacher education by scholars such as Schön (1983, 1987) and Shulman (1986, 1987) similarly advises against imposing on teachers a formulaic blueprint concerning how they should conduct themselves professionally in their individual classrooms. This is particularly true in the rapidly changing 21st century which, as Schoonmaker (Goodwin, 2010:25) contends, requires teachers to reflect and make rational decisions in the context of professional practice. Under such circumstances, a collection of ‘how to’s’ would be of little value, as professional practice is primarily based on teachers’ practical knowledge, which captures tacit and routinised insights relating to working with specific students in a specific context (Schön, 1983, 1987). Clearly, a formulaic and standard approach to teaching runs counter to Schön’s thoughtful counsel. Perhaps, this is why Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:194) caution against the technical approach, arguing that teaching involves far more than the mastery of a restricted set of competencies.

In line with the above, Shulman’s (1987:8-9) idea of pedagogical content knowledge seems to cast some doubt on the value of externally imposed competences. According to Shulman, pedagogical content knowledge underpins teachers’ capacity to manage specific learners’ learning behaviour in specific environments, based on the interaction of content knowledge with the demands emanating from a specific classroom situation. This suggests that specific pedagogical content knowledge cannot be suitably applied across teaching/learning contexts; therefore, it seems ill-advised to seek to impose formulaic competencies on all teachers, regardless of the contextual circumstances.

• **Personal approach**

In contrast to the approaches discussed above, the personal approach shifts the focus away from a concern about skills, knowledge and performance towards the interpersonal and human aspects of the teaching-learning environment. Elliott, Stembler, Sternberg, Grigorenko and Hoffman (2011:83) and Malm (2009:83) consider personal qualities as part of a teacher’s social competence. Highlighting the personal dimension of teaching, Lampert (2010:22), in agreement with Maguire and Dillon (2001:4), describes teaching as a relational undertaking, the effectiveness of which hinges on
harmonious and cooperative engagement between the teacher and the student, which, if not properly managed, may limit the teacher’s capability to understand and effectively respond to the needs of learners.

In similar vein, Andersson (2002:257) earlier proposed a personalistic paradigm in terms of which the thrust of teacher education is to produce teachers who possess adequate psychological maturity and interpersonal competences to understand and relate and work well with professional colleagues, students and the community at large. This is consistent with Jennings and Greenberg’s (2009:492) emphasis on the need for teachers to create a positive social and emotional climate in schools.

- **Critical inquiry approach**

The critical inquiry approach, primarily drawing on the work of scholars such as Freire (1973) and Giroux (1988), focuses on issues beyond skills and knowledge and the immediate needs of the human players in the teaching-learning situation. Rather, it focuses on and expects teachers to interrogate the broader socio-political and economic macro-picture, encompassing issues beyond the school (Vithal, 2008:30).

In terms of this view, teachers are seen as potential agents for overhauling and reforming society to align it with principles of equality, justice and democracy (Samuel, 2010:5; Vithal, 2008:29; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997:2; Giroux, 1988:126). The task of teacher education is to make teachers aware of the structural forces shaping the wider societal context and their influence on teaching and learning at schools (Vithal, 2008:29). Such an understanding may provide the basis for reforming society to make it operate on the basis of equality and justice. The foregoing resonates with Fay’s (1977:65) educative model of society, which views human beings as capable of critically understanding their oppressed lot, on the basis of which they can strive for their own emancipation.

Echoing the foregoing, scholars such as Feiman-Nemser (Arnon & Reichel, 2007:447) and Andersson (2002:25) identify similar orientations to teacher education; their focus being to develop teachers who can question the ideological basis of current social
institutions, seeking to re-orient them in terms of the values of justice and democracy. For Samuel (2008:3), South African teachers who raised collective counter-hegemonic voices against apartheid education policies, as well as the broader socio-political and economic order in the late 1970s and 1980s, could be seen as exemplifying the kind of teachers envisaged by a critical approach to teacher education. However, it may be difficult for a teacher who operates within a specific social structure to seek to assume a counter-ideological stance against that society, since he or she is already part of the system.

Reviewing the different approaches to teacher education as discussed above, it seems as if each approach represents a limited conception of teaching and teacher education. There is a need for a unified conceptual framework on the nature of teaching and teacher education that integrates all the above views into one holistic frame of reference. However, Calderhead (2002:28) has gone some way in developing a framework of concepts that presents a somewhat unified view of teaching and teacher education and outlines the scope of teacher preparation by proposing that teaching and teacher education include the following dimensions, namely the socialisation of the prospective teacher into the professional culture of teaching; developing knowledge and skills in respect of relevant teaching and learning disciplines; moral and personal dimensions; and the skill of reflectiveness. Below follows a more in-depth discussion of each dimension.

### 2.3 DIMENSIONS OF GOOD TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION

- **Socialisation into professional culture**

Teaching is a profession that has well-established and reasonably stable ways of doing things. What are considered standard professional practices are usually anchored in certain assumptions, values and beliefs on the nature of teaching.

However, student teachers do not enter teacher education programmes as blank slates; they already possess set ideas about the nature of teaching (Cheng, Cheng & Tang,
The same view is shared by Lortie (Warford, 2011:253), who refers to such initial assumptions, values and beliefs about teaching as **an apprenticeships of observation.**

The new student teacher enters into a professional culture within an education programme that constitutes an interactive space for contact between her or his assumptions and values about teaching and those of the school as a professional community (Progoff, cited in Goodwin, 2010:23). If not properly managed, this interface may negatively affect the prospective teacher’s learning.

The issue of the socialisation of student teachers into the professional culture is given particular prominence in the socio-cultural perspective of teacher education. Wenger (Lambson 2010:1661), a major proponent of the socio-cultural perspective of teacher education, notes that a profession can be best learnt through participating in a community of practice. Such a community of practice usually operates on the basis of a relatively stable set of assumptions, beliefs and values, in this case about teaching. For student teachers to be accepted and participate in the community of practice, they must first embrace and assimilate the prevailing culture, otherwise they may remain on the periphery of, or at worst, outside the community of practice, with detrimental consequences for learning how to teach (Anderson & Hellberg, 2009:274-275).

- **Development of knowledge and skills**

Osguthorpe (2008:289) maintains that both knowledge and skills are necessary for effective performance in the classroom. Along the same line, the work of several scholars (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008:389; Hammerness et al., 2005:358; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999:250; Schwab, cited in Furlong & Smith 1996:106; Schön, 1987, 1983; Shulman, 1987) clearly demonstrate that teachers need to have certain forms of knowledge in order to perform effectively in the classroom. Writing about the same issue, Darling-Hammond and Goodwin (Wilen, Ishler, Hutchinson & Kindsvatter, 2000:6) assert that knowledge is a necessary condition for teaching to be regarded as a profession. Highlighting the importance of a solid knowledge base to teaching, Hammerness et al. (2005:370) contend that actions that are based on adequate
understanding are sure to be more effective. However, there is a divergence of scholarly opinion on the nature of the teacher knowledge base, as sub-section 2.7.2 demonstrates.

Besides the knowledge base of teaching, it is an undisputed fact that teachers generally need specific skills in order to perform effectively. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004:251) point out that teachers need to master the basic practical routines of teaching, while Ball, Sleep, Boerst and Bass (2009:459) relatedly affirm that initial teacher preparation must also educate students to enact ideas or beliefs on teaching. These skills range from technical and administrative to socio-emotional skills. Technical skills relate to the ability to effectively utilise methods that ensure that the subject content is clearly conveyed to the pupils (Osguthorpe, 2008:288); skills include lesson execution and preparing classroom displays and professional documents such as work sheets. Classroom management and control are examples of administrative skills needed for order, while socio-emotional skills are needed for effective interpersonal relationships since, as Lampert (2010:22) attests, teaching is a relational profession, which can be effectively practised if there are co-operative and harmonious relationships between students and teachers in a school. Malm (2009:79) emphasises the need to develop teachers’ emotional competencies so that they can effectively handle an increasingly diverse and complex student population. However, depending on their perspective and orientation to teacher education, there is disagreement amongst scholars about the precise nature of these skills, as different scholars take different stances. For example, the behaviourist perspective emphasises technical skills, that is, the competences.

- **Moral dimension of teaching and teacher education**

Learning to teach can also be seen as an inherently moral undertaking that has a strong altruistic-spiritual dimension (Taylor, 2008:67; Burant, Chubbuck & Whipp, 2007:405). Osguthorpe (2008:289) describes morality as character that is informed by what is considered to be morally acceptable or tolerable within a specific culture. This ties in with Burant *et al.* (2007:405), who describe acting morally as behaving in a way that takes into account how one’s actions, based on one’s knowledge and skills, impact on
others in the social environment. It does then not seem out of place for Watson (1998:65) to call for prospective teachers to have a well-developed moral side.

However, there seems to be a lack of consensus regarding the concept of morality and how it can be developed and assessed in the context of teacher education. Several scholars (Clarke, Lodge & Shelvin, 2012:141; Malm, 2009:83; Burant et al., 2007:398; NCATE, 2001:30) practically equate morality with dispositions, describing the latter as comprising a constellation of beliefs, attitudes, values, commitments and professional ethics that underlie and influence teachers’ behaviours when they interact with various educational stakeholders such as students, professional colleagues and parents. Earlier, Richardson and Fallona (2001:724) posited a strong relationship between teachers’ goals and beliefs on the one hand and their professional and classroom effectiveness on the other hand.

Those advocating for the moral/dispositional dimension to be included in the teacher education curriculum contend that there are certain values that should guide teachers’ behaviour as they interact with the students in order to ensure that teaching takes place in the best interests of the students or at least so that teachers will not harm their students (Osguthorpe, 2008:296). The implication of the foregoing is that although the teachers may have the content knowledge and pedagogical skills, it cannot be guaranteed that these will be deployed in the best interest of the learners. Shulman (1998:351), for instance, notes that if teachers lack commitment and a sense of fairness, they may not apply extra effort to ensure that students learn, even though the teachers may have the knowledge and skills to do so. Extending this line of argument, Osguthorpe (2008:291-292) points out that teachers’ morality influences their practices and shape their choices in relation to methods and aims of teaching. The foregoing seems to tie in with Rosiek (2003:400) and Noddings’s (1992) view of teaching as a caring profession. Minott (2011:78), suggests that the concept of a teacher as a pedagogue implies moral commitment and active interest in the welfare and educational success of students. In line with the foregoing view, Taylor (2008:67) earlier avered that initial teacher education also entails developing moral attitudes in student teachers.
so that they will appreciate the need to relate to school students, colleagues and the community with a sense of justice and equality.

Shulman (1998:351) suggests that teacher education programmes could develop pre-service teachers’ self-awareness of their dispositions as well as interrogate their prejudices and biases so that they could re-align them with professional ethics of teaching and morally good teaching. Elaborating on the same issue, Osguthorpe (2008:288, 290, 296) maintains that there is a possibility of cultivating student teachers' dispositional orientation, while calling for recruits to be subjected to moral and criminal background screening to ensure that only those who are committed to the moral dimensions of teaching are selected. Burant et al. (2007:405) relatedly suggest that the moral dimension in teacher education involves seeking to align one’s behaviour with some professional code of ethics that picks out some core ethical qualities connected with being a teacher.

- **Personal dimension of teaching**

Zeichner and Liston (1996) contend that student teachers bring into teacher education a body of personal understanding of the nature of teaching as personal action theories. Such action theories are based on the student teachers’ educational experiences in other contexts and life experiences (Zeichner & Liston, 1996:24). Lortie (Warford, 2011:253) similarly argues that student teachers bring into the teacher education programme what is referred to as *apprenticeships of observation*, composed of values, beliefs and assumptions about teaching.

Considering the above, it becomes clear that learning how to teach involves mastering the capacity to manage the interaction between student teachers’ personal theories of teaching and the learnt conceptions of teaching, either conveyed through literature studies or the example demonstrated by other teachers in the school contexts. This suggests that the personal perceptions about teaching that student teachers bring into teacher education influence their professional reasoning and practices (Cheng, Cheng, & Tang 2010:92; Goodwin, 2010:22) while Bell and Gilbert (1996:34) earlier noted that
such personally constructed knowledge structures cannot be relinquished easily, pointing out that yielding or modifying them is usually an emotionally charged process.

According to Hoban (2002:107), relationships with learners in learning settings are extremely valuable, as they have the potential to enable or hinder learning at different levels. The personal dimension of teacher education also concerns enabling student teachers to take control of their personality traits in a way that will encourage the development of healthy relationships with colleagues and learners as well as with the wider community as relationships extend beyond the school context to connect the student teachers with the community and parents, and even with those higher up in the education bureaucracy. The quality of such relationships may determine the level of support the teacher receives in the school and community.

- **Reflective dimension of teaching**

Authors generally agree that reflection involves thinking deeply and critically about one’s own professional practices (Yost *et al.* 2000:40). Killen (2010:108-112), largely drawing on the work of Schön (1983, 1987), has conducted substantial research on the concept of reflection related to professional learning.

Following Schön (1983, 1987), Killen (2010:112) identifies two forms of reflection, namely *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action*, to demonstrate the intertwined nature of thinking and action in the professional workforce. This seems to suggest that thought and actions are co-influential. According to Killen (2010:112), the one occurs retrospectively as the teacher thinks back on decisions taken in the context of work while reflection-in-action refers to reflection that takes place in the thick of action, as the professional makes decisions under the pressure of circumstances.

Relating reflection to the quality of professional learning, Osterman and Kottkamp (2004:13) point out that reflecting on one’s practices, enables the professional to attain a deeper level of learning, which they refer to as *double-loop learning*. According to these authors, double-loop learning involves changing one’s theories-in-use, one’s underlying assumptions and beliefs. Double-loop learning is a deeper form of learning in
which the professional interrogates set routines and traditional practices, with a view to improving them. As Osterman and Kottkamp (2004:8) contend, double-loop learning involves changing one’s models of teaching or personal action theories in the face of developing situational demands, a point also raised by Van Manen (Yost et al., 2000:40). By contrast, in single-loop learning, the professional is not prepared to overhaul her or his assumptions or schema (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13), even if the contextual circumstances demand this.

2.4 PERSPECTIVES ON THEORIES OF LEARNING AND TEACHER EDUCATION

The investigation of issues in teacher education must be guided by an understanding of the theories of learning, since teacher education also involves learning by both the student teachers and their learners. Teachers need to understand the different theories on learning so that they can adapt their teaching, if needed, to accommodate the learning modes of their learners. Arguably, with minor adjustments, to take into account that the student teachers are adults, theories of learning that have been applied over the years to the learning of younger people can also be applied to teacher education.

There are three major schools of thought on human learning, namely behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism (Hung, 2001:28). Behaviourism is associated with the work of scholars such as Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and Skinner. Behaviourists view human beings as taking a passive role in the learning process, as they merely respond or react to external stimuli, with the pattern and relationship between the responses and stimuli forming the basis of learning. Learning or behaviour becomes a function of the strength of the relationship between stimulus and response. Thus, in behaviourist terms, learning takes place outside of the individual. This implies that the mind or brain does not have a role to play in the learning process (Jung & Orey, 2008:2; Mergel, 1998:2). In this regard, Miller (2003:141) and Hung (2001:281-282) agree that behaviourists focus only on observable aspects, justifying their stance by contending that mental processes cannot be observed and therefore cannot be scientifically examined.
However, from the 1920s, behaviourism began to weaken, to be gradually replaced by cognitivism (Mergel, 1998:6). In contrast to behaviourism, this theory recognises that the mental faculty plays a central role in the learning process and pays attention to the relationship between behaviour and the internal thought processes behind it (Hung, 2001:282). Cognitivism regards the mind as an information processor and storer of representations, accounting for how individuals receive, organise, store and retrieve information (Jung & Orey, 2008:3; Hung, 2001:282).

Although cognitivism recognises the internal nature of learning, as well as the role of the mind or brain in learning, the theory still projects human beings as primarily passive, merely serving as a storehouse of externally generated information, basically based on an information-processing model of learning. However, by portraying the learner as a mere information processor, cognitivism suggests that meaning is given as opposed to being produced during the processing; hence denying the learner some agency during the learning process. Thus meaning, in terms of the cognitivists, is not constructed by the learner, since the latter is a mere processor and depository of pre-existing or external meaning structures.

Constructivism is by no means independent from it precursors, as it builds on or opposes the premises of behaviourism and cognitivism. A case in point is Piaget’s theory, which seems to bestraddle cognitivism and constructivism. For this reason, constructivism will be considered in the next sub-section.

2.4.1 Constructivism

Several scholars, such as Isikoglu, Basturk and Karaca (2009:350), Lowenthal and Muth (2008:177), Jung and Orey (2008:3) and Swan (2005:14), agree that constructivism is a family of theories largely drawing upon the ideas of psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Von Glasersfeld, who share the view that learners actively construct knowledge and meaning on the foundation of what they
learnt previously. Thus, from a constructivist point of view, meaning is imposed on the physical, social and mental worlds, as opposed to being passively received from outside the mind of the individual. Swan (2005:14) therefore states that learning takes place in the mind, as the individual comes up with new structures to take on board new knowledge. As a theory of knowing, constructivism denies the existence of meaning or an objective world outside the knower (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008:177). Two sub-schools of constructivism, namely cognitive constructivism, and social constructivism are respectively associated with Piaget and Vygotsky. These sub-schools will be considered in some depth in the sub-section below.

- **Cognitive constructivist perspectives**

The cognitive constructivist theory falls squarely and unambiguously within the field of psychology and developed as an oppositional response to the flaws of behaviourist and cognitivist information processing models of learning (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008:178). As Bell and Gilbert (1996:44) point out, there are various strands in this broad school of psychology, namely Kelly’s (1969) personal construct psychology, Piaget’s (1970) approach, and personal constructivism, as exemplified by the work of Osborne and Wittrock (1985). Despite this diversity, cognitive constructivists generally share two major views on learning. Firstly, that learning is a primarily individual process, involving the mental construction of representation of an object, event or idea (Powell & Kalina, 2009:241; Swan, 2005:15), with these mental representations constituting an individual’s knowledge or beliefs. Secondly, the mental representations are used as a type of a provisional interpretive scheme, in terms of which the individual interacts with the world. For this reason, the mental representations guide the individual in giving meaning to any situation, thereby guiding both mental and physical action. However, to get a deeper understanding of cognitive constructivism, the subject must be considered in more detail.

In this connection, Piaget’s theory will be given more extensive treatment, since it arguably has a classical and representative status. Firstly, the Piagetian brand of
cognitive constructivism mainly focuses on how learners actively develop mental structures or schema as they interact with their environment (Swan, 2005:14). This process of developing schema occurs through the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation (Swan, 2005:15). This theory takes the individual as the primary unit of analysis, implying that cognition occurs independently of the social context (Powell & Kalina, 2009:242). Learning is therefore seen as a largely individual and internal process (Lourenco, 2012:281), suggesting that meaning resides in the mind/brain, and is removed from socio-cultural influences. This view inexplicably downplays the embeddedness of human beings in the social and cultural web of relationships and their widely noted social and gregarious nature (Powell & Kalina, 2009:241). The learning process, according to Piaget’s theory, entails the progressive modification of an individual’s schema or cognitive structures. This change in the cognitive structures occurs as a result of interaction with both the physical and social environments. In specific terms, learning takes place as result of two processes, namely assimilation and accommodation (Powell & Kalina, 2009:242), with assimilation referring to the process in terms of which the incoming information is readily taken on board and fitted into the existing schema (Powell & Kalina, 2009:243; Swan, 2005:14; Dawson-Tunik, Fisher & Stein, 2004:259; Cohen & Kim, 1999:202). Conversely, accommodation occurs when incoming information is incompatible with the existing schema and therefore cannot readily be taken into the existing schema, placing the individual in a state of cognitive conflict and imbalance, necessitating the adjustment of the existing schema so that incoming information can fit in (Powell & Kalina, 2009:243; Swan, 2005:14; Cohen & Kim, 1999:202). This adjustment is intended to ensure that incoming information is integrated into the existing schema and represents a point of growth in the learning process. This interplay between assimilation and accommodation is called equilibration and involves the quest for cognitive balance by the individual (Dodonov & Dodonova, 2011:1345; Powell & Kalina, 2009:243). Progressive equilibration takes concepts further away from their originating context, making them more abstract.

However, influence seems to follow a uni-directional route, moving from the environment to the individual. Therefore, there is no reciprocal influence between the
individual and the environment; hence the possible interplay between sociocultural factors and the individual remains unexplored. Although this theory acknowledges that the individual exists in a specific environment, it fails to satisfactorily account for how individual learning relates to the environment. In terms of this perspective, the individual completely lacks human agency, as he or she passively responds in an exclusively reactive mode to changes in his or her environment.

Piaget’s brand of cognitive constructivism seems to imply that an individual understands the world as given; the mind simply adapts to an already complete and final reality. Relatedly, this suggests the existence of a singular reality (cognitive structure) on which all people ultimately converge. Further, decentering suggests that ideas will ultimately be context-free and universal, completely ignoring their historical and social situatedness (Bell & Gilbert, 1996:45).

In relation to teacher education, the Piagetian brand of cognitive constructivism seems to imply that the prospective teacher enters the training programme with preconceived ideas about the nature of teaching. This point has been raised by several researchers, amongst others Lortie (Warford, 2011:253) and Cheng, Cheng and Tang (2010:94). Hence, for any learning to occur, these initial beliefs ought to be addressed by way of accommodating or problematising them (Lawrence & Butler, 2010:136); otherwise, they constitute potential obstacles to the learning of new pedagogical ideas (Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010:94; Hoban, 2002:51).

Secondly, the Piagetian theory suggests that teacher learning does not need to take place in the workplace, that is, schools. According to this theory, as Hoban (2002:51) notes, the site of learning is ‘like a box in the head of the learner’. What this suggests, is that teaching can be learnt in the lecture room, from an instructor who tells the student what he or she thinks are the best pedagogical principles of learning. Yet, research findings on professional learning point towards the fact that professionals learn best through accessing the often tacit practical knowledge from their more experienced counterparts (Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2003:197-198).
Consistent with the reflective teaching model, the Piagetian theory implies that teacher learning entails the progressive but externally initiated modification of existing beliefs and ideas about teaching. However, unlike in the reflective teaching model, where the process of changing schemas about teaching occurs both internally and externally, the Piagetian model seems to consider the individual’s mental activity as mainly consisting of adapting to externally imposed ideas, without the capacity to also influence the source of these ideas. Therefore, the student teacher, in terms of the Piagetian theory, cannot generate new pedagogical ideas (Hoban, 2002:53).

Taking into account the above observations, it seems that the Piagetian theory on its own does not offer an adequate theoretical framework for a study on the school-based mentoring of teachers, because school-based teacher learning that takes place in a mentoring context is a form of work-based learning; therefore, an interactive social situation as found in school-based teacher education represents a primary site of learning. Learning under such circumstances is therefore likely to be influenced by the web of social relationships that the student teacher has with others at the school (Elliott et al., 2011:84; Solomon, Boud & Rooney, 2008:75). Under such circumstances, learning to teach cannot occur as a cognitive exercise only, but is also dependent on the social sphere of the classroom and the school.

Based on the above, there is therefore a need for a theoretical framework that recognises that learning is as much an individual, mental and internal process as it is a social and collective process. In this regard, the social constructivist perspective seems to hold out much promise, since it takes due regard of the individual, mental, collective and social nature of learning. In the section below, social constructivist perspectives on learning will be discussed.

2.4.2 Social constructivist perspectives
The social constructivist perspective is, according to Bell and Gilbert (1996:49), a loose amalgam, encompassing many diverse viewpoints on knowledge and learning. Swan (2005:16) argues that social constructivism is the most current and common version of constructivism, mainly deriving from the work of Vygotsky, and developed in response to and extended from some of the premises of cognitive constructivism (Lowenthal & Muth, 2008:179). This learning perspective, unlike cognitive constructivism, is interdisciplinary in nature, straddling the two disciplines of sociology and psychology. Capturing the general thrust of this perspective, Swan (2005:16) notes that social constructivism recognises that learning and cognition occur in conjunction with broader social or cultural processes.

The foregoing suggests that cognition does not occur in the mind or the brain only, but is a relational phenomenon embedded in and a product of social and cultural processes, encompassing the context, the people in the context and the associated cultural tools, such as the language used (Lourenco, 2012:282; Powell & Kalina, 2009:243; Swan, 2005:16). Therefore, in social constructivist terms, the social and the personal cannot be separated, which makes learning a product of the interplay between inter- and intra-psychological processes (Lee, 2005:252).

The views of sociologists such as Berger and Luckmann (1966:27-40) perhaps best capture the general and typical tenor of social constructivist perspectives. These scholars assert that reality is socially constructed and inter-subjectively produced and shared. Thus, on one hand, social constructivists seem to posit the existence of a social stock of common-sense knowledge that can be transmitted from generation to generation. On the other hand, these theorists also acknowledge that the individual participates in the construction of knowledge at a personal level.

As indicated above, there are many strands of social constructivism. Of these, the situated cognition or situative learning perspectives potentially seem to be the most suitable theoretical framework for this study and will therefore be discussed in the next section.
Situative perspectives are relatively recent theories of learning and cognition, with roots that can be traced back to educators and psychologists such as Dewey and Vygotsky. In more recent times, these perspectives have been popularised mainly through the work of Wenger (1998) and Lave and Wenger (1991). Addressing the same questions as those that preoccupied the cognitivists, namely the nature of cognition and learning, situative perspective posit that cognition is situated, taking place in social and historical contexts; that cognition is social and collective (Maitland & Lemmer, 2011:129; Wenger, 1998:3; Lave, 1996:149; Lave & Wenger, 1991:29); and that cognition is distributed across several aspects of the context, namely individuals, other persons and tools (Cheng & Yeung, 2010:335; Putnam & Borko, 2000:1).

The situative perspective further argues that since man is a socially and historically situated being, his or her thinking, knowledge and learning must necessarily be thus situated, inextricably embedded in the historical and social contexts in which it takes place (Cheng & Yeung 2010:335; Philpott, 2006:291). Writing about the same issue earlier, Resnick (Putnam & Borko, 2000:2), points out that the broader context of cognition is shaped by the nature of the discourse community. Describing discourse communities, Putnam and Borko (2000:2) postulate that they range from those representing scholarly disciplines, to groups of people sharing common interests, to particular classrooms. The concept of discourse community seems to be equivalent to what Lave and Wenger (1998:5) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002:12-13;) describe as communities of practice as Gravett and Petersen (2007:194) describe the term discourse as ‘... the means by which a group actively shapes and orders their relationships to the social world’. A school as a discourse community purveys a relatively stable set of cognitive tools, such as ideas, concepts and theories, that newcomers try to appropriate as their own as they to try to make sense of their school-based experiences (Lave & Wenger, 1991:108-109).
Boreham and Morgan (2008:72) note that learning in such contexts becomes a form of participation in specific historical and social contexts. The set of cognitive tools, inasmuch as it represents a symbolic system that enables a person to both interpret and participate in social experiences, can therefore be seen as representing the culture of a school. Learning in such a scenario essentially entails being acculturated into the school culture or discourse community.

Based on the foregoing, the controlling discourse in an organisation could be seen as shaping how the discourse community thinks and produces knowledge. Therefore, the individual learns in proportion to the degree of her or his participation in the social group (Rogoff, 2008:62-63), suggesting that if he or she does not participate, he or she may not learn. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that most learning in organisational contexts tends to occur informally, without explicit or formal instruction.

Given what has been said above, one may argue that learning is unidirectional, with the individual being assimilated into the culture of the group or school. However, researchers in this tradition, such as Wenger (1998:29), suggest that there is also the possibility of reciprocal influence between an individual and the culture of the group. This implies that the culture or discourse can also change as a result of the new things that an individual brings to a cultural group or discourse community. In this connection, Boreham and Morgan (2008:72) aptly observe that from a sociocultural perspective ‘… social and individual dimensions of learning are mutually constitutive’.

However, it is not clear how an individual can manage to single-handedly effect change in a set culture of doing things. On one hand, it is suggested that learning involves being acculturated into the culture of the community of practice. On the other hand, situative theorists claim that the discourse community can also change in response to individual input (Lasky, 2005:900). Given the fact that culture is essentially organised on the principle of stability, it is difficult to see how an individual can succeed in changing things when he or she is already part of the scheme of things. His or her horizons of thinking would already, to a certain extent, be restricted by his or her membership of the
specific community of practice. This is so because the ability to participate presupposes that one has agreed to put on a specific cultural lens, which necessarily restricts one’s perspective.

Additionally, the situative perspective maintains that learning is a social process. This suggests that learning is not an individual, but a collective undertaking, incorporating all the aspects of the context. In this view, cognition and learning do not occur in the mind of an individual, but in the social context. Therefore, cognition takes place within the interactive social settings in which individuals work together. Besides interacting with other individuals, the learner also engages with the tools of work. These tools are potentially both of a symbolic and material nature. The socio-cultural view of learning and knowledge suggests that the latter is a product of these interactions, implying that knowledge is social and co-constructed.

The above represent general views regarding the situative perspective, and they seem not to be based on research in specific applied contexts. This is the reason why it is necessary to examine how such views fare when applied to different learning contexts. Since this study concerns teacher learning in mentoring contexts, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) and Wenger’s (1998) research in skills-based workplace learning environments may contribute some useful insights into teacher learning in school-based mentoring contexts. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, Lave and Wenger’s interpretation of the situative perspective of learning needs to be discussed in more detail.

**Lave and Wenger: Legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice**

The situative learning perspective was refined by Lave and Wenger through their research on learning, on what they refer to as craft-oriented organisational settings (Skinner, 2010:280). The focus of that research is closely related to the focus of this study; hence, it can be reasonably expected that insights from the former study may
illuminate issues of school-based mentoring that are being investigated in the present study.

Lave and Wenger’s ideas on learning in organisational settings are explained through two main concepts, namely; *legitimate peripheral participation* and *community of practice*. These terms are considered in an extended manner in the sub-section below.

*Legitimate peripheral participation*

In the context of Lave and Wenger’s theory, the phrase legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) is used to describe the process and degree of the individual’s involvement in the social group’s activities, especially during the early period of joining the community (Skinner, 2010:280; Gravett & Petersen, 2007:195). Describing legitimate peripheral participation, Hanks (Skinner, 2010:280) states that it is ‘an interactive process in which an apprentice engages in simultaneously performing several roles, such as being a subordinate, a learning practitioner, being the sole responsible agent in minor part of the performance, an aspiring expert, and so forth’. Each of these roles implies a different set of role relations and different interactive involvement. A newcomer starts off at the fringe of the group, unable to participate fully, because he or she has not yet been accepted as a member and has not yet acquired the necessary cultural tools that facilitate participation. In order to become an accepted member of the group, the newcomer needs to be invited and introduced by an experienced member of the group (the mentor), who vouches for the newcomer’s authenticity and legitimacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991:22).

Once the newcomer has been legitimised, he or she can build a web of relationships with members of the group. In this way, he or she will be widening opportunities for learning beyond his or her relationship with the sponsor. The more he or she is assimilated as a member of the group through appropriating the relevant cultural tools, the more he or she is able to learn (Wenger, 1998:77; Lave & Wenger, 1991:22).
Teemant, Wink and Tyra (2011:686) similarly contend that from a sociocultural perspective, knowledge is closely tied to cultural understanding and participation. Thus, learning may be seen as closely tied to the process of identity formation, as suggested before by Anderson and Hellberg (2009:275) and Wenger (1998:125).

In relation to the content of learning, Lave and Wenger (Anderson & Hellberg, 2009:275) distinguish two forms of curricula, namely the teaching curriculum and the learning curriculum. According to Anderson and Hellberg (2009:275), the learning curriculum refers to practical knowing, which occurs in the course of participating in authentic contexts. In contrast, the teaching curriculum denotes theoretical knowing, which is associated with formal settings. In a community of practice, the dominant form of participation is the learning curriculum.

As briefly indicated above, the other central concept in Lave and Wenger’s (1998) theory of learning, used in conjunction with the idea of legitimate peripheral participation, is ‘community of practice’. Gravett and Petersen (2007:194) state that a community of practice is ‘…a group of people who engage in a shared purposeful activity’. This view suggests that a community of practice is a socio-cultural unit made up of people who, on the basis of a shared cultural and historical heritage, mutually engage each other in activities intended to achieve common interests, as shared heritage creates space for cohesion and solidarity among the members of the community of practice.

The above views suggest a number of things about teacher learning. Firstly, Lave and Wenger (1991), Shulman (1987) and Schön (1983, 1987) suggest that the best location for teacher education is the school. This is so because schools provide more authentic contexts of practice than higher education institutions. Furthermore, teachers possess a unique knowledge domain called practical knowledge, which primarily informs professional decision-making in the classroom. This form of knowledge is largely tacit and cannot be transmitted through verbal instruction. That is why Shulman’s views
(1987) on pedagogical knowledge point towards schools as the primary locations for teacher learning.

These ideas seem to endorse the growing international focus on school-based teacher education. Since this research seeks to investigate the learning of student teachers in mentoring contexts in schools, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) views on learning seem to provide a solid theoretical framework for this study.

Wenger (1998:77), almost as an afterthought, suggests that the values and beliefs of a community of practice are not static, but open to either self-renewal or modification by those outsiders who seek membership of the community of practice. However, it is difficult to fathom how an individual can change the value orientation of a community single-handedly and from the inside of communities of practice. This is consistent with Jorgensen and Phillips’s (2002:48) contention that there potentially exists social antagonism between the identities of newcomers and old-timers and that the latter are likely to lose out if there is a clash of identities. This raises the question whether membership of a community of practice does not restrict and blunt an individual’s appetite for change.

If learning mainly entails enculturation into a community, then school-based teacher learning largely involves initiation into the school culture. This would be less worrying if the school represented the best teaching practice. However, as Putnam and Borko (2000:8) point out, there is a possibility that a school culture could have stagnated and therefore can no longer be regarded as representing the best professional practice. Under such circumstances, student teachers will be initiated into a ritualistic teaching culture that may not be consistent with the demands of present teaching situations. Westbrook et al. (2009:437), echoing the views of Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981:7) observe that new teachers tend to ‘wash out’ and conform when they are socialised into the teaching profession.
What has been noted above, suggests that the situative perspective on its own would not be an adequate conceptual framework for a study that seeks to investigate ways of modifying a mentoring model in a way that will ensure that the model produces teachers who are flexible and can adapt their teaching practices in line with the changing demands of the 21st century classroom. Therefore, there was a need to complement the situative perspective with Engestrom’s *Expansive Learning Theory* and Kolb’s *Experiential Learning Model*, as such an eclectic conceptual framework allowed the researcher to see learning as enculturation, while at the same time viewing teaching or school cultures as necessarily dynamic systems subject to change, when needed.

### 2.5 PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER EDUCATION

Perspectives on learning in general seem to influence views about teacher learning. Therefore, links between perspectives of learning and perspectives on teacher education need to be highlighted. For this purpose, the three perspectives of teacher education, namely the *rationalistic*, the *social-market* and the *hermeneutic* perspectives, as identified by Elliott (Dahlstrom, 2002:113), need to be analysed.

#### 2.5.1 Rationalistic perspective

Dahlstrom (2002:113, 1995:280) endorses Elliott’s (1993:16) view that the rationalistic perspective regards teachers as intellectuals whose mastery of theory necessarily makes them effective practitioners. This view on teachers is echoed by Schwab (Maynard 1996:106), who posits that the knowledge base of teachers mainly consists of propositional knowledge. According to these views, teacher learning therefore seems to essentially entail mastering disciplinary theory in isolation from real teaching contexts. Similar views are proposed in the context of Sockett’s scholar-professional model (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010:393), Feiman-Nemser’s (Arnon & Reichel, 2007:447) academic orientation to teacher education, as well as Andersson’s (2002:256) academic paradigm and Gover’s (1996) rational-platonic model of teacher education, in which the thrust of
teacher education is to develop rational teachers who have a thorough mastery of the theoretical aspects of teaching.

According to the rationalistic perspective, teacher education follows the traditional campus-based model, with schools playing the peripheral role of hosting student teachers during short periods of practicum. Teacher education is therefore largely located at higher education institutions, where a subject-divided, content-based curriculum is offered, informed by a cognitive perspective of learning.

The rationalistic perspective echoes Tabachnick and Zeichner’s (Dahlstrom, 2002:116) academic approach to teacher education. Like the rationalistic perspective, the academic approach assumes that the mastery of academic subject matter necessarily translates into effective classroom practices and ignores the forms of professional development that student teachers acquire through practical engagement with learners in authentic teaching-learning situations.

Based on the aforementioned, the rationalistic perspective could be seen as running counter to research in teacher education and as being based on a narrow conception of the teacher knowledge base. Schön (1983, 1987) suggests that effective professional practice mainly draws on practical knowledge, not on propositional knowledge. Furthermore, Shulman (1986, 1987) similarly notes that academic content will need to be converted into pedagogical content knowledge for it to be of use to teachers’ professional practices in the classroom.

2.5.2 Social-market perspective

As its name suggests, the social-market perspective approaches teacher education from a quasi-commercial angle by applying the production-consumption logic usually associated with the economic sphere to education (Dahlstrom, 1995:280; Elliott, 1993:16-17). The social-market view echoes the New Right, neo-liberal perspective on education, which advocates for the competencies approach, as articulated by Furlong,
Barton, Miles, Whiting and Whitty (2000:10). In terms of this perspective, the role of teacher education is to impart to teachers a set of clearly defined and pre-specified practical skills necessary for effective job performance. This perspective emphasises streamlining teacher education so that it efficiently focuses on the needs of the social market, that is, the schools. The foregoing seems to tie in with Tabachnick and Zeichner’s (Dahlstrom, 2002:116) behavioural skills-training approach to teacher education, as well as Liston and Zeichner’s (1991:33) social efficiency tradition, which both emphasise producing teachers who can demonstrate certain practical competences that guarantee pre-specified outcomes. The social-market perspective therefore implies that teachers work within a tightly defined framework of norms and standards of practice that are externally imposed and are seen as valid and useful across all teaching contexts.

2.5.3 The Hermeneutic perspective

The perspectives described above seem to regard teachers’ work as based on a model whereby they receive knowledge and skills from an external source. By contrast, the hermeneutic perspective, as proposed by Dahlstrom (2002:114) in agreement with Elliott (1993:17-19), contends that teachers are researchers and reflective practitioners who autonomously and independently decide how to teach on the basis of their understanding and interpretation of a specific teaching-learning situation. As Arnon and Reichel (2007:447) suggest, such a perspective is consistent with the views of Dewey and Schön, advocating for a reflective orientation in teaching.

Unlike the previous perspectives, which separate the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, this perspective locates theory and practice in teacher learning in an integrated conceptual framework in which theoretical analysis and the practical aspects of the teaching course mutually feed into each other (Dahlstrom, 1995:281). In this perspective, teachers are seen as capable of responding to situations with discernment and insight. In the same vein, Gover (Arnon & Reichel, 2007:447) also proposes a
hermeneutic model of teacher education, in which the thrust is to develop teachers capable of intelligently interpreting teaching-learning situations.

Tabachnick and Zeichner (Dahlstrom, 2002:116) also refer to this approach as the heuristic-interactive approach, or the social reconstructionist/transformational approach, implying a participatory and inquiry-oriented approach. The thrust of such an approach is to produce teachers who are capable of reflective and critical engagement with problems in the workplace, as well as proposing well-considered and reasoned solutions to such problems. The transformational approach goes beyond interrogating teaching practices to interrogate broader issues relating to oppressive social structures, with a view to changing them in a way that is consistent with democratic principles. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:2), in agreement with Diamond’s (1991) ‘perspective transformation approach’, as well as Feiman-Nemser’s (1990:225) critical-social orientation, take a similar stance to teacher education, suggesting a critical inquiry orientation, considering teachers as being necessarily implicated in attempts to bring about broader social reforms.

In the hermeneutic perspective and its associated approaches, learning to teach largely takes place in authentic situations, namely the schools, where student teachers are afforded an opportunity to work alongside more experienced and qualified counterparts. Such circumstances create possibilities for school-based mentoring to occur. Thus, the hermeneutic perspective seems to be consistent with the situative learning theory, in terms of which teacher learning is a collective and social enterprise.

More importantly, the hermeneutic perspective, in a way that goes beyond the situative perspective, and consistent with Engestrom’s expansive learning theory, sees learning as the capacity to interrogate the prevailing professional practices and going beyond them. The same view of professional learning is also held by Agryis and Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13), through their concept of double-loop learning, as opposed to single-loop learning. Double-loop learning involves interrogating current professional practices, with a view to attaining increasingly higher levels of
performance. In contrast, single-loop learning involves learning that does not seek to fundamentally transcend the conceptual basis of current professional practices (see also the reflective dimension of teaching).

From the above, it is clear that the hermeneutic perspective and its associated approaches would be appropriate for a study investigating school-based mentoring practices in Zimbabwe. This is particularly so in the context of the search for a proper mentoring model that would produce teachers who can flexibly adapt their teaching practices in order to deal with the unpredictable teaching demands in the 21st century classroom.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Four models of initial teacher education could be distinguished, namely Furlong and Maynard’s Model (1995:73-74), Warford’s Zone of Proximal Teacher Development Model (ZPTD) (2011:252), the Competence-based Model, and the Reflective Practitioner Model. These models will be comprehensively examined in the sections below.

2.6.1 Furlong and Maynard’s Model

Furlong and Maynard (1995:73-74) developed a teacher education model in terms of which student teachers are considered to pass through five stages during the process of learning how to teach. These stages are *early idealism; survival; recognising difficulties; hitting the plateau; and moving on*, each marked by distinctive concerns on the part of student teachers. This model will be examined in depth below.

- *Early idealism*

In this stage of the model, before they begin to teach, student teachers hold rather simplistic and idealistic views about teaching and about themselves as teachers (Furlong & Maynard 1995:73-74; Maynard & Furlong, 1995:12-14). They tend to
narrowly conceptualise teaching in terms of the teachers’ relationships with their learners. As Maynard (2001:44) states, at this stage, student teachers have a clear idea about the kind of teacher they want to be and seek, at all costs, to maintain a warm relationship with their learners, seeing this as a sign of teaching effectiveness (Maynard & Furlong, 1995:12-14). Based on their own experience as learners in schools, student teachers often tend to think that teaching mainly entails indulging and catering for learners’ interests. However, as soon as the student teachers start teaching, the demands of the classroom quickly dissipate such conceptions of teaching. Inevitably, student teachers initially struggle with classroom control as they try to reconcile the contending priorities of ensuring classroom discipline, while at the same time establishing and maintaining good relations with the learners.

- **Survival**

During the survival stage, student teachers have not yet formed a clear idea about what is happening in the classroom (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:73-74). Classroom noise and movement seem to be overwhelmingly complex and seem not to make any sense to them. This situation forces them to ‘learn to see’ what is happening in the classroom, and interpret why it is happening (Pollard, 2005:35-36; Furlong & Maynard, 1995:70). The foregoing view seems to tie in with the emphasis by Dreyfus and Dreyfus’ (2004:251-252) on the mastery of the routines of the job as a first stage in professional learning. Student teachers often initially battle to define their role in the classroom and are uncertain about how to manage the situation, from a procedural point of view.

Under such circumstances, student teachers are initially mainly concerned about surviving the seemingly chaotic and potentially overwhelming classroom situation, so that ‘fitting in’ and establishing themselves in the classroom become major priorities (Maynard, 2001:40). Earlier, Lave and Wenger (1991:36) also referred to the concept of legitimate peripheral participation in which the newcomers to a community of practice seeks to be accepted into the new discourse community. Student teachers therefore desperately try to find quick-fix solutions to management problems in their classrooms.
when realising that they need to assert their authority and bring some order and discipline into the classroom.

- **Recognising difficulties**

The challenges and confusion associated with failure to interpret classroom activities fortunately tend to be mostly short-lived (Pollard, 2005:34; Furlong & Maynard, 1995:82) as student teachers begin to discern and identify the difficulties they are facing. However, as the student teachers become aware of the demands and challenges of the task awaiting them, a sense of pressure also increases. In this regard, Scholars such as Swabey, Castleton and Penney (2010:33) and Conway and Clark (2003:476) share the view that class management constitutes a major challenge for most student teachers during their early phases of learning to teach. This is particularly so given the fact that the student teachers do not yet have the required set of skills, knowledge and experience to meet these management and disciplinary demands. In the face of this pressure and the concomitant lack of skills to meet the demands of the work, it is little wonder that student teachers copy the teaching behaviour of the established teachers in the classroom and school (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:82, 87), whether good or bad. However, this mimicry occurs at a very superficial level, since the student teachers merely replicate the teaching practices of other teachers, without understanding the full background, the rationale or the implications of doing so.

- **Hitting the plateau**

Having faced immense pressure since entering the classroom for the first time, it is quite understandable that once student teachers find practical ways of dealing with the demands of the classroom, they become more comfortable and at ease (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:89). Fuller and Bown (Maynard, 2001:39) identify a similar stage in the professional development of student teachers, during which student teachers are primarily preoccupied with mastering the routines of teaching. In this regard, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004:251-252) highlight the importance of student teachers grasping the routines of professional tasks. The repertoire of blueprints for dealing with classroom life mimicked from other teachers may be seen as the unquestionable way of dealing with
the problems occurring in the classroom. At this stage, student teachers' decisions tend to lack any conceptual and rational basis, taken and implemented without any reflection and insight. In other words, the student teachers may act like teachers, but are not yet thinking like teachers; they still need to learn to reflectively draw upon a body of professional knowledge when making decisions in and on the teaching situation. This implies that if student teachers stagnate at the stage in which they make teaching decisions without drawing on any professional knowledge base, they could become too content to think beyond the situation or to become more creative in their dealing with challenges in the classroom. Agyris and Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13) term this type of learning as single loop learning. In such learning, student teachers do not question or seek to change the fundamental assumptions and values that underlie their teaching practices. When this happens, student teachers are said to have hit a plateau, implying that they have stagnated in terms of professional development.

**Moving on**

For student teachers to attain full professional status, they need to be able to critically interact with their own and other teachers' professional practices in ways that seek to fundamentally change the conceptual basis of negative practices. This suggests that student teachers need to move beyond rituals and thoughtlessly using their current repertoire of teaching practices; rather, they must begin to question their practices in a way that accommodates the possibility of fundamental alteration in the conceptual basis of teaching practices. Agyris and Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13) refer to the form of learning that changes the values and assumptions that underpin current practices, as double-loop learning. Furlong and Maynard (1995:73-96), as well as several other scholars, such as Hammerness *et al.* (2005:374-5), share the view that student teachers need to be challenged to move on from ritualistic teaching practices to become reflective practitioners who critically interrogate their own practices, thereby creating room for improvement. Such a thrust in teacher education is also echoed in Mezirow's (2000:7) view of learning as involving the transformation of one's taken-for-granted assumptions.
Furlong and Maynard’s Model (1995:73-96) usefully delineates the typical stages student teachers pass through as they learn to teach, as this potentially informs possible intervention measures to facilitate their learning as the stages indicate the sort of assistance student teachers may need at different stages of their learning how to teach. The model crucially notes that fully-fledged teachers need to continually be able to critically and reflectively engage with their own teaching practices in the search for progressively higher levels of performance. However, Furlong and Maynard’s Model (1995:73-96) seems somewhat general, neglecting to address more substantive issues in teacher education. Such issues include the location of teacher education; what teachers need to know; and the sequencing of components of the teacher education curriculum. This diminishes its utility value for those who seek practical advice in relation to planning a teacher education programme. These listed issues will be addressed during the discussion of other models in the sub-sections below.

2.6.2 Zone of Proximal Teacher Development (ZPTD) Model

The Zone of Proximal Teacher Development (ZPTD) Model is based on the situative perspective of teacher education, specifically drawing on the views of Vygotsky. In fact, as Warford (2011:252) notes, this model represents an attempt to rework the Vygotskyan notion of Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) into a model for teacher education. According to Warford, the Zone of Proximal Development “… measures the distance between what a learner is able to do and a proximal level that they may attain through the guidance of the expert-other’. The concept of ZPD suggests that learning proceeds from being assisted to progressively less assisted mastery. The Zone of Proximal Teacher Development, as discussed by several scholars (Warford, 2011:253; Chaiklin, 2003:41; McCaslin & Hickey, 2001:236; Wood & Wood, 1996:5; Vygotsky, 1978:86) comprises the gap between what student teachers can accomplish on their own and the possible level of performance they can attain if assisted by more competent practitioners. This model sees the process of learning to teach as occurring within the Zones of Proximal Teacher Development. In this regard, this Model sees
teacher development as primarily proceeding through stages of progressively less assistance provided by expert-others within the zone of the student teachers’ proximal development.

The ZPTD Model traces the development of professional knowledge from the inter-psychological plane, located in the socio-cultural sphere, to the intra-psychological plane, located within the mind of the student teacher (Lee, 2005:252) and implies that teaching concepts cannot be taught directly to students. This Model argues that concept formation is necessarily mediated; suggesting that student teachers acquire teaching concepts through appropriating the meaning of these in schools. The ZPTD therefore seeks to bridge the traditionally nagging schism between the various aspects of the teacher training curriculum. These aspects include student teachers’ tacit beliefs about teaching, based on their experiences when they were learners themselves, the pedagogical content of the teacher education programme, and the observations of teaching and learning in the field. In this Model, learning how to teach essentially entails facilitating student teachers in weaving the different aspects into one coherent narrative of teaching through strategically timed assistance within the student teachers’ zone of proximal development.

The ZPTD Model sees teacher development as occurring in the following four stages:

- **Initial stages of the ZPTD: Self-assistance and teacher assistance (Stages 1 and 2)**

Training begins with attempts to establish the student teachers’ tacit beliefs about teaching, based on what Lortie (Warford, 2011:253) calls *apprenticeships of observation*. This is intended to calibrate candidates’ pedagogical dispositions in order to develop a body of information on which to base decisions on the kind of support student teachers may need in the future. If these initial pedagogical schemas are not acknowledged and addressed, they could pose a serious barrier to learning, a point echoed by Donche and Petegem (2011:208). The potential of the beliefs to impede learning necessitates a change of approach in terms of which the ZPTD is reversed, beginning with self-assistance instead of teacher assistance.
During the first stage, the aim is to subject the tacit beliefs to gentle and gradual scrutiny, while weaving in some new approaches into the student teachers’ personal narratives. This takes place in the context of dialogic encounters between the student teachers and the expert teachers. Relatedly, Bloomfield (2006:10) recommends the creation of ‘spaces for safe play’ in which student teachers can be freely and openly helped to disclose and interrogate their beliefs. The student teachers should take the foreground; this is not the place or time for modelling practice or engaging in direct teaching. Rather, the teacher educators should use prompts to encourage the student teachers to reflect on their tacit beliefs. In the same regard, Hammerness et al. (2005:359), Zeichner (2005:122) and Cochran-Smith (2003:9) seem to agree that for professionals (student teachers and teacher educators) to learn effectively, they need to think about teaching in a way that interrogates and challenges their long-held beliefs about teaching. Regarding this, Warford (2011:253) emphasises that such prompts should try to map onto the concepts and constructs that the student teachers are likely to be exposed to in the curriculum.

To establish a bridge between student teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning and the teacher education programme, Van Lier (Warford, 2011:254) proposes a technique called prolepsis. Describing the role of this technique in teacher education, Warford (2011:254) claims that it involves a situation in which teacher educators acknowledge and validate candidates’ prior experience of teaching and learning, while employing the future tense in hinting and discussing new lenses through which they can consider the same phenomenon’. This enables teacher educators to orchestrate a seamless transition from student teachers’ beliefs and the new concepts that have to be learnt, thus establishing a bridge onto the next stage in which teacher educators assume a more directive role.

**In the second stage**, teacher educators introduce the scientific language of academic discourse to student teachers. However, such discourses must be grounded in the experiential concepts from the student teachers’ beliefs about teaching, as well as an exploration of classroom realities. Typical exercises in this stage include video-taping
the student teachers, as well as demonstrating innovative classroom practices in the actual classrooms.

This reduces a sense of separation between the academy-based and classroom-based aspects of the teacher education course. Analysis of teaching episodes could help candidates recognise illustrations of various pedagogical constructs.

Warford (2011:255) points out that, in this second stage, assessment plays a key role in providing teacher educators with an informational base of the kinds of mediation that will be required to promote concept maturation among student teachers in relation to programme values and content. For this, two forms of dynamic assessment are recommended, namely interventionist and interactionist dynamic assessment. Interventionist assessment makes use of more formal tools, such as pre- and post-testing, role-taking, journaling and autobiographical narratives, and graphic organisers, while interactionist dynamic assessment mainly takes the form of teacher educator-student teacher dialogues, asking leading questions following the simulation of classroom situations. The aim is to figure out how the student teachers’ concept maturation is proceeding.

- **Advanced stages of the ZPTD: Internalisation and recurrence (Stages 3 and 4)**

In Stage three, student teachers repeatedly try to apply concepts learned in the previous stages and are given an opportunity to try out skills and pedagogical knowledge in practical situations. Video-taped microteaching is popular in this stage. Student teachers are also encouraged to capture their reflections on their teaching experiences in a personal journal. Importantly, before student teachers are released on practicum, the teacher educators should require from them a formal written statement on their beliefs about teaching. Such an exercise will help teacher educators establish the extent to which student teachers have managed to merge beliefs and assumptions and critiques on contemporary teaching practices with the scientific language of relevant literature into a coherent personal narrative about teaching and learning. This will force student teachers to undertake some soul-searching on their personal values and ideas.
The last stage of the ZPTD; the **recurrence (Stage four)** entails sending the student teachers out to schools to undertake the teaching practicum to bring the programme of course work and the practical situation closer together. Discrepancies between the two aspects will trigger cognitive dissonance, triggering reflection as a catalyst for professional development (Warford, 2011:256).

### 2.6.3 Competence-based Model

Ideas underpinning the Competence-based Model of teacher education can be traced back to the work of Flanders in the 1970s. These ideas gathered momentum in 1983, following the publication of a British policy document entitled *White Paper: Teaching Quality* (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:27). This set the stage for viewing teaching as a series of competences, as further developed through a series of subsequent policy papers in England, particularly the Circulars of 1992 and 1993a of the Department of Education (Moore, 2004: 78,80; Furlong & Maynard, 1995:27).

The Competence-based Model is informed by a technical-rationalist interpretation of teaching, infused with a modicum of utilitarianism. The driving premise of such a view is that principles that scientific research have demonstrated to be always associated with high learner achievement should be used as the conceptual basis for classroom teaching. Also, theorists contend that only this set of principles must be used, because it is demonstrably useful, given its ameliorating effect on learner achievement.

The above approach, similar to the one espoused by Flanders, differs from what is prevailing in contemporary times. In contrast to basing teaching on scientifically decidable principles, the current interpretation seems to prioritise competences derived from job analysis. In terms of the contemporary view, the requirements of the teaching job must form the point of departure for selecting the set of competences needed to teach well.
However, there are various interpretations in relation to the substantive aspects of this model. The crux of contention relates mainly to the conceptualisation of the competences (Moore, 2004:75). In this regard, two major strands of the competence-based model can be distinguished, namely the performance model (in terms of which competence is narrowly regarded as performance) and the cognitive model (in terms of which competence is broadly conceptualised as encompassing ‘intellectual, cognitive and attitudinal dimensions’). For clarity, these two competence-based models will be discussed below.

**Performance Model of Competence**

The Performance Model of Competence is based on an atomistic view of teaching, suggesting that the teacher’s role can be taken apart into a series of units (Pitfield & Morrison, 2009:21; Turner-Biset, 2001:3). This view of competencies was dominant in the 1960s and 1970s and was then informed by the Behaviourist model of education and training (Struyven & Meyst, 2010:1496; Beck, 2009:6; Johnston, 2007: 352). Each of the units is seen as sub-divisible into its constituent elements. In turn, each of the elements is defined in terms of its own performance criteria. The performance criteria relate to what exactly student teachers are expected to do to demonstrate competence in specific aspects of the teaching role (Beck, 2009:6). Similarly, Moore (2004:76) notes that in teacher education, competencies are the skills that student teachers are supposed to acquire and demonstrate during assessment.

However, Jessup (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:29) and others see the Performance Model as flawed, on the following counts. Firstly, Jessup expresses skepticism about the possibility of defining professional tasks in purely behaviourist terms. As Moore (2004:82-83), in agreement with Furlong and Maynard (1995:31), observes, defining the teaching role in terms of a finite set of competences assumes that all teaching situations are similar and predictable; yet teaching may develop in unanticipated directions, depending on the context and the nature of the learners being taught. This
makes it difficult to understand how a static set of competences could help teachers adequately deal with complex and unanticipated situations. To do so, seems to require analytical and strategic judgment abilities, rather than merely a static set of behavioural competences.

Also, seeing teaching exclusively in terms of performance seems to be a somewhat misleading and reductionist view, ignoring other dimensions of teaching, as mentioned above. As Furlong and Maynard (1995:29) point out, competence at a professional level takes more than the execution of a pre-specified set of skills. Research has demonstrated that teaching, like all other professions, does not involve only the performance of certain skills, but also deep pedagogical reasoning, drawing on a broad knowledge base (Pantic & Wubbels, 2010:695; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999:250; Shulman, 1986, 1987). In other words, a narrow performance-based interpretation of competences as mere technical skills, ignores any creative dimensions and does not do justice to the professional acts of teaching.

Further arguing for the complex nature of teaching, Walker (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:31) notes that beyond the execution of practical skills, teaching involves many other, deeper forms of non-practical skills, such as cognitive, interpersonal and motivational abilities. This suggests that teaching involves intellectual-affective and socio-ethical dimensions, as much as practical aspects. On the basis of the foregoing argument, the Performance Model can be seen as failing to recognise the deeper and complex nature of teaching. Pantic and Wubbels (2010:696) similarly assert that teaching situations are not amenable to the straightforward application of knowledge.

However, the performance perspective of competence could be considered viable. It can be reasonably argued that by focusing on what the newly qualified teachers should be able to do, the performance perspective seems to provide a clearly defined role for schools and for those in higher education (Moore, 2004:76). This also makes the quality of training programmes easier to establish, as the criteria of success are clearly defined.
Based on the concerns raised about defining competence in terms of performance, as in the above model, the cognitive view of competence seems to provide a refreshing take on the issue. The Cognitive Model of competence will be discussed in the following section.

**Cognitive Model of Competence**

Furlong and Maynard (1995:33) note that the Cognitive Model of Competence was developed outside the field of teacher education. In this model, competence is broadly seen as encompassing a more extended and broader set of skills and abilities. Competence is defined in terms of the student teachers’ ability to derive meaning from their classroom experiences, on the basis of knowledge and understanding. This suggests that teachers who do not have knowledge and understanding may not be able to accurately interpret their experiences in a meaningful way. As a result, they may find it difficult to respond appropriately to the situations they encounter in schools. In this context, Furlong and Maynard (1995:33) note that student teachers interpret their professional experiences through their cognitive structures, highlighting the significant role a well-developed teacher knowledge base plays in teaching.

It has become clear that teaching does not merely involve performance, but also a great deal of thinking about the activity undertaken. Student teachers, therefore, do not merely take in theoretical knowledge, but also evaluate the relevance of that knowledge to the specific contexts in which they may be working. Teaching therefore involves making judgments and commitments in relation to certain courses of action seen as potentially more worthwhile or useful than others in relation to learners’ learning, implying that teachers engage in some reflection.

The Cognitive Model of Competence also sees knowledge, understanding, judgment and skills as difficult to separate. This is so because these aspects are exercised in an
integrated way in any teaching-learning situation, never in isolation from one another. This is why this model does not define competence in terms of a discrete and isolated set of skills, but rather in terms of broad and generic competences.

As noted above, the Cognitive Model of Competence recognises that teaching is not merely skills-based, but also involves much thinking about the relevance of a given practical skill in specific work contexts. However, in recent times, some researchers have sought to go beyond this view, suggesting that teachers can transcend the given set of standards in search of what is potentially useful from the point of what is useful for the learning of their learners. This is the fundamental premise of the reflective practitioner model, which will be explored below.

2.6.4 Reflective Practitioner Model

In terms of a view that gained popularity in the 1980s and early 1990s, teacher professionalism was defined in terms of capacity to reflect on professional practices (Moore, 2004:121). However, as Calderhead (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:38) points out, the concept of reflection seems to lack clarity, leading to various interpretations.

Despite this lack of a commonly agreed view of reflection on professional practice, McIntyre (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:37) notes that the notion of reflection in teacher education mainly relates to the role of theory in teacher education. There are two streams of thought relating to the form of theory in teacher education, namely theory as propositional knowledge, and theory as process. Theory as process is equated with reflection.

Golombek and Johnson (Warford, 2011:256) define reflection as ‘the ability to make one’s own behaviour an object of study, to manage it via the ability to regard oneself as the ideal other’. Previously, Korthagen in Nilsson and Van Driel (2010:1310) similarly described reflection as involving the ability to critically engage and possibly modify one’s
practices. Reflection therefore implies a continuing quest to do things in increasingly better ways through exploring a wide range of solutions to problems.

A closely related term often used in conjunction with the term reflection in teacher education is reflective practice. Defining reflective practice, Reiman (Warford, 2011:256) states that it is ‘a process of problem-solving, reconstruction of meaning and subsequent reflective judgments while persons are engaged in significant new activity’. Reflective practice, in this view, involves the use of reflection to solve problems in one’s practices. This interpretation is also borne out by Samuel (2005) and Furlong, McNamara, Campbell, Howson and Lewis (2008:333), who see reflective practitioners as defined by their capacity to exercise judgement at classroom level on issues such as adjusting the curriculum and teaching methods to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Of the many interpretations of reflection, those of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983, 1987) seem to stand out as the most conceptually illuminating and will therefore be examined in more depth in the sub-sections below.

**Dewey’s notion of reflection**

According to Furlong and Maynard (1995:40), Dewey (1933) identified two dimensions of reflection, namely cognitive abilities, which make one capable of engaging in reflective thought, and personality aspects. Cognitive abilities that enable one to engage in reflection include capacities for keen observation, reasoning and analysis, while the personal dimension encompasses dispositions such as open-mindedness and taking responsibility. Dewey points out that the personality dimension can either hinder or encourage an individual to reflect (Beyer, 2002). For instance, a person who is close-minded will tend to refrain from considering alternative ways of teaching, while someone who is open-minded will be more inclined to embrace alternative ways of doing things.

In agreement with Dewey’s notion that personality impacts on reflective thinking, LaBoskey (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:40) distinguishes two personality types among
student teachers: alert novices and common-sense thinkers. The former describes those student teachers who are always eager to learn, seeking higher levels of knowledge and skills in their job. In contrast, the latter refers to those who, in spite of having the cognitive abilities for critical thinking, cannot – because of negative intellectual values and attitudes – engage in reflection.

Dewey distinguishes two forms of action, namely routine action and reflective action. Routine action is when people conduct their lives in a ritualistic, shallowly technical and thoughtless manner. In contrast, reflective action involves critical engagement with the values and conceptual basis of an action. For action to be transformed from routine to reflective action, there must be a problem that demands a solution.

In teacher education, the two modes of action can also be seen as constituting two levels of professional work, with routine action representing a level at which student teachers work on the basis of the prevailing teaching cultures at the schools, without seeking to question the teaching practices prevalent at those schools. At this level, the student teachers take the values and principles that underlie the teaching culture for granted. This could happen even though the learners may call for a fundamental alteration in the conceptual basis of the teaching approach used. Such a shift cannot be made at the level of routine action, because the student teachers are not prepared to question the values and assumptions that underpin the prevailing teaching cultures. In terms of Furlong and Maynard’s (1995) model, such teachers are considered to be ‘on a plateau’, where they may remain stuck if they are not challenged to ‘move on’ by interrogating their current teaching practices.

In contrast, reflective action suggests that professionals take a flexible and critical stance towards their practices and the values and assumptions on which these are based. In this mode of activity, the professionals do not merely conform to external standards of teaching, but the teachers proactively and critically relate standards to their teaching practices, with the intention to adjust these, should the needs of the learners demand.
In the Deweyan view, the routine and reflective levels of activity also imply a differential quality of teaching. As Zeichner and Liston (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:43) assert, reflective teaching can be seen as resulting in a better quality of teaching, because reflective teachers consistently seek to adjust personal teaching practices and their conceptual basis to suit the needs of the learners. In contrast, teachers who operate at the routine level are reluctant to change their teaching practices, even if the learning needs of their learners so demand. Teaching at routine level tends to be ritualistic and less responsive to the needs of the students, thereby diminishing its effectiveness and quality.

**Schön’s views on reflection and professional learning**

Another useful view of reflection and its place in professional learning was developed by Schön (1983, 1987). Like Dewey, Schön relates the concept of reflection to different levels of professional activity. Schön sees student teachers as passing through three levels of activity and thinking during training. In this view, reflective thinking occurs in different degrees at the different levels of professional work. At the most basic and lowest level of professional operation, student teachers operate mainly as technicians, unthinkingly drawing upon the repertoire of their accumulated experiences and skills as a basis for professional action. Such a repertoire of experiences, which Schön terms *practical knowledge* or *knowing-in-action*, represents the sum total of the techniques, strategies and ideas that teachers have used to deal successfully with different groups of learners and classroom challenges over the years. Schön (1987:25) describes knowing-in-action as the sort of knowledge revealed by our ‘spontaneous and skilful execution of performance not made verbally explicit’. This repertoire of experiences is mainly tacit and unarticulated, because they are routinely used and therefore become internalised.

When faced with a challenging situation, student teachers somewhat intuitively select from the repertoire a unique set of understandings and techniques with which to
interpret and frame the problem at hand before acting on it. However, sometimes when there is no match between the set of ideas and the classroom problem, the framing process fails. The application of aspects of practical knowledge therefore often occurs on an experimental basis.

The failure of the frame to correctly interpret and deal with the problem at hand forces the student teachers to try a new frame and deal with the problem in new ways. At this point, the student teachers critically engage in both problem analysis and frame seeking to adjust in a way that is likely to bring about a solution. Schön (1987:28) refers to this form of reflection as reflection-in-action. Unlike the first type of reflection, this level of professional activity is fully conscious. Schön observes that reflection-in-action occurs when student teachers critically engage with aspects of their work so as to modify them in the context of on-going professional work, with the student teachers consciously drawing on their repertoire of experiences, creatively shuffling techniques and understandings to come up with new solutions.

The third and highest level of professional activity is where student teachers open-mindedly, critically and retrospectively examine their professional practices. This level represents an attempt to articulate and critically engage tacit practical knowledge and justify its deployment to solving specific problems. Such reflection on action can be an internal and individual mental process, or a collaborative activity. This form of reflection is generally referred to as reflection-on-action and takes place after the action has been completed.

The three levels of professional activity and thinking discussed above can be seen as an integral part of professional development. Student teachers should be assisted to moving from operating at the level of knowing-in-action, through reflection-in-action, to reflection-on-action for them to become fully-fledged professionals as they progressively gain more control in their classroom practices. This suggests that true professional learning for student teachers can best take place in schools, where they can co-reflect on their teaching practices together with more experienced teachers. Schön’s work
could therefore be seen as suggesting that mentors play a critical role in initial teacher education. Experienced teachers have amassed a repertoire of practical knowledge, which student teachers must access and appropriate in their own professional development.

For more clarity on the above issues, a general teacher education curriculum will be discussed in the following section.

2.7 THE TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

It is generally agreed that any teacher education curriculum should, even at the most general level, include two major aspects, namely theory and practice. However, what seems to be in contention is the form that such theory and practice should take, as well as the relative emphasis laid on each component. These issues raise the question of the structure of the teacher education curriculum.

2.7.1 The structure of teacher education curriculum

- Furlong and colleagues’ views on structure of teacher education curriculum

Although there are various views on the issue of the structure of any teacher education curriculum, the model proposed by Furlong, Hirst, Pocklington and Miles (Maynard & Furlong, 1995:10-11) seems to capture scholarly consensus. Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1995:10-11) have conceptualised the structure of a teacher education curriculum in terms of four levels, with no hierarchical or temporal relationship. The first level involves direct practice in schools and classrooms. At this level, student teachers work with experienced teachers in schools and classrooms to acquire ‘craft’ knowledge of teaching (Jones & Straker, 2006:167). Craft knowledge or knowledge of practical skills refers to the largely tacit repertoire of strategies, images and ideas that experienced teachers have accumulated over the years and on which they base their day-to-day decision-making in the classroom (Gholami & Husu, 2010:1520). Tang and Choi (2005:388) highlight the importance of structured practical work in pre-service
teacher education, arguing that it facilitates the development of the prospective teachers' practical understanding, skills and judgement in real work situations. Scholars such as Reid (2011:301) and Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2004:251) seem to concur with Furlong and colleagues that it is critically important for student teachers to master and take for granted the basic moves and routines of teaching in the early phases of their learning to teach. By appreciating the importance of the practicum in teacher learning, Furlong and colleagues seem to agree with Schön's seminal view that 'craft' knowledge cannot be acquired outside the authentic contexts in which mentors work with student teachers.

The second level of the model proposed by Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:70) involves student teachers learning through what they call 'indirect practice', in terms of which student teachers broaden their repertoire beyond the one school only; yet, the limitations of time may not allow them to do so. To overcome this obstacle, Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:70) suggest that student teachers can also learn through vicarious contact with teaching-learning situations elsewhere. This can be done through reflecting on literature books, video’s, visits and talks that capture teaching-learning situations elsewhere.

The next level of training, as proposed by Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:70), involves student teachers seeking to grasp the established principles of teaching through learning disciplinary theory. However, these principles are presented in the context of the student teachers' personal reflections about teaching. The thrust is to enable the students to test their beliefs against the established principles of teaching. Describing the above, Tang and Choi (2005:386) note that it includes critically relating one’s practices and principles to theory and research. However, as Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:70) intimate, student teachers must be made to understand that the established principles are not immune to critical scrutiny.

The last level in this model involves an attempt to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum. This can be accomplished through encouraging student teachers to critically interrogate practice and its principles in the light of insights derived from disciplinary theory. The aim here is to ensure that the relevance and usefulness of
a set of practical principles is continually tested against findings in the latest research on teaching.

This model is useful in that it provides a broad indication of the prototypical structure of a generic teacher education programme. However, its utility value at a practical level seems to be limited, as it does not clearly address the substantive issues that are likely to be raised in any debate on a teacher education curriculum. Such issues include the sequencing and the differential emphasis given to different aspects of the curriculum, the location of the teacher education programme, as well as the distribution of specific responsibilities among different players.

Also, the model implicitly takes academic knowledge as the most important aspect of a teacher education curriculum. This is evidenced by the fact that all aspects, except the disciplinary theory, are subjected to questioning, implying that this component forms the foundation of the teacher education curriculum. However, research in teacher education suggests that this aspect must also be questioned and interrogated in the context of experiences in teaching-learning situations. This raises the question of what form content can take in teacher education.

Cheng et al. (2010:93) and Reddy (2009:1161) generally concur with the views of Furlong et al. (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:70) expressed above, contending that the teacher education curriculum comprises the following components: general education, subject matter studies, foundations of education studies, method studies as well as field experience.

2.7.2 Content of teacher education curriculum

Theory in teacher education has been understood in two senses, *theory as propositional knowledge* and *theory as process* (Furlong & Maynard, 1995:37-38). Theory as propositional knowledge refers to theory understood as a body of facts and concepts and can be equated with content knowledge. Theory as process does not so much focus on the content as theorising on teaching practices and could therefore be equated with reflection.
There are various perspectives on theory understood as propositional knowledge in teacher education. However, the most influential views are those of the following scholars: Shulman (1987), Schwab (Maynard, 1996:106), and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999). These different views will be discussed in more detail below.

- Schwab’s (1978) views on teacher knowledge base

Schwab’s work (Maynard, 1996:106) represents the earliest attempt to engage the question of what a teacher knowledge base should consist of. Good teaching is considered as largely based on the mastery of subject knowledge, with content knowledge consisting of two dimensions, namely substantive knowledge and syntactic knowledge. Following Schwab, Maynard (1996:106) and Rowland and Turner (2008:92) consider substantive knowledge to represent knowledge of a subject relating to how the subject area is structured and organised. In specific terms, this implies knowing the facts, concepts and procedures that make up the subject area, as well as the relationships between them. Schwab’s views are echoed by Elliott’s (1993:116) rationalistic perspective, in terms of which the main thrust of teacher education programmes is to develop teachers who have thorough mastery of disciplinary theory.

However, substantive knowledge on its own is not sufficient to make one an effective teacher. There is a need for teachers to also have knowledge about a subject area. Schwab (Maynard, 1996:106) alternatively refers to this sub-category of content knowledge as syntactic knowledge. This form of knowledge is concerned with knowing the ways in which a particular body of knowledge is generated and evaluated. In other words, syntactic knowledge relates to having an appreciation of the body of knowledge’s generative and validation procedures.

Schwab (Maynard 1996:106) also draws an unprecedented distinction between the categories of subject content knowledge, indicating clearly the nature of such knowledge in a way that can be readily used to guide a teacher education programme at a practical level. However, the utility value of Schwab’s contribution is considerably diminished by some theoretical blind spots. Firstly, Schwab neglects to explain how the mastery of the two forms of knowledge may lead to effective teaching. Secondly, there
is no explicit indication of how and under what circumstances these forms of knowledge are acquired. Furthermore, Schwab’s separation of the two dimensions of content knowledge seems not to reflect what happens at the level of practice, since it is difficult to learn the two aspects in isolation from each other.

In addition, Schwab tends to see teacher learning from a narrowly academic point of view, in which learning how to teach is seen as essentially an intellectual endeavour, ignoring the widely recognised practical side of learning how to teach. This narrow view seems oblivious to more recent insights into professional learning, such as Schön (1983, 1987) and Shulman’s (1987) views, which suggest that learning how to teaching involves a dynamic interplay between the theoretical and practical components of the teacher education curriculum. Furthermore, the teachers do not generate and own the disciplinary knowledge, since it is mainly acquired at higher education institutions, handed to them in a top-down manner. This implies that such knowledge cannot form part of their professional identity. This arguably makes it (knowledge) practically irrelevant to their professional decision-making. Luna, Botelho, Fontaine, French, Iverson and Matos (2004:69) similarly bemoan discourses in teacher education that see teachers as passive recipients of other experts’ knowledge. To give teachers control and a sense of ownership of professional knowledge, Cochran-Smith (2003:8) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999:289) propose an approach known as inquiry-as-stance, in terms of which teachers engage in collaborative research in their work contexts to produce local knowledge, which has strong anchorage in practical teaching situations.

- **Shulman’s (1987) views on teacher knowledge base**

Shulman’s views attempt to make up for some fundamental flaws in Schwab’s model by linking propositional knowledge with what happens at the practical level in schools. Building on the work of Shulman (1987), Ball, Thames and Phelps (2008:391) identify seven content related domains of teacher knowledge, namely general pedagogical knowledge; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts; knowledge of educational trends, purposes and values and their philosophical
and historical grounds; content knowledge; curriculum knowledge; and pedagogical knowledge.

Ball et al. (2008:39) place the seven domains of teacher knowledge into four categories, with the first four being lumped together in a general category and each of the remaining three representing a category on its own. General pedagogical knowledge is concerned with the broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation. Another related aspect of knowledge in this group is knowledge of learners and their characteristics. This enables student teachers to better handle and appropriately respond to learners’ needs. Additionally, student teachers should have knowledge of educational contexts to understand the general issues that affect teachers’ work in the classroom. Such issues include classroom management, governance and financing of schools, and communities and their cultures. A further aspect of the first broad category relates to teachers’ familiarity with broad educational trends, purposes and values. In this connection, teachers must be able to relate the trends, purposes and values to their own philosophical and historical underpinnings.

The second category of curriculum knowledge encompasses knowledge about the materials and programme design for teaching specific subjects (Shulman, 1987:9). Also, under this category, student teachers must be able to judge when certain curriculum materials and programmes are likely to work for specific groups of learners (Ball et al., 2008:39). Content knowledge constitutes the third category of teacher knowledge. Drawing on Schwab’s distinction of two sub-categories of subject matter knowledge, Shulman sees this domain as involving knowledge of the subject, its organising structure, as well as the criteria of establishing parameters of knowledge claims in a field (Ball et al., 2008:39).

The fourth domain, and perhaps Shulman’s most important contribution to the concept of a teacher knowledge base, is pedagogical content knowledge. Describing this domain of teacher knowledge, Wiegand and Stiell (1997:186) state that pedagogical knowledge refers to modes of presenting knowledge that make it easy to be understood by others. According to Shulman (1986:9), pedagogical content knowledge comprises
representations of knowledge in the form of analogies, illustrations, examples and demonstrations intended to enable learners to understand the subject matter more easily. Pedagogical knowledge therefore forms a bridge between content knowledge, the context in which the content is taught, and teachers’ beliefs and values about teaching and learning. This follows from Shulman’s view that pedagogical knowledge cannot be acquired through the transmission model of learning outside practical teaching contexts, a point also raised by Danaher, Gale and Erben (2000:58-59). This again emphasises that school-based practicum is a critical component of any teacher education curriculum.

Unlike Schwab, Shulman, through the concept of pedagogical knowledge, has attempted to address the question of the relationship between content knowledge and what happens in schools, shedding some light on how the perennial dilemma of the gap between propositional knowledge and practice in teacher education can be addressed. Shulman’s pedagogical knowledge can be acquired by teachers only in the context of efforts to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of a teacher education curriculum.

Both views of teacher knowledge seem to conceptualise teacher knowledge largely from the ‘theory as propositional knowledge’ perspective. This suggests a separation between theory and the practical aspects of the teacher education curriculum. However, some efforts have also been made to develop models of teacher knowledge from a ‘theory as process’ perspective. Such a stance potentially seems to allow the bridging of the traditional gap between theory and practice in teacher education. Supportive of such a stance are Schön (1987) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999). Their views will be considered in the sub-sections below.

- Schön’s view on teacher professional knowledge

As early as 1983, Schön stated that teachers had a unique and special kind of knowledge, called craft or practical knowledge or knowing-in-action. In this regard, Gholami and Husu (2010:1520) contend that practical knowledge refers to the beliefs, insights, practical skills and habits that teachers have that enable them to do their work
in the classroom. Van Manen (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005:291) similarly notes that practical knowledge straddles the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains. In other words, practical knowledge combines the rules and principles that guide teachers’ work in every-day classroom situations.

Practical knowledge is largely tacit and latently underlies professional practice. Teachers do not consciously refer to practical knowledge; rather, they work spontaneously in a way that demonstrates that some underlying and intelligent judgement and decision-making is at play, despite not being able to articulate the rationale for acting in certain ways. That is why practical knowledge is seen as not existing in a propositional form, but as implicit in patterns of professional actions.

Professionals build up a store of practical knowledge through the experience of working in specific contexts. Practical knowledge evolves through reflection-in-action over the years, as professionals set up a store of beliefs and values about what works and what does not work at a practical level. This suggests that the utility value and validity of practical knowledge is context and time-bound. From this, one may contend that practical knowledge cannot be acquired outside of the authentic work situation. This is not confined to this study alone, as developments on the international scene have also demonstrated a shift from higher education institutions to schools as primary locations for teacher education.

2.8 SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

The concern about the separation of theory and practice in teacher education, as repeatedly noted in sub-section 2.7.2, reinforces a strong case for a school-based model of teacher education made in the literature. However, in some countries, proposals for school-based teacher education emerged from politically-driven discourses and concerns about the declining quality of teacher and school education (Carney, 2003:415). A case in point is England, where the shift towards school-based teacher education was largely driven by the New Right political philosophy during the
The school-based model entails the sharing of responsibility for teacher education between schools and higher educational institutions (HEIs), with the schools being given a significantly increased responsibility for teacher education (Moran, Abbott & Clarke, 2009:951; Hurd, Jones, McNamara & Craig, 2007:308; Carney, 2003:414). This seems to represent a radical break with traditional models, in which the HEIs carried sole responsibility for planning and delivering teacher education, while schools played the peripheral role of hosting short periods of the practicum only. In the school-based model, the courses run by HEIs are supposed to be planned and delivered in collaboration with schools (Carney, 2003:414). For example, in England, HEIs are under a statutory obligation to genuinely involve schools in teacher education partnerships (Furlong et al., 2008:309; Furlong, 1996:41).

At a practical level, school-based teacher education results in student teachers spending most of their training in schools, learning to teach in authentic and on-going natural work situations (Carney, 2003:414). This suggests an increase in the relative significance of the practicum as an aspect of teacher education curricula, as demonstrated by the increased length of the practicum. For example, in England, the practicum now occupies 66% of the training period (Pitfield & Morrison, 2009:21; Furlong et al., 2008:308; Hurd et al., 2007:308).

Furthermore, the advent of school-based teacher education has created a new mentoring role for teachers who supervise the professional development of student teachers (Jones & Straker, 2006:166; Butcher, 2000:98). Scholars generally share the view that mentoring significantly differs from merely modeling. It is seen as an extension of and going beyond the traditional job description of the experienced teacher. Several countries have introduced formal training for mentors and incentives for taking on the extra job responsibility. For instance, in England, mentor training is state funded, while in the United States, incentives for the lead teachers at Professional Development Schools are achieved through differential remuneration.
Some countries in Western Europe have already embraced, with some degree of success, the school practicum-model of teacher education; such as England, where school students have benefitted from this model (Taylor, 2008:67). However, the smooth and effective functioning of school-based teacher education models seems to hinge on the clarification of the distribution of responsibility between schools and HEIs. This highlights the importance of the issue of collaborative relationships between the schools and the HEIs involved in school-based teacher education.

2.8.1 Models of HEI-school partnerships

Smith, Brisard and Menter (2006:147) point out that collaboration is a predominant pattern of partnership between HEIs and schools internationally. Shedding light on the same issue, Furlong et al. (2000:80-81) note that collaborative partnerships take teacher education to be a joint responsibility between staff in the HEIs and those in the schools. Buitink and Wouda (Maandag, Deinum, Adriaan & Buitink, 2007:153) propose five models of collaborative relationships between schools and higher education institutions, based on the Western European experience. The models tend to be defined in terms of the roles and responsibilities of HEIs and schools in teacher education. The models are as follows: work placement model, coordinator model, partner model, network model and training school model.

The first model is the **work placement model**. According to Maandag et al. (2007:153), this model, as its name suggests, entails a scenario in which the school merely serves as the site for the teaching practicum. The student teachers learn to teach under the guidance of experienced teachers, who supervise and coach them. In terms of this model, the school’s role in teacher education seems to be very limited. The work placement model seems to mirror some aspects of the HEI-based partnership model proposed by Furlong et al. (2000:148), in terms of which school teachers play minimal formal roles in the planning and execution of teacher education. Under the HEI-based model, all the aspects of teacher education are initiated and planned in the HEIs.
The second option is the **coordinator model**, in terms of which the school still has no training responsibility, although its supervisionary function has been slightly increased. The school appoints a central supervisor, who coordinates the supervision of student teachers at the school. The school-based coordinator supervises and coaches other supervisors.

In terms of the **partner model**, the school has some training responsibility. In addition to supervising and coaching student teachers, the school can also teach some aspects of the teacher education course. The school appoints one or more trainers, who are given the responsibility for supervising and monitoring the progress of the student teachers. However, the relevant higher education institution largely remains in charge of the theoretical aspects of the course.

The terms of the **network model** allow the school partial responsibility for developing the teacher education curriculum through some school-based teams (Maandag *et al*., 2007:153). Collaboration between the training teams and the relevant higher education institution is more intensive. However, the higher education institution retains the role of developing teaching methods and general educational theory. This seems to parallel the collaborative model of partnership, in terms of which there are formal structures through which HEIs and schools jointly plan and implement teacher education (Furlong *et al*., 2000:75-76). Describing the collaborative model of partnership, Sachs (2003:66) states that this model is marked by reciprocal relationships between the partners, who recognise that both parties have something to contribute to the relationship.

The **training school model** seems to represent the ultimate scenario in terms of the extent of the responsibilities schools can take for teacher education. In this model, the school takes full charge of teacher education. Training institutions play a peripheral and supportive role, focusing on issues such as the training of school-based trainers and developing teaching and training methods. However, the higher education institution retains the accrediting or certifying function. In England, the SCITT (School-Centered
Initial Teacher Education) schemes, in terms of which clusters of schools offer teacher education courses with no or minimal involvement of HEIs (Furlong, 2005:121), can be seen as a case in point.

2.9 MODELS OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

2.9.1 The teacher education system in England

Since the early 1990s, the English government has been making significant changes in its teacher education policy, as the New Right political philosophy of the social market began to assert itself on the education front, especially through the enactment of the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Warren, 2006:12; Whitty, 2006:5; Pretorius, 2004:54). In short, the New Right ideology on education is based on economic and commercial premises that contend that the education sector should be driven by quasi-free market principles. In education, the free market ideology has manifested itself in terms of allowing greater parental choice and an unprecedented emphasis on improved standards. In this scheme of things, the state exercises control through establishing a strong regulatory and monitoring framework for ensuring teaching quality.

Through a press statement by its then Secretary of State for Education in 1994, the then Conservative Party government launched a scathing verbal attack on the quality of teacher training in England. The statement notably lamented the steep decline in the quality of school education, placing the blame squarely on the shoulders of teachers. In this connection, the teacher education curricula were criticised for prioritising what the Secretary of State termed peripherals and theoretical issues, at the expense of practical concerns (Pretorius, 2004:55).

Such attacks became so routine and frequent that they ended up being commonly termed the ‘discourse of derision’ of the teaching profession. Hence, the English government sought to overhaul teacher education in order to improve the quality of
school education. In pursuit of this objective, the government effected some radical changes to teacher education, as discussed below.

- **Location of teacher education**

Teacher education in England is provided through partnerships between or among HEIs, schools and Local Education Authorities (Furlong et al., 2008:310). However, partnerships between HEIs and schools seem to be the predominant mode of provision, in what came to be known as "school-based teacher education". The school-based model of teacher education was introduced in England through DFE Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (Warren 2006:14; Furlong et al., 2000:2; Maynard, 1997:3; Furlong, 1996:42). In line with the New Right philosophy, this signalled a shift from theoretical to practical concerns in teacher education. In this regard, Jones (2006:57) asserts that school-based teacher education represents a move from the theory-driven teacher education courses traditionally offered by universities to practice-oriented teacher training. Taylor (2008:65) agrees that this policy change was based on the contention that teaching is primarily a practical activity, hence learning how to teach can best take place in the context of authentic and on-going practice.

The new scheme of things significantly altered the balance of roles and responsibilities between HEIs and schools (Taylor, 2008:65; Warren, 2006:32), with teacher education being provided in the context of a partnership between schools and universities, and HEIs being under a statutory obligation to enter into genuine teacher education partnerships with schools (Furlong et al., 2008:309). Unlike before, schools no longer served as mere sites for hosting the teaching practicum period. The shift towards school-based teacher education resulted in the lengthening of the practicum, making it the most important aspect of the teacher education curriculum, now occupying up to two thirds of the training time (Furlong et al., 2008:309).

At schools, student teachers learn how to teach under the supervision of qualified and experienced teachers, known as mentors. The mentors are required to support the student teachers’ efforts to attain *Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)*. The mentors are given sponsored opportunities to undergo training for their new role.
Teacher education policy and curriculum

Teacher education is governed by a framework of national and officially sanctioned accreditation criteria, called the Standards (Beck, 2009:3; Furlong et al., 2008:308; Furlong, 2002:22). Until 1994, the standards were known as the competences. The standards constitute a basis for controlling the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision at all institutions throughout the country. Also, all institutions offering teacher education courses are required to align their courses with the Standards, hence the standards represent a national teacher education curriculum. In England, all student teachers are assessed on the basis of the standards before they are awarded QTS (Taylor, 2008:64).

Institutional framework for accreditation of teacher education programmes

Since 1984, there has been a central agency for accrediting teacher education programmes in England. This accreditation authority has changed names, from the original Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) (1984), to Teacher Training Agency (TTA) (1994), to the current Teacher Development Agency (TDA) (Beck, 2009:3). Among its responsibilities the TDA establishes and updates standards and recommends to the Secretary of State for Education courses suitable for accreditation (Furlong et al., 2008:308; Furlong, 2005:12; Pretorius, 2004:56; Furlong, 2002:23). The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) carries out inspections of all teacher education programmes on an institution by institution basis to monitor and enforce compliance with the national requirements (Furlong et al., 2008:308; Taylor, 2008:64; Maynard, 1997:4).

Pathways into teacher education

To become a teacher in England, a person needs to hold a degree and should have undergone initial teacher training to obtain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is the basic level qualification for teaching in England (King, 2004:197). QTS can be attained through various routes offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. At undergraduate level, the major routes into
teaching are Bachelor of Education and the Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) with QTS, allowing trainees to acquire degrees and QTS simultaneously (Department For Education [DFE], 2012). Those who already hold first degrees can attain QTS through the standard route full-time Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) offered by universities in partnerships with schools. The PGCE includes QTS.

However, in addition to the standard routes, QTS can also be attained through alternate and employment-based routes into teaching, such as the Graduate Teacher Programme (GRP) and the flexible PGCE. The Graduate Teacher Programme can be provided in three contexts, namely HEI-based, Local Authority-based and School-consortium-based models (Mead, 2007:310). In terms of the Graduate Teacher Programme, a degreed trainee gets full-time salaried employment in a school while undertaking a school-based and personalised initial teacher training programme, leading to QTS (Coles & Pitfield, 2006:286). However, in terms of the GTP scheme, the trainee is required to attend HEI-based courses in the specialist subject and general professional studies.

As indicated above, the flexible PGCE is another alternate route to QTS, titled as such because it is offered on a flexible part-time basis. This qualification is provided through distance learning by universities or by undertaking school-based training arrangements, such as the School-Centered Initial Teacher Training Scheme (DFE, 2012).

- Critical evaluation of teacher education system in England

The teacher education system in England has certain strengths. Firstly, the existence of a statutorily constituted accreditation authority for teacher education programmes in the country facilitates the monitoring of standards. Such an accreditation body ensures that no programmes of dubious quality are offered. Also, a central accrediting body complements institution-based quality review procedures, thereby tightening the standards control and monitoring framework in teacher education.
Secondly, the standards usefully give those engaged in teacher training a clear indication of the national goals of teacher education (Moore, 2004:76). This simplifies the development of curricula that are in line with national goals. This makes it relatively easy for the central government to monitor and account for the quality of the teachers produced.

Thirdly, taking teacher education to schools is likely to allow increased opportunities to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher education, a dilemma faced by most teacher education programmes. Furthermore, the move towards school-based teacher education seems to be consistent with the latest trends in teacher education. Several authors, such as Schön (1983, 1987), Shulman (1986, 1987) and Lave and Wenger (1991) have, based on a diversity of reasons, concluded that teacher education can best happen in schools where student teachers learn to teach under the guidance and supervision and with the collaboration of qualified, experienced teachers.

In the fourth instance, it must be mentioned that, to its credit, the teacher education system in England provides alternative and non-standard routes for entry into the teaching profession. In this way, the system provides opportunities for mature mid-life career changers to join teaching (Mead, 2007:310). As indicated above, such schemes include the Graduate Teacher Programme and the flexible PGCE.

In spite of all the positives, the teacher education system in England also has some flaws. Firstly, the standards seem to be based on a narrow conception of teaching as performance; teaching encompasses other dimensions, which the standards seem to ignore. For instance, teaching also involves a moral-ethical dimension, since one may have the technical competence, but may not be committed to truly helping those in need (Schussler, Stoolsberry & Bercaw, 2010:351).

Relatedly, the standards imply a top-down model of teaching in terms of which teachers passively implement externally defined and imposed standards. This potentially undermines teachers’ professional autonomy and limits their scope and opportunity to adapt their teaching to suit different or unpredictable situations in the classroom. If teachers have no right to exercise informed professional discretion in the classroom, the
situation is likely to undermine their self-esteem. In this regard, Zembylas (2003:223) similarly asserts that identity is dialogically constructed in conjunction with others in a social environment, implying that if teachers cannot exercise professional autonomy and agency, they are likely to hold a low view of themselves. Du Toit (2011:117) further develops the abovementioned line of argument by stating that low self-esteem negatively impacts on teacher effectiveness.

In conclusion, the standards erroneously assume that a static and rigid set of competences can be effectively applied across all teaching-learning situations; yet, there are situations that the standards may have failed to anticipate. Teachers who have mastered only the standards, may find themselves out of depth in the face of situations of which the development is difficult to predict. Such situations call for teachers who have the capacity to flexibly adapt their teaching, suggesting that instead of banking exclusively on the mastery of skills that assist teachers in performing in the classroom, the English government may be advised to seek to cultivate reflective capacities in their teachers to allow them to function in the 21st century classroom.

2.9.2 The teacher education system in the United States of America (USA)

The current state of teacher education in the United States of America (USA) has been shaped mainly by the reforms introduced in the 1980s, following the publication of the Nation at Risk (1983), an adverse report on the state of education in the USA (Wise & Leibbrand in Pretorius 2004:51). This report was compiled and published by the United States Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996:14) and is considered to constitute a policy watershed in teacher education in the United States.

- **Location of teacher education**

In the USA, higher education institutions play a central role in the provision of teacher education qualifications through the faculties of education at universities and the degrees offered at colleges of education (Cochran-Smith, 2003:6; Beyer, 2002:306).
There are also some specially designated schools, known as Professional Development Schools (PDSs), which act almost as laboratory schools, hosting practice internships (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei & Johnson, 2009:617; Pretorius 2004:49).

The PDSs represent interactive spaces in which universities collaborate with public schools. Describing the term Professional Development Schools, Pretorius (2004:52) explains that it usually refers to a partnership between schools and university personnel who share decisions regarding school-based aspects, as well as the entire teacher education curriculum. In PDSs, a group of career oriented teaching professionals, known as lead teachers, are charged with the responsibility of supervising the learning of student teachers during the practicum (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009:617). These senior professionals are also required to act as consultants to regular teachers, as well as participate in collaborative research (Pretorius, 2004:53). The lead teachers’ work also involves developing curricula and acting as link between teacher education programmes at the university and the schools in which they are involved full-time in classroom teaching.

- Teacher education policy and curriculum

In the USA, a centrally generated inter-state framework of standards governs and guides the provision of teacher education. The standards were generated by a statutory body, known as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009:621; Beyer, 2002:306). The decision to turn to standards occurred on the back of concerns about the declining quality of teacher and school education. The standards were considered as a way to ensure and guarantee education quality. The standards spell out the goals of all teacher education programmes in terms of the expected outcomes for teachers in three domains, namely knowledge, performance and dispositions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009:622). For student teachers to be given a teaching license, they have to demonstrate sufficient competence across the entire range of standards.
- **Institutional framework for accreditation and quality control of teacher education**

The NCATE, the inter-state accrediting authority for all teacher education programmes in the United States (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2009:617; Beyer, 2002:308; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996:34); periodically revises the standards to make sure that they are in line with current research findings and best practices in teacher education. However, NCATE accreditation is not mandatory, as there are also intra-state accreditation alternatives available to student teachers.

All teaching qualifications in the United States are offered at degree level or above, taking five to six years (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2009:618). A teaching degree takes at least five years. In terms of such degree programmes, student teachers take courses in the liberal arts for four years and in their fifth year, education related courses.

- **Critical evaluation of teacher education system in the USA**

The teacher education system in the USA scores high marks for the existence of a central accrediting agency, with the NCATE and the standards policies ensuring that quality can be centrally vetted and guaranteed. However, there is a continued need for an effective standards monitoring and enforcement mechanism.

A clearly defined set of performance standards provides a guiding framework for the design of teacher education courses (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2009:621; Beyer, 2002:306). This keeps educators aware of what they are expected to do. The central accrediting authority also complements the reviews for quality assurance at universities, thereby further consolidating the quality of teacher education programmes.
The USA seems to have gone further than most countries in developing and formalising the partnership between universities and schools engaged in the provision of teacher education. The presence of lead teachers in the PDSs, who serve as links with the higher education institutions, ensures that the two systems take a coordinated approach to teacher education provision. In this sense, the USA system can be seen as having gone some way in reducing the gap between higher education and schools. Also, the collaboration between universities and schools through the lead teachers who work full time in PDSs enables theory and practice to interrogate each other, thereby facilitating the integration of the theoretical and practical components of the teacher education curriculum.

Giving lead teachers in PDSs a differential status in remuneration motivates them to take on the extra mentoring responsibilities in schools. These additional responsibilities of lead professionals in PDSs in relation to the learning of the student teachers are clearly spelt out to ensure that the student teachers learn how to teach in a structured environment. Highlighting the importance of such a structured training experience, De Knowles and Cole (1996:671) cite Dewey, who contends that the quality of experience, not the mere existence of it, makes a difference to the quality of learning.

However, the USA teacher education programmes also have some weak points, which need to be highlighted. The standards, insofar as they define teaching competence in terms of performance, unfortunately also represent a reductionist and narrow conception of teachers’ work, ignoring many dimensions that contribute to effectiveness in the classroom.

The uniform standards may also not be able to anticipate what will happen in all teaching-learning contexts. Hence, teachers who have mastered the competences may not be able to flexibly adjust their teaching practices in order to deal with emerging and unanticipated situations. This emphasises the need for teachers to be flexible over and above mastering the standards.
2.9.3 The teacher education system in South Africa

- **Location of teacher education**

Teacher education provision in South Africa is largely the responsibility of tertiary faculties of education. Mahomed (2009:165) notes that, in 2009, 25 South African universities were involved in providing initial teacher education. These institutions were in receipt of government subsidies for the training of teachers in their faculties or schools of education.

- **Institutional framework for accreditation of teacher education programs**

Teacher education policy in South Africa is centrally planned and regulated. The central government has established a statutory framework for governing the provision of teacher education. Therefore, the roles, responsibilities and obligations of various players in teacher education are defined by relevant acts of Parliament, such as the National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008 and the Higher Education Amendment Act, No. 39 of 2008 (UNESCO, 2010).

In this connection, national statutory bodies are responsible for accreditation and quality control in teacher education in South Africa. All providers of teacher education have to advance through several levels of compulsory accreditation. At the highest level, the Council for Higher Education (CHE), through its Sub-Committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), approves all teacher education providers, as well as their learning programmes. At the second level, a prospective teacher education institutional provider needs to register its qualifications with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). The third level involves having the qualification approved by the Department of Education for funding and employment purposes.

- **Teacher education policy and curriculum**

A national standards framework, called the Norms and Standards for Educators, governs accreditation and quality control in teacher education (Parker & Deacon, 2005:6). Gazetted in February 2000, the Norms and Standards for Educators provide a
common frame of reference for all roleplayers in teacher education in South Africa. The framework defines not only the teacher education culture in South Africa, but also provides a picture of an ideal teacher that all providers must strive to produce (Robinson, 2003:1). The Norms and Standards articulate the knowledge, skills and values all educators must hold through specifying three sets of competences of an educator. These encompass practical, foundational and reflective competences (Parker & Deacon, 2005:13). In this way the Norms and Standards provide a guiding framework of standards for the development of teaching qualifications and learning programmes. This suggests that the Norms and Standards do not constitute a national teacher education curriculum, but a general policy framework. This allows universities to come up with their own curriculum, which of course should comply with the Norms and Standards.

- **Pathways into teacher education**

The minimum requirement for a person to become a classroom teacher in South Africa is either a Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd) or non-teaching degrees such as Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSci, Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) and on, combined with an Advanced Diploma in Education (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010:14). Teachers begin their careers as specialists in a phase, subject or both. For example, teachers who get into teaching through the BEd degree can specialise in the teaching of English in the Foundation phase or specialise in just Foundation Phase teaching. Similarly, holders of non-teaching degrees can take the same specialized in their Advanced Diploma in Education (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010:14). Thus teaching qualifications/ specialisations closely mirror the structure and the requirements of the school education system.

The school education system consists of two bands, namely the General Education and Training (GET) and the Further Education and Training (FET). The GET refers to the first ten years of schooling, covering grades R (ECD) to 9. This band consists of three phases, namely the Foundation Phase (R to 3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6) and
the Senior Phase encompassing grades 7 to 9. On the other hand, the FET band is the crossing point into higher education and the world of work and encompasses grades 10 to 11.

- **Critical evaluation of teacher education system in South Africa**

The teacher education system in South Africa has some definite strength. Firstly, it has a network of central accreditation and quality control agencies. This enables the government to account for the quality of teacher education courses offered at different institutions. Such multiple quality control institutions help complement the internal quality control review processes in university departments.

Furthermore, the Norms and Standards provide clear guidelines and expectations to enable the design of teacher education by various institutions. This helps the government to assess the quality of courses so as to make informed accreditation decisions. Also, the Norms and Standards make it easier to standardise courses offered at different institutions in the country.

The South African teacher education system is based on a broad conception of competences. As Parker and Deacon (2005:6) state, there are three categories of competences mentioned in the Norms and Standards, namely foundational, practical and reflective competencies. By prioritising reflective competence, the South African teacher education system can be seen as trying to produce educators who can operate effectively in the fast-changing and unpredictable world of the 21st century.

However, on a negative note, the teacher education system in South Africa does not provide room for an alternative and non-standard route of entry into teacher education. In this way, it shuts out mid-career changers who have a passion for teaching, but for one reason or another failed to make it into the profession when they were younger. Seen from this point of view, the teacher education system loses an opportunity to recruit potential mid-career changers who are committed to the teaching profession, but did not have the opportunity to join it. Hess (2009:453) similarly notes the need for the
teacher education system to allow mature college graduates who hold qualifications in non-education fields to join the teaching profession if they desire to do so.

There seems to be also no effort on the part of teacher education authorities to organise schools to ensure that students have a supportive school-based learning environment. The deployment of student teachers to schools on a practicum seems to be based on the availability of vacancies rather than on considerations of the schools as supportive environments for teacher learning. Perhaps this explains the lack of a national policy framework governing the school-based learning of student teachers.

2.9.4 The teacher education system in Zimbabwe

To follow is a diagram of the Zimbabwean primary teacher education model as used at present
Figure 4.1 CURRENT MODEL FOR INITIAL PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE (Three-year generalist Diploma in Education course)

**ENTRY AND RECRUITMENT**

**Academic screening:**
Five ordinary levels, including English and Mathematics

**YEAR ONE (College-based tuition)**

- **Academic Study (Main subject)**
  One subject chosen from among those taught in the primary school.

- **Theories of Education**
  - Psychology of Education
  - Sociology of Education
  - Philosophy of Education
  - Curriculum Studies
  - Educational Administration

- **Professional Studies**
  - Communication skills
  - Classroom management
  - Scheming and planning
  - Record keeping
  - Teaching methods
  - Professional conduct
  - Chalkboard skills

- **Curriculum Depth Study**
  An action research project on a teaching problem drawn from the main subject.

**YEAR TWO (One year-Teaching Practice)**

- Student teachers can be placed in any primary schools in the country. Logistical considerations such as geographical accessibility to college and availability of qualified teachers are taken into account.
- Student teachers are attached to qualified teachers who are expected to serve as their mentors.
- College lecturers conduct supervision visits to schools to assess the student teachers.
- Student teachers collect data for the Action research project.

**YEAR THREE (College-based tuition)**

- **Academic Study (Main subject)**
  - Continue with work started in Year One
  - Final examination

- **Theories of Education**
  - Continue with work started in Year One
  - Final examination

- **Professional Studies**
  - Continue with work started in Year One
  - Final Examination

- **Curriculum Depth Study**
  Submission of Action research project.

**QUALIFICATION, EXIT AND READILY GET EMPLOYED AS TEACHERS**
• **Location of teacher education**

The provision of initial teacher education is at present largely the responsibility of public institutions. Private players seem to be playing a peripheral role only. Teacher education providers include universities and teachers' colleges. However, teachers' colleges take most responsibility for initial teacher education, preparing both secondary and primary school teachers at Diploma in Education level (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000:321). Of the fifteen teachers’ colleges, only three are privately run, while the rest are state institutions. However, all the colleges are registered with and fall within the overall administrative ambit of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (Nziramasanga, 1999:504). Also, all the colleges receive government training subsidies.

• **Pathways into teacher education**

Eleven of the fifteen teachers’ colleges in Zimbabwe offer a three-year diploma education course for primary school teachers (UNESCO, 2008:13). All applicants for teacher education are required to have five Ordinary Level subjects, including English and Mathematics passed at Grade C, or better (Nziramasanga, 1999:450), with grades descendingly ranging from A to U; U being the lowest score.

Two patterns of organising the teacher education course are followed. The first and more predominant organisational pattern is the 3-3-3 scheme under which student teachers enrolled for the three-year diploma in teacher education course spend their first and third years (one term is equivalent to three months while there are three terms in a year) taking college-based courses in Principles of Education, Methods of Teaching as well as an academic subject (Nziramasanga, 1999:450) (Figure 4.1 represents the current primary teacher education model in Zimbabwe, in terms of which Principles of Education fall under Theories of Education, while the Professional Studies course corresponds to Methods of Teaching). The second year, student teachers spend a practicum at schools. The second pattern of organizing teaching practice follows a 2-5-2 scheme, in terms of which student teachers spend only two terms (six months) in
college, five terms (fifteen months) on teaching practice and the last two terms in college.

For primary school student teachers, the teaching practice is organised on a block basis, in terms of which students go on teaching practice for a continuous period of one year. During teaching practice, all student teachers are attached to certificated and more experienced teachers, called mentors. This suggests that student teachers are not supposed to take full charge of classes yet.

Student teachers are attached to mentors; however, the mentors’ roles in relation to the student teachers are not clear. There seems to be no official policy that spells out what mentors are supposed to do in the context of their relationship with the student teacher under their guidance. Also, the mentors seem to have no training for the job. Besides being supervised by mentors, student teachers are also supervised by school heads and college-based lecturers who visit schools during set times.

Of the fifteen teachers’ colleges in Zimbabwe, four offer a two-year diploma in education for secondary school teachers. All applicants to this course are required to have at least an Advanced Level pass (Nziramasanga, 1999:450). (Examinations are taken in the sixth year of secondary education, whose grading scale descendingly ranges from A to F, with A representing five points while E represents 1 point and A–E also represents the pass range), over and above five Ordinary Level subjects, which must include English. Student teachers spend most of the time taking college-based courses in an academic subject, either Methods of Education or Principles of Education.

As suggested above, universities seem to play a largely peripheral role in the provision of initial teacher education in Zimbabwe. There are eleven universities in Zimbabwe; eight are state-run, while three are private institutions. Traditionally, most of these institutions offer upgrading courses to teachers who already hold a diploma in education (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000:321). Such offerings take the form of professional degree qualifications, such as the two-year Bachelor of Education degree (BEd) in academic subjects, aimed at prospective high school teachers. BEd students do not undertake
teaching practice, since they already hold a teaching qualification (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000:321). Also, the universities offer a post-graduate certificate or diploma in education for those who hold non-teaching degrees.

In recent years, universities started to offer pre-service professional degree courses in education. Typically, such qualifications are at least four-year courses. In general, the structure of these is disproportionately front-loaded with subject content knowledge courses. Principles of Education and Methods of Education courses constitute only a small component. Students enrolled in such courses tend to go out on the teaching practicum for at least one full year. Examples of such courses include a Bachelor of Education (primary), a Bachelor of Arts or Science (with Education), and a Bachelor of Education (Honours).

**Institutional framework for accreditation of teacher education programmes**

There is no central accreditation and quality control authority for teacher education in Zimbabwe. One of the universities, the University of Zimbabwe, serves as the accreditation, certifying and quality control agency for the Diploma in Education course offered at various teachers’ colleges in the country (Nziramasanga, 1999:451). This role is undertaken through an associateship between the colleges and the University of Zimbabwe. Through its Department of Teacher Education, the University of Zimbabwe monitors the quality of teacher education courses offered at all the teachers’ colleges. The colleges are required to submit syllabi to the University for approval (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000:321; Nziramasanga, 1999:504). Also, the University closely monitors the quality of summative assessment procedures at these colleges. Furthermore, the University of Zimbabwe is responsible for certifying the prospective teachers once it has satisfied itself about the quality of their work.
Teacher education policy and curriculum

There is no standard or national teacher education curriculum in Zimbabwe (Nziramasanga, 1999:455). This implies that there are no nationally sanctioned criteria or guidelines defining the standard of teacher expected. This is perhaps the reason why there seems to be no uniformity in the courses offered at the various teachers’ colleges.

Critical evaluation of teacher education system in Zimbabwe

The teacher education system in Zimbabwe can be seen as weak, on the following counts. Firstly, the absence of a central accreditation and quality control authority makes it difficult to monitor the quality of teacher education courses offered at the various colleges. Although the University of Zimbabwe purports to play the role of an accrediting agency for the colleges, the fact that the courses offered in the colleges are its own, makes it an interested party. Accordingly, it cannot be seen as playing an independent accrediting role. This concern was implicitly echoed by Nziramasanga (1999:537), which called for the establishment of an independent accrediting agency for teacher education in Zimbabwe.

Relatedly, the absence of a national teacher education policy makes it difficult for the government to account for and monitor the quality of the teachers produced. As noted above, each of the colleges seems to offer a different teacher training course. Therefore, there are no criteria for assessing the quality of the various course offerings. In the absence of a framework of expectations and standards, everything seems to go.

Thirdly, there seems to be no alternative or non-standard routes for entry into the teaching profession in Zimbabwe. This denies mid-career changers the opportunity to join teaching. Such people are often dedicated and possess mature qualities that are in high demand in human services professions, such as teaching. Thus, the absence of alternative and unconventional routes into education deprives the teaching profession of the opportunity to accommodate potentially excellent teachers.
Fourthly, it seems as if student teachers can be deployed to practice teaching at any school as long there are mentors who are willing to take them on board. There seems to be no effort on the part of the teacher education authorities to ensure that the schools to which the student teachers are deployed provide a supportive environment for teacher learning. Some school environments may not provide student teachers with the support they need in order to effectively learn how to teach.

2.10 SUMMARY

In overview, this chapter explored and raised a number of issues. Firstly, it was established that the terms *teacher education* and *teacher training* tend to be embedded in views about the nature of learning and teacher learning. This makes it difficult to define the above-mentioned terms without unraveling the ideologically embedded views that inform them. However, each of these orientations represents a partial view of teacher learning; hence it cannot on its own capture fully the nature of teacher learning. This calls for a unified conception of teacher learning, based on a fuller appreciation of teacher learning. In this connection, the Chapter established that teacher learning is a multifaceted process that comprises several dimensions, such as developing knowledge and skills, socialisation into a professional culture, and developing student teachers’ personal and moral dimensions. In an attempt to deepen the theoretical understanding of teacher learning, the Chapter also explored perspectives on teacher education. Three perspectives of teacher education were identified, namely the rationalistic, social-market and hermeneutic perspectives. However, the significance of these perspectives can be more deeply appreciated if one relates them to perspectives on learning.

Three learning perspectives were examined, namely the cognitive and social constructivist as well as the situative perspectives on learning. The perspectives on learning and teacher education point towards certain conceptual models of teacher education. Hence, the Chapter also examined the following conceptual models of teacher education, namely Furlong and Maynard’s model; Warford’s Zones of Proximal Teacher Development (ZPTD); Competence-based models and the Reflective
practitioner model. A particularly significant insight emerging from the examination of these models is that student teachers must be trained to critically interrogate their teaching practices if they are to attain full professional development. These models, together with the exploration of teacher knowledge bases, seem to point towards schools as the best locations for teacher education. It seems that it is established opinion in academic circles that there are some uniquely teacher-based domains of knowledge that are crucial in making professional decisions. These domains of knowledge cannot be developed in isolation from the context of authentic practice in schools. Based on the above, the school seems to be placed at the centre of initial teacher preparation, with the professional development of student teachers being the primary responsibility of school-based mentors. The next chapter will therefore explore the theory and practice of mentoring.
CHAPTER THREE
LITERATURE REVIEW ON MENTORING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As established in the preceding chapter, the school-based mentoring model in Zimbabwe represents a promising strategy for improving the quality of primary school teachers in that country. However, this has not yet been achieved.

Before an empirical study of models on mentoring can be undertaken, it is necessary to clarify theoretical issues relating to mentoring. Accordingly, this chapter will first explore the concept of mentoring, tracing it back to its origin in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Although various definitions of mentoring are presented and analysed, it is also recognised that the concept of mentoring has undeniably expanded beyond its original meaning in the Homeric context; hence, various models of mentoring will be considered and analysed in this chapter.

To deepen the reader’s understanding of the concept of mentoring, three perspectives on mentoring will be discussed, namely the humanistic, situated apprentice and critical constructivist perspectives. However, the practical significance of these perspectives cannot be fully understood unless the perspectives are related to models of mentoring practice. Hence, this chapter will also explore four models of mentoring (the apprenticeship, competency, reflective practitioner and Parsloe and Leedham models). In an additional attempt to enable the reader to fully appreciate mentoring from a practical point of view, this chapter will consider issues such as the characteristics of mentoring, factors influencing the effectiveness of mentoring, the role of mentors, and how successful mentoring relationships can be developed.

Given the fact that people often question the benefits of mentoring, based on the considerable resources invested in running mentoring programmes, this chapter will
posit the benefits of effective mentoring for mentors, mentees and organisations running mentoring programmes. However, the benefits of mentoring are contingent upon the effectiveness of mentoring programmes. A critical success factor of a mentoring programme is arguably how the mentor manages the relationship. For the mentor to effectively manage the relationship, he/she needs to have a deeper understanding of the various types of mentees in terms of their nature and learning styles. Accordingly, this chapter will also consider, in an extended manner, a wide range of mentee types, as well as learning styles.

Even though the mentor-mentee relationship may be working, the parties involved may be unable to sustain their learning if the host school’s culture does not provide an adequately supportive environment. This chapter therefore considers the concept of the learning school as a possible organisational model for a school in the 21st century. Such a school, it is argued, is best placed to support mentees and mentors operating in the situated apprentice and critical constructivist perspectives.

3.2 CONCEPT OF MENTORING

3.2.1 Definitions of mentoring

The earliest recorded use of the term mentor was in a mythological context, as told by the ancient Greek poet, Homer in his narrative poem, *The Odyssey*. In this poem, the hero, Ulysses, entrusted his only son, Telemachus, to Mentor, an old, wise, trusted friend and advisor (Sawatzky & Enns, 2009:146; Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2008:168; Lindgren, 2005:252; Woodd, 1997:333). When Ulysses departed for the Trojan War, Mentor assumed Ulysses’s parental role, serving as Telemachus’s guide, tutor, teacher, father figure, advisor and role model (Sawatzky & Enns, 2009:146; Hennissen et al., 2008:168). In this context, Mentor’s role essentially consisted in supporting and helping his protégé, Telemachus, to deal with personal development challenges.
Outside Homer’s poem, the word *mentor* was first used as a common noun in Francheois Fenelon’s 1699 book, *The Adventure of Telemachus*. In the book, the word *mentor* is generally used to refer to a trusted friend, counsellor, or teacher (Strong, 2009:5). The concept of a mentor as defined in the above classical context continues to influence contemporary scholarly thought about mentoring, albeit with some modification. Siu and Sivan (2011:797) describe mentoring as a ‘… voluntary and mutually beneficial relationship in which one person who is experienced and knowledgeable supports the maturation of a less experienced person’.

From the above, mentoring can be described as being a necessarily beneficial relationship between two people with different levels of skills, knowledge and experience. Also, in a mentoring relationship, support is seen as flowing in a unidirectional route from the more experienced, skilled, knowledgeable and experienced (mentor) to the one who is deficient in these attributes (mentee or protégé). Such a view of mentoring negatively suggests that mentoring involves social cloning, in that the mentoring relationship seeks to turn the mentee into a replica of the mentor (Sundli, 2007:204). If this is the case, mentoring may be seen as a limiting relationship, confining the mentee within the mentor’s level of skills and knowledge; thus mentoring would regrettably and disappointingly cease to be a developmental relationship.

Additionally, the above definition portrays mentoring as involving a skewed and asymmetrical power relationship between the mentor and mentee. This difference in power largely stems from the difference in skills, knowledge and experience as well as usually the ages of the mentor and mentee. According to this view, mentoring is seen as a necessarily hierarchical relationship, which Jackson (2002:5) disapprovingly describes as a traditional top-down relationship.

However, in a significant departure from the traditional view, Siu and Sivan (2011:797) refreshingly see mentoring as potentially beneficial to both the mentor and mentee.
Over the years, similar departures or modifications of the concept of mentoring to reflect changes in mentoring practices have been recorded. Therefore, in contrast to the traditional view, in contemporary times, mentoring can no longer be seen as necessarily a one-on-one relationship, as it can involve more than two parties, with a number of mentors and mentees working together in a network of mentoring or multiple mentoring. Neither is the relationship between the mentor and the mentee necessarily hierarchical, with the mentee always playing a subservient role, merely trying to get up to the mentor’s level of skill and knowledge (Woodd, 1997:334). This suggests that mentoring can be a mutual and reciprocal relationship (Vonk, cited in Mtetwa & Kwari, 2003:274). This is particularly the case in today’s world, which is putatively characterised by knowledge explosion and ceaseless, rapid change. This change brings with it a continual shift in roles (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000:52). It is therefore impossible for any person to claim a stable, superior status on the basis of a static set of skills and knowledge, since these may be made irrelevant in the context of the ever-changing circumstances. To describe this new mentoring scenario, some scholars have used the term reciprocal or peer mentoring. The term reciprocal or peer mentoring describes a mentoring situation in which roles are flexibly interchanged between or among the parties involved.

Under such circumstances, the question is how much support and assistance flows between the parties involved. This echoes a more recent interpretation of mentoring, based on the situated learning perspective, in which mentoring is seen as a dialogical relationship between the mentor and the protégé (Sundli, 2007:207).

Furthermore, the definitions of mentoring considered above seem to portray mentoring as a necessarily beneficial relationship for the parties involved. However, Colley (Sundli, 2007:202) points out that mentoring relationships can go wrong, with distressful consequences for the parties involved.
Conceptions of mentoring tend to vary slightly according to the social sector in which mentoring is practised. Therefore, mentoring is described differently, depending on whether one is talking about mentoring in higher education, in schools, in industry or in business (Murphy, Mahoney, Chen, Mendoza-Diaz & Yang, 2005:344). In the context of this study, the focus was on mentoring as practised in teacher education. From the perspective of teacher educators, Ingersoll and Strong (2011:203) describe mentoring as the ‘… personal guidance usually provided by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools’. This view sees mentoring as an aspect of induction taking place in the context of in-service support given to newly recruited teachers to facilitate their entry and adjustment to the new job. A case in point is the mentoring practised as part of beginner teacher in-service induction in several states in the United States of America (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005:679).

In teacher education, mentoring can also occur in the context of pre-service training. In this regard, Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen (2011:320) define mentoring as ‘… the one-to-one support of a student teacher by a more experienced teacher’. Fletcher (Sundli, 2007:204) agrees that mentoring in pre-service teacher education largely involves helping student teachers manage difficult ‘transitions by smoothing the way’. Similarly describing the place of mentoring in pre-service teacher education, Wang and Odell (2007:474) state that mentoring assumes that student teachers who work together with expert teachers receive help and support to become qualified teachers and are also integrated into the school culture.

Besides being defined in relation to the nature of the social relationship between the mentor and the mentee, mentoring can be described in terms of mentoring roles. From this point of view, Murphy et al. (2005:344) define mentoring as ‘… a one-on-one relationship between an expert and a novice in which the expert guides the novice by behavioural and cognitive modelling, academic and career counselling, emotional and scholarly support, advice, professional networking and assessment’. This definition
picks out several mentoring roles, going beyond and expanding on the set of roles performed by the original Mentor, as described by Homer.

However, it is difficult to come up with an all-encompassing definition when mentoring is defined in terms of the roles it entails. This is so because mentoring roles vary according to the applicable social and historical contexts (Parsloe & Leedham, 2009:19; Carter, 2001:259). Mentoring seems to be so embedded in practice that defining it in terms of roles merely comprises describing what happens in different contexts (Parsloe & Wray, 2000:81). In this view, mentoring can be seen as a protean concept, amenable to being flexibly and elastically extended, depending on socio-historical circumstances. Perhaps, this is the reason why, as Hamel and Jaasko-Fisher (2011:434) note, there is little international consensus on the roles, purposes and definitions of mentoring. In the same vein, Hawkey (Cain, 2009:53) asserts that mentoring is idiosyncratic, making it difficult for researchers to make generalisations about it. Even in the same mentoring situation, roles may keep on changing, as priorities and purposes change (Fletcher, 2000:3). Given the foregoing, trying to define mentoring from the perspective of roles is like shooting at a moving target.

Given the futility of the above approach, some scholars describe mentoring in terms of more generic roles, which do not seek to capture mentoring practices in specific contexts. In this connection, most scholars seem to agree that a mentoring relationship entails supporting and helping, enabling and facilitating (Jamisen & Phelps, 2006:300). However, this does not provide one with a concrete idea of mentoring, since generic roles such as supporting and helping can be carried out and interpreted differently in different contexts. Therefore, such an approach may not be helpful for people who need practical guidance on what to do.

Having noted weaknesses in the above views of mentoring, there was an undeniable need to find or come up with a definition that can be acceptably used as a working
definition for the purpose of this thesis. Such a definition must be relatively free from the flaws identified in the above definitions.

Besides conceptualising mentoring in the above terms, it can be usefully defined in terms of what it is not. This is particularly called for, given the fact that there are forms of school-based human relationships or processes that can be easily confused with mentoring. In this connection, Shapiro and colleagues (Woodd, 1997:334) note that there are many other forms of human relationships in which people support and help each other, but which cannot be taken as mentoring. Examples of such relationships or processes include coaching and induction. Therefore, in the next two sub-sections, the relationship between mentoring, induction and coaching will be explored.

3.2.2 Relationship between mentoring, induction and coaching

As pointed out above, the concept of mentoring is closely allied to other concepts with which it co-exists in the same field of meaning, such as coaching and induction. Oftentimes, practitioners and scholars confuse mentoring with coaching and induction, sometimes using these concepts interchangeably, erroneously treating them as synonyms (Strong, 2009:6). Hence, defining the concept of mentoring also arguably involves differentiating it from the abovementioned concepts with which it is often confused.

- Mentoring and induction

According to Strong (2009:6), ‘Induction refers to the initial stage or phase of one’s career, or to the system of support that may be provided during that phase’. The latter part of the above definition seems to be relevant to this context. Ingersoll and Strong (2011:201) agree with the above view, observing that induction involves ‘support, guidance, and orientation programmes for new employees’. To synthesise the above definitions, induction can be seen as the support given to new recruits in order to
facilitate their transition into a work environment. Such support essentially consists of information-giving (Trethowan & Smith, cited in Coleman, 2006a:15). Information-giving activities during induction include the following: familiarising the recruit with the new work situation; providing a tour of the facilities; introducing the recruits to staff; describing the procedures and policies of the workplace; and offering work-related suggestions (Hughes, 2002:15).

Several literature sources regard mentoring as a strategy in a full induction programme (Portner, 2008:3; Coleman, 2006a:15; Hughes, 2002:15). As part of an induction programme, mentoring is a means of facilitating the information-giving process through a close and trusting personal relationship between the new recruit and the mentor (Trethowan & Smith, cited in Coleman, 2006a:15). While induction mainly entails information-giving, mentoring is a broader process that encompasses many roles beyond information-giving (Coleman, 2006a:15). Strong (2009:6) succinctly clarifies the relationship between mentoring induction when he asserts that, ‘Mentoring … refers only to one aspect of an induction support programme, and is thus subsumed in the notion of induction rather synonymous with it’.

Induction is particularly necessary to help novice teachers in schools, given the fact that teaching is a complex profession, but the only one in which new entrants work on their own (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011:201). Therefore, induction gives novice teachers a support framework to help them develop the basic schema and skills to operate in their new work environment. As Ingersoll and Strong (2011:203) further note, teacher induction encompasses a variety of activities for new teachers, namely orientation sessions, collaborative periods, meetings with supervisors, developmental workshops, extra classroom assistance, reduced workloads and mentoring. In the United States of America, mentoring is used as an induction strategy to facilitate the transition of new teachers into teaching (Strong, 2009:6-7; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005:679).
As pointed out above, mentoring is also sometimes confused with coaching. In the next sub-section, the relationship between mentoring and coaching will be explored.

- **Mentoring and coaching**

The term coaching, as it is used in higher education, industry and business, is a loan term, borrowed from sports (Kushnir, Ehrenfeld & Shalisha, 2008:837). The International Reading Association (cited in Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum & Ostrosky, 2008:229) describes coaching as ‘… a form of professional development that takes place directly in the classroom when the goal is to help intervention practices or teaching behaviours’. In this formulation, coaching is portrayed as primarily intended to enhance performance on the job. This view is supported by the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, which defines the verb coach as ‘… to train intensively-as by instruction and demonstration’. This suggests that coaching is a short-term process intended to facilitate the acquisition of skills needed for job performance (Callan, 2006:18). The same view is shared by Kushnir *et al.* (2008:837), who point out that coaching focuses on the immediate improvement of skills. The coaching process takes place in coaching cycles, each of which consists of three basic aspects, namely the planning conference or pre-observation discussion; observation by the coach; and a reflection or post-observation conference or discussion (Maskey, 2009:64; Joyce & Showers, cited in Hsieh *et al.*, 2008:837).

In contrast to coaching, mentoring has a broader set of roles attached to it. Thus, apart from the mere acquisition of skills, mentoring seeks the broader and all-round personal and professional development of the mentee (Basset, 2001). However, mentoring also encompasses a skills acquisition component, a view shared by Portner (2008:8-9), who considers coaching to be one of the roles of mentoring. While coaching necessarily takes place on the job (Teemant *et al.*, 2011:685), mentoring does not have to; it may occur off the job.
In the corporate sector, there is a tendency to emphasise the skills acquisition component of mentoring, namely the coaching aspect, possibly because of business organisations’ primary focus on enhancing skills in order to improve performance and achieve organisational goals in the short term. Therefore, in the business context, coaching or skills acquisition tends to be the most emphasised aspect of the mentoring relationship, often leading to the conflation of coaching and mentoring.

3.2.3 Forms of mentoring

Given the close link between mentoring and its contexts, as suggested above, different forms of mentoring emanate from different contexts (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:113). Literature sources analysed as indicated below, suggest the following major forms of mentoring: formal and informal mentoring, reverse mentoring, professional mentoring, qualification mentoring, multiple mentoring, and educative mentoring.

- Formal mentoring

Describing formal mentoring, Blake-Beard (2001:332-3) notes that it develops on the basis of deliberate organisational sponsorship. The sponsorship comes in the form of organisational assistance, such as establishing an enabling structural, logistical and policy framework for mentoring. Additionally, in formal mentoring, careful consideration is given to identifying the right people to take up a mentoring role, as well as finding appropriate matches between mentees and mentors (Long, 2009:319). The foregoing suggests that formal mentoring takes place in a structured environment with a clearly pronounced policy or plan that spells out the roles and responsibilities of the various players involved (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:164; Meyer & Fourie, 2004:113). Because of its structured nature, formal mentoring is likely to be relatively short term, occurring only within the confines of work routines, schedules, and objective of an organisation, inevitably coming to an end when these organisational timelines come to term (Sawatzky & Enns, 2009:147).
• Informal mentoring

By contrast, informal mentoring occurs outside an organisationally or officially sanctioned framework (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:164). In this form of mentoring, there are no clear guidelines with respect to the roles and responsibilities of the various players involved. According to Blake-Beard (2001:332-333), parties to informal mentoring relationships spontaneously and mutually identify each other on the basis of shared career needs. The learning that takes place occurs incidentally in the context of normal and routine interaction between the people in a workplace (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:113).

However, informal mentoring presupposes that people interact in workplaces; yet, that may not be the case. Such on-the-job interaction may be difficult in organisational cultures based on a bureaucratic model. In such an organisational culture, job roles and tasks are rigidly demarcated and the work schedules so tight that workers have limited opportunities for interaction in their work environments. Hence it is difficult in such environments for a culture of sharing and collaboration to take root. This may make it difficult for informal mentoring to take place. Writing with schools in mind, Jurasaitė-Harbison and Rex (2010:268) similarly contend that school cultures can hinder or facilitate the informal interaction that takes place in an organisation, making it difficult for informal mentoring to occur. Teaching is traditionally an isolated affair; therefore for informal mentoring to occur, schools will need to undergo some kind of ‘reculturing’ and reconfiguring so that they can embrace a culture of collaboration. In this regard, Ganser (2006:44) notes that in integrated professional cultures, it will not be necessary to have formal mentoring, since informal mentoring will already be a part of that culture.

The lack of structure associated with informal mentoring may be advantageous in terms of giving the mentees control in relation to when they want to learn, and how and from whom. Also, informal mentoring relationships are often of a long-term nature, since they are not limited by the routines and timetables of the workplace. However, lack of a clear
implementation plan and policy framework may make it difficult for mentoring to be undertaken and accounted for. This is particularly so given the possibility that there may be competing priorities in the work environment that may always take precedence to mentoring. Despite such drawbacks, informal mentoring may still be a default option for organisations that do not have the resources to set up and sponsor formal mentoring structures.

Formal and informal mentoring seem to be superordinate, broader or overarching categories of mentoring under which some subordinate or narrower forms can be subsumed. This suggests that irrespective of which form of mentoring is adopted, it takes on some aspects of formal or informal mentoring. Also, formal and informal mentoring should not be seen as mutually exclusive and dichotomous categories. Rather, in practice, it is possible for mentoring to take on a hybrid form that strategically partakes of elements of both formal and informal mentoring.

- **Professional mentoring**

Subordinate or narrower forms of mentoring, as intimated above, include professional mentoring. Meyer and Fourie (2004:131) observe that professional mentoring aims to create an enabling learning environment for a person to attain professional registration and status.

Although the mentee undergoes training in a specific organisation, the mentoring programme is not run by the host organisation, but by the professional association whose registration the mentee is seeking. The host organisation’s only role is to serve as a location for training. The professional association sets the certification or accreditation standards and also appoints a professional mentor, who works in the host organisation. Professional mentoring seems to be similar to mentoring in teaching education, in terms of which a university or teacher’s college sends student teachers on
a practicum at schools, but insists that their school-based training be conducted on its own terms.

- **Reverse mentoring**

In addition to the above, mentoring can take the form of reverse mentoring. Jamissen and Phelps (2006:136) propose that reverse mentoring occurs where the parties involved swap roles whenever the circumstances demand. Thus, in contrast to the traditional view of mentoring, in terms of which supportive input necessarily flows from the mentor to the mentee, in reverse mentoring, support can follow either direction between the mentor and the mentee. Reverse mentoring seems to be based on the recognition of the possibility of mutual learning; the mentor is also capable of learning something from the mentee. As Vonk (cited in Mtetwa & Kwari, 2003:274) similarly argues, mentoring is a potentially reciprocal relationship from which both parties can benefit. This view is shared by Dusenbury (cited in Mtetwa & Kwari, 2003:275), who underlines the possibility of mutual learning in a mentoring relationship. Reverse mentoring seems to be particularly in tune with the situation prevailing in the 21st century, which is characterised by knowledge explosion and rapid and ceaseless societal changes. In such circumstances, a person cannot always sustain his or her claims on monopoly on knowledge and skills, since these are likely to be frequently made obsolete and irrelevant by the rapid changes in the environment and shifts in role expectations.

- **Multiple mentoring**

Based on the above, in order to survive in a rapidly changing world, people may need to collaborate closely with others to enhance their knowledge and for skills sharing. This seems to suggest that mentoring may also involve more than two parties engaged in a network of mutual support. Such a web of mentoring relationships comes close to what Jamissen and Phelps (2006:139) term multiple mentoring. These authors maintain that
multiple mentoring takes place where the mentee works with two or more mentors so that the mentee can achieve a 'diversified competence profile in a shorter period than would be possible with a single mentor'. Portner (2008:9) implies the possibility of multiple mentoring in pointing out that the mentee may find alternative sources of support to the mentor. It seems that multiple mentoring is more likely to take root in workplaces where there is a culture of collaboration.

In schools where there are larger numbers of mentees or student teachers, it is possible for them to support each other to supplement the support they may be getting from their mentors. Such a form of mentoring comes close to what Crow (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:158) terms co-mentoring or peer mentoring. In peer mentoring, the parties involved have more or less the same levels of experience, knowledge and skills. As Crow states, in peer mentoring the relationship between the parties is mainly that of a critical friendship. However, such a form of mentoring is likely to be largely informal.

Extending the above conceptions of mentoring, Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005:679) suggest that in teacher education, mentoring can also be broadly categorised in terms of the nature of learning that results from it. In this connection, these authors distinguish between 'educative mentoring' and what they call 'a narrow view of mentoring'. Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005:679) describe educative mentoring as a robust, richer form of mentoring that is based on a developmental view of learning, which actively seeks to enable mentees to reflectively and critically respond to the challenges they meet in the classroom. Implicitly, such mentoring encourages the mentee to interrogate the values underlying the prevailing teaching culture in a school. Such a form of learning calls to mind what Argyris and Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13) call double-loop learning.

The foregoing suggests that educative mentoring goes beyond seeking to give mentees technical advice; it also provides emotional support and facilitates situational adjustment (Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher, 2011:435). Intriguingly, educative mentoring seems
to come close to what Broadbank and McGhill (Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher, 2011:435) term ‘evolutionary mentoring’. The two authors describe evolutionary mentoring as a form of mentoring that allows and enables the parties involved to ‘… identify prevailing discourse and challenge it through reflective dialogue’. Clearly, such a form of mentoring allows the parties involved to continually interrogate and transform their teaching practices, an approach to teacher education that Cochran-Smith and Lytle term ‘inquiry as stance’.

Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005:679) contrast ‘educative mentoring’ to what they term ‘a narrow view of mentoring’. According to these authors, the latter form of mentoring superficially seeks to facilitate the new teacher’s adjustment to the new work environment as well as to provide technical advice. The technical advice given, consists of a static set of cookbook-like pedagogical recipes that the mentor is expected to uncritically and unreflectively implement in the classroom. This form of mentoring is unlikely to promote mentee development.

3.3 PERSPECTIVES OF MENTORING

The form of mentoring adopted in a specific context depends on deeper and more fundamental considerations relating to theoretical assumptions on mentoring and learning. These assumptions are closely coupled with the forms of mentoring discussed above. Hence, to acquire a thorough appreciation of mentoring and its various forms, there is a need to explore the various perspectives on mentoring relationships. Accordingly, in this section, the various perspectives on mentoring will be given extended treatment.

Wang and Odell (2006:475) identify the following three perspectives of mentoring relationships: humanistic, situated perspective, and critical constructivist perspectives. These perspectives will be considered in some depth below.
3.3.1 Humanistic perspective

As its name suggests, the humanistic perspective of mentoring focuses on the person and pays less attention to the non-human aspects of mentoring relationships, such as the content and process of learning (Wang & Odell, 2006:475). Consequently, this perspective on mentoring is primarily concerned with helping the mentee adjust appropriately to the new working environment through supporting him or her to come to terms with the emotional and psychosocial tension that emanates from the adjustment process (Wang & Odell, 2006:475; Tang & Choi, 2005:384). The major thrust of mentoring relationships, according to this perspective, is to help the mentee maintain self-esteem and build confidence in the face of the demands of the new workplace.

Given its emphasis on facilitating the individual’s emotional and psychosocial adjustment to the new work situation, the humanistic perspective conceptualises mentor roles in terms of providing emotional and psychosocial support to the mentee. That is why the counselling role features prominently in mentoring relationships based on the humanistic perspective. The counselling role involves developing close interpersonal relationships with mentees so that they will, for example, freely disclose their personal problems to the mentor (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010:46). It is on the basis of such relationships that the mentor can identify the mentee’s problems and provide the appropriate motivational and emotional support. In order to effectively perform a counselling role, the mentor needs skills, such as being a good friend and listener.

However, the humanistic perspective is seen as limited, on a number of counts. Firstly, the success of mentoring is precariously dependent on a harmonious relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Yet, such a harmonious relationship cannot be always guaranteed, since it is contingent on the delicate matching of the personalities of the parties involved in mentoring. Secondly, the humanistic perspective does not give due regard to the need to help the mentee to construct and reconstruct his or her views of teaching (Wang & Odell, 2006:475). This suggests that the humanistic perspective
cannot be an appropriate and adequate theoretical framework for a student teacher mentoring programme that seeks to produce quality teachers through the transformation and continual interrogation and modification of the teaching culture. Korthagen and Vasalos (Cain, 2009:56) also write sceptically about mentoring in which the counselling role takes foreground, suggesting that counselling and mentoring cannot be conflated, as the humanistic perspective implies.

### 3.3.2 Situated apprentice perspective

The second mentoring perspective is the situated apprentice perspective. Unlike the humanistic perspective, this perspective pays attention to the process and content of learning to teach. Accordingly, the situated apprentice perspective, as formulated and popularised by Lave and Wenger (1991), seeks to support the mentee to master knowledge and skills that are necessary for effective participation in and integration into a specific school and its teaching culture. This perspective sees professional knowledge and skills as embedded in socio-cultural contexts; therefore, they can only be acquired through participating in authentic professional work situations. Buitink (2009:118) similarly points out that ‘teaching is a complex activity and complex operations can be learned effectively in an authentic context’. A similar point is raised by Sfard (Tynjala, 2008:131) when she refers to the ‘participation metaphor’ of learning, in terms of which learning is seen as taking place in social communities.

In the context of this perspective, the goal of mentoring is to provide the necessary technical support and guidance to facilitate the transition and integration of student teachers into an existing teaching culture. Student teachers come from an entirely different community of practice, namely a higher education institution, where they would have learnt theory that cannot be readily connected with practice. In this regard, Cope and Stephen (2001:913) refers to the ‘two worlds’ pitfall’ in teacher education, in that higher education institutions and schools are seen as entirely different contexts, different in terms of major activities and criteria. This represents a typical challenge for
student teachers. As Shulman (1986) has noteworthy pointed out, the theory risks remaining useless in the context of teaching if it is not converted into pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge is a synthetic form of knowledge that teachers develop when theory interacts with the demands of the professional work situation. Consequently, the theory that the student teachers bring from college needs to be redefined, taking in the context of experience in an existing teaching culture; otherwise, the student teacher will remain a professional outsider. That is why learning in the situated perspective is seen as both intellectual and socio-cultural processes. Cope and Stephen (2001:914) similarly point out that learning to teach ‘… is as much a process of acculturation as it is of the mastery of a number of technical competences’.

Given what has been said above, the ideal mentor in the situated perspective would be one who has developed a strong practical and contextualised knowledge base of teaching. Such knowledge enables the mentor to have a thorough understanding of the culture and context of teaching in the specific school. In this way, the mentor will be able to facilitate the transition and integration of student teachers into the teaching culture (Wang & Odell, 2006:476).

The situated apprentice perspective seems to provide a refreshingly new take on mentoring and teacher learning by seeing these processes as collaborative, socio-cultural as well as intellectual. However, this perspective can be regarded as deficient, since it privileges the student teacher’s participation and fitting into an existing teaching culture. It seems that this perspective does not encourage the mentees to interrogate challenges and transform the existing teaching culture. Therefore, the mentee may not learn anything beyond the horizons of the existing teaching culture. In this regard, Stones (Buitink, 2009:118) expresses the fear that the mentees may learn ‘mediocre pedagogy and everyday pedagogy … reflecting traditional teaching culture … in which the underlying principles are not made explicit’.
The situated apprentice perspective implies that the student teacher must accept the existing teaching culture, irrespective of whether or not it is viable and progressive in relation to promoting effective student learning in schools. The student teacher may therefore find it difficult to challenge the existing teaching culture. Cochran-Smith (Cope & Stephen, 2001:914) similarly observes that ‘to be critical in schools may not be rewarding – it involves teaching against the grain’. Cope and Stephen (2001:914) also relatedly note that tension may arise ‘when students are expected to join a community whilst simultaneously critiquing some of its practices’. Yet the latest research findings suggest that teachers learn best when they collaboratively, reflectively and critically engage with their own and each other’s teaching practices, with a view to transform them in a way that enhances the learning of students (Wang & Odell, 2006:476). If the situated perspective does not allow student teachers to question and transform the existing teaching culture, then it can legitimately be seen as limiting professional development. Hence, the situated apprentice perspective on its own cannot constitute an adequate theoretical basis for organising a mentoring programme that seeks to transform the existing teaching practices in order to enhance teacher quality as well as student learning in schools.

3.3.3 Critical constructivist perspective

Apart from the two perspectives considered, there is a third perspective on mentoring relationships, namely the critical constructivist perspective. This perspective is underpinned by two theoretical bases, namely critical theory and constructivism. As Wang and Odell (2006:477) note, critical theory considers the goal of learning to essentially consists in interrogating existing knowledge and practices, possibly exposing the oppressive and hegemonic potential in it. This provides the basis for emancipation. Shank (Hudson, 2004:140) describes constructivism as ‘... holding that learning is a process of building up structures of experience where prior knowledge and experience scaffold new understandings’. Wang and Odell (2006:477) concur with the preceding
definition, stating that constructivism holds that learners actively build up new knowledge on the basis of initial schema.

In terms of the above formulation, the goal of the mentoring relationship predictably becomes one of providing the mentee with an environment that encourages him or her to critique existing knowledge structures and teaching cultures. The ultimate goal is to bring about ameliorative transformation in teaching practices. Hence, mentors in this perspective are regarded as change agents. In this perspective, the key mentoring role involves acting as a critical friend to the mentee, posting thought-provoking questions about existing knowledge and practices and critically exploring new possibilities and ideas. An effective mentor in this perspective is one who is committed to the ideals of transforming rather than defending and perpetuating the current teaching culture.

The critical constructivist perspective offers specific advantages. This perspective is consistent with the latest research findings, in terms of which teacher learning is seen as problematising and transforming the existing concepts and teaching culture. In the same vein, Hager (Tynjala, 2008:131) talks about the emerging paradigm of learning, in which learning is regarded as ‘action in the world’. Rosaem and Schram (Cope & Stephen, 2001:914) similarly point out that initial teacher education should produce ‘transformative intellectuals’ who will reform rather than just fit into existing practices. In schools, this takes place when mentors and mentees reflect collaboratively on their practical knowledge and teaching practices (Wang & Odell, 2006:478). The continuous critiquing and interrogation of one’s practices ensure that practical knowledge and teaching practices are not ritualised and routinised, but constantly adjusted with reference to changes and demands in the pedagogical circumstances. Tynjala (2008:131) relatedly posits the need for continuous learning in an age characterised by rapid and on-going change in all facets of society so that competence remains consistent with the changed demands of the teaching profession. In this regard, this mentoring perspective can be seen as a potentially viable basis for organising a mentoring programme that seeks to ultimately improve teacher quality as well as school
student learning in an era putatively characterised by ever-changing demands on the teacher (Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011:294). This is consistent with the view of Schön (Paris, 2010:15), who considers reflection as a viable basis for attaining excellence in professional practice.

However, the critical constructivist perspective can also be considered deficient, on the following two counts. Firstly, it is based on the somewhat erroneous view that every item on the knowledge of teaching is flawed unless it is produced from reflective and collaborative inquiry. Secondly, the critical constructivist downplays and does not give due regard to the possible existence of knowledge on teaching that is largely a matter of consensus in a professional community. In this way, this perspective can be accused of taking the issue of reform-minded teaching too far.

In overview, the three perspectives of mentoring emphasise different aspects of mentoring relationships. This implies that, taken individually, each provides partial and limited views on mentoring. Therefore, when designing mentoring programmes, one may need to adopt an eclectic approach, judiciously picking out elements of each of the perspectives, without restricting oneself to any one of them.

### 3.4 MODELS OF MENTORING

The perspectives analysed above underlie different models of mentoring through emphasising different dimensions of the mentoring relationship that the specific perspectives also emphasise. Thus, different models of mentoring seem to be distinguishable on the basis of the differential emphasis placed on different aspects of the mentoring process. Maynard and Furlong (1993) propose three models of mentoring, namely the apprenticeship model; the competency model; and the reflective practitioner model. These models relate mentoring to initial teacher education. However, for a more complete picture, the Parsloe and Leedham`s model (2009) will also be considered below
3.4.1 Apprenticeship Model

The apprenticeship model, mainly sponsored and popularised by the Hilgate Group in the United Kingdom (Mukorera, 2002:66), is based on the craft or technicist view, in terms of which learning to teach is equated with learning a craft. Cain (2009:58) argues along the same lines, namely that the content of mentor-mentee conversations mainly relates to the practical issues of classroom teaching, rarely about theory. In the context of the apprenticeship model of mentoring, scholars such as Valencic and Vogric (2007:374), Smith and Lev-Ari (2005:289) and Mukorera (2002:66) consider the mentor as primarily a model and exemplar of ‘good teaching practices’, with the student teacher being expected to emulate the mentor’s example. Experienced teachers, who are the mentors, and student teachers are in a relationship of apprentices and master craftsmen. This relationship implies that mentors, who are the master craftsmen, have a monopoly on the skills and knowledge in the relationship. The mentors or the master craftsmen’s authority seems to be based on their possession of a secure and assured body of craft knowledge and skills. Learning in such a relationship takes a one-directional route from mentors to mentees.

The lack of balance in the levels of knowledge and skills held by mentors and mentees implies that mentors will most likely adopt a directive style. Hennissen et al. (2008:174) intimate that the directive approach involves the mentors telling student teachers what to do, assessing, correcting and informing. The directive style implies that mentors take professional decisions on their own, with no or limited involvement on the part of mentees (Clutterbuck, cited in Callan, 2006:11). This suggests that there is unlikely to be a hierarchical relationship between mentors and mentees, making genuine collaboration between the two quite difficult.

In the Apprenticeship Model, mentors perform the following major roles: interpreters of teaching experience, guides and coaches. As interpreters, mentors explain the significance of the initial teaching experience to student teachers to help them
conceptualise what is happening in the classroom (Mukorera, 2002:66). Mentors help mentees give meaning to what is happening in the classroom in terms of putting together the isolated bits of mentors’ teaching behaviour into a coherent and connected picture (Maynard & Furlong, 1995:16). This enables them to form initial schema about what the process of teaching entails (Mukorera, 2002:66). Such ideas are not original, but are only an image of teaching, based on the experienced teachers’ example.

The coaching role involves such mentoring activities as modelling and instructing. Modelling occurs as mentors demonstrate teaching skills, while the mentors observe and imitate the mentors’ examples, thereby learning how to teach. In this way, it is assumed that mentees will be able to access veteran teachers’ practical knowledge and therefore learn how to teach (Cain, 2009:57). Student teachers are also given an opportunity to practise the observed skills under the supervision of their mentors, taking responsibility for part of the teaching process. In the guiding role, the mentors, in terms of the apprenticeship model, give the mentees practical tips and ‘recipes’ about teaching (Mukorera, 2002:66). Describing learning to teach under this model, Van Manen (Cain, 2009:57) states that learning to teach is ‘acquiring pedagogical tact … all about knowing what to do, not to do, what to say and not to say’.

However, it is not clear how mentees access the craft knowledge of experienced teachers, given the limited possibility of collaborative practice and reflective dialogue between mentors and mentees. A widely shared view among researchers is that practical or craft knowledge is largely tacit and unarticulated; therefore, inaccessible outside collaborative practices and reflective discussions. The Apprenticeship Model seems not to provide a framework that allows mentors and mentees to engage in discussion about each other’s practices. Hence, veteran teachers’ practical knowledge remains tacit and unarticulated; therefore, out of reach of student teachers. This suggests that a minimal amount of learning, if any, occurs in the context of the Apprenticeship Model.
Also, the model assumes that student researchers enter training with no ideas on teaching whatsoever. Lortie contends that student teachers bring to the training programme schema about teaching formed from their experience as students in schools, which he terms apprenticeships of observation. These prior notions about teaching could potentially undermine student teachers’ receptivity to the new ideas encountered during teaching practice. The Apprenticeship Model does not allow student teachers to critically engage with the conceptual sub-structure of prior notions about what needs to be modified to allow the accommodation of new ideas during the practicum. This implies that the Apprenticeship Model treats learning to teach as intellectually vacuous work that involves the transfer of low-order craft-like skills only (Brooke & Sykes, cited in Cain, 2009:57). Such a view oversimplifies teaching in a way that is inconsistent with the latest view of teaching as a complex and intellectually challenging profession. This is so because in the apprenticeship model, mentors are not provided with challenges and the stimulation that generate reflective dialogue. Hence there will be no shift in student teachers’ prior conception of teaching. Since learning implies fundamental change in cognitive structures, given the foregoing scenario, no learning would have taken place at all.

The Apprenticeship Model does not allow student teachers to transcend the existing teaching culture, as exemplified by their mentors’ practices, but to merely fit into it. A similar view of teaching has been noted by Wang and Odell (2002:495), in what they call the situated apprentice perspective of mentoring, in terms of which the primary focus is on socialising beginner teachers into the procedures, routines, policies and technical aspects of the workplace. This view is shared by authors such as Lave and Wenger (1991:29), who see fitting in and getting accepted by a community of practice as a necessary step in learning a profession. However, training that is aimed only at giving the trainee technical mastery of the job and fitting into an existing professional culture is somewhat professionally impoverished, as it would produce a para-professional only, whom Hoyle (Day, 1999) terms a restricted professional. This also echoes Agryis and Schön’s (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13) idea of single loop
learning; a superficial kind of learning that does not seek to change the values and assumptions underlying the existing teaching culture.

Furthermore, the Apprenticeship Model seems to have been overtaken by the times. The view of mentors as master craftsmen with a secure body of knowledge and skills is regarded as no longer tenable in a world characterised by knowledge explosion, changing demands and shifting roles (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000:52). In such a world, the basis of mentors’ authority is continually undermined, as their knowledge and skills increasingly grow irrelevant and inadequate in the face of new demands and roles.

Given the possibility that neither mentors nor mentees may have a monopoly on knowledge and skills in an increasingly globalised world, both mentors and mentees may need to continue to learn and share knowledge in the face of increasing challenges. Otherwise, they will not be able to cope with the new demands and changes. Such circumstances make reverse mentoring, in terms of which both parties in a mentoring relationship learn from each other, a very likely and potentially workable mentoring option.

### 3.4.2 Competency Model

Maynard and Furlong (1993:17) also propose a Competency Model of mentoring. In this model, learning to teach is seen as mastery of a set of pre-defined competences. The main mentoring role in this model is coaching, in terms of which mentors systematically train mentees to master specific skills and behaviours that are regarded as vital. Coaching takes place in cycles, each of which comprises three phases, namely pre-observation conference; class observation; and post-observation conference (Portner, 2008:46). In the pre-observation conference, mentors and mentees seek to define and agree on the specific skills to be learnt (Portner, 2008:46). Mentors then observe the student teachers delivering a lesson in which the relevant skill is highlighted. Mentees and mentors then engage in a discussion of the lesson presented. After the discussion,
mentees again teach, implementing the changes in teaching agreed to in the post-
observation discussion. The aim is to help mentees attain higher levels of mastery of
教学 skills.

In common with the Apprenticeship Model, the Competency Model is based on a
technicist view of teaching. This model de-emphasises the theoretical foundations of
teaching, taking teaching to be more about performance than understanding. Student
teachers can give practical effect only to mentors' or officially sanctioned ideas about
teaching.

Neither student teachers nor mentors dare question the conceptual basis of the existing
teaching culture. This denies teacher student teachers the opportunity to engage
critically with the theories and values that underpin their teaching practices. Hence, like
the Apprenticeship model, the Competency Model does not go further than fitting
student teachers into an existing teaching culture, as defined by a static competencies
framework. As Menter (2009:158) observes, the Competency Model does not allow the
student teacher to strategically respond to unforeseen classroom situations not
anticipated in the competencies framework, thereby constraining student teachers’
professional growth by not allowing them to exercise professional creativity and agency.
Also, the competency approach assumes that these competences can be relevantly and
usefully applied in all situations. Yet, in the 21st century, which is characterised by rapid
and ceaseless change, a static set of teacher competencies may not be relevant if it is
not continually modified in line with changing demands in the classroom. This view is
echoed by Ezati, Ochong, Ssentamu and Sikoyo (2010:32) and Turner-Bisest (2001:3),
who consider teaching to be full of contingencies and unpredictable situations, calling
for the teacher to have adaptive expertise which enables him or her to deal with
different contexts as they come. Ceaseless change brings new roles and responsibilities
that mentors cannot effectively perform on the basis of a static set of competencies.
3.4.3 Reflective Practitioner Model

The third model proposed by Maynard and Furlong (1993:18) is the reflective practitioner model of mentoring. In contrast to the apprenticeship and competency models, the reflective practitioner model sees teaching primarily in terms of capacity to critically engage with and possibly transform the theoretical basis of teaching practices. Shaw (Cain, 2009:57) alternatively terms such a view the ‘inquiry-oriented approach’.

The Reflective Practitioner Model suggests a view of student teachers who learn to teach in authentic environments, engaging in actual teaching, while at the same time being allowed to interrogate their teaching practices and assumptions, as well as those of their colleagues (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005:291). In this way, student teachers are given an opportunity to modify, review and extend the assumptions and values that inform and frame their teaching practices to suit changing situations and demands (Minott, 2011:74; Ezati et al., 2010:31; Huddleston & Unwin, 2002:26). Argyris and Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13) refer to this kind of learning as double-loop learning. The foregoing seems to tie in with Mezirow’s views (2000:7), who refers to such learning as transformative learning, whereby the individual seeks to fundamentally alter her or his taken-for-granted assumptions and perspectives.

The role of mentors in this model is to serve as a source of stimulus, challenge and encouragement, so that student teachers can move beyond the technical level of teaching. The foregoing projects student teacher learning in the context of the Reflective practitioner Model of mentoring as involving collaborative engagement, in terms of which professional colleagues scaffold each other’s professional growth. Thus, learning takes place in dialogical manner through mutual critical engagement between mentors and student teachers. In the same vein, Carroll (2011:80) highlights the importance of dialogue in professional learning, as it allows teachers to share and understand each other’s assumptions and practices. Hence this model makes it
possible for student teachers to attain the level of a full professional, as suggested by Hoyle (Day, 1999:5) in his notion of the ‘extended professional’.

Considered individually, these models represent a partial view of teaching and mentoring. While the Apprenticeship and competency models of mentoring do not allow student teachers to attain full professionality, the reflective practitioner model on its own represents an inaccurate and idealistic view of teaching. This is so because the reflective model assumes that student teachers will straightaway be able to interrogate teaching practice, ignoring the gradual and developmental nature of learning to teach. The developmental view implies that before teacher student teachers begin to reflect on their practices, they need ‘to learn to see’ so that they grasp and understand the ‘rules, routines and rituals of the classroom’ (Pollard, 2005:36). Fish (Cain, 2009:58) similarly contends that apprenticeship and reflection need not be dichotomised, but should be seen as points on a teacher learning continuum through which student teachers gradually move from apprenticeship to reflective practice. This suggests that student teachers necessarily go through an apprenticeship before they begin to interrogate their own and others’ teaching practices as they attempt to construct an independent professional identity.

3.4.4 Parsloe and Leedham’s Model

While the three models considered above enable one to have a deeper understanding of mentoring and teaching, they are of little use to someone who needs practical guidance on the practice of mentoring and teaching in practical situations. The following model, proposed by Parsloe and Leedham (2009:21), addresses this need to some extent. In their model, these authors see mentoring as proceeding in four overlapping stages, as described below.

The first stage involves analysing the needs, nature and desires of mentees. Villani (2009:6) highlights the critical importance of understanding the needs of mentees to
serve as a basis for ensuring that they are provided with appropriate support. In defining the needs of mentees, mentors may use psychometric instruments and probing questions, with a view to establishing, for example, mentees’ learning styles and preferences, so that the techniques and approaches used during implementation may be tailored to suit the particular mentee’s needs. At this stage, learners are also helped to acknowledge and appreciate their needs, as well as the need for change. Once the needs have been identified and defined, mentees can specify goals in terms of the competencies or skills they need to attain.

The clarification of needs and goal specification enables mentees to move to the next stage, where they construct a **Personal Learning Plan** (PLP). The PLP is similar to a contract in which mentees, in agreement with their mentors, formally set out the agreed goals, as well as the resources and strategies needed to accomplish these goals, the evaluation plan and a time-frame. The PLP is comparable to Individual Professional Development Plans or Personalised Student Learning Plans, both of which similarly seek to help mentees identify specific individual learning goals and plans of actions (Missouri Professional Development Guidelines, n.d:128; New Jersey: Department of Education, 2009:2). The PLP is particularly necessary because of the potential lack of agreement and consensus about the focus and content of the mentoring process, given the fact that the two parties start off different in terms of their respective needs, perceptions and expectations, due to their different career stages (Waters, 2004:520). The first two stages of Parsloe and Needham’s model could be seen as corresponding to a mentoring phase which Kochan and Trimble (2000:21) term *laying the groundwork*, *during* which the mentor and the mentee make preparations before entering into a fully-fledged relationship. The two preparatory stages in Parsloe and Needham’s model also seem to echo Kram’s (1985:32) initiation phase of the development of the mentoring relationship.

The next stage involves putting in place a supportive framework for mentees to realise these goals, as specified in the PLP. A central pillar in such a framework of support is
the use of appropriate mentoring styles that suit the nature and the level of development of the mentees. Davis (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010:429) expresses the same view when he argues that mentors must try to match the mentoring approach with the mentees, taking into consideration such factors as the mentees' learning styles, developmental levels and changing needs. In keeping with this spirit, mentors should flexibly and pragmatically shift along the directive to non-directive styles continuum, looking for a style that suits their mentees. For example, where mentees have low knowledge and skills levels and lack initiative, mentors may appropriately use directive styles, such as instructing and modelling. Clutterbuck (Callan, 2006:11) sees such mentoring as based on a sponsoring model of mentoring.

However, as mentees achieve growing mastery of knowledge and skills and become less dependent on their mentors, the latter may shift to non-directive styles. According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010:428), the non-directive style or approach is associated with such activities as listening, clarifying, encouraging and reflective behaviours. Such a style is appropriate to someone who has already mastered the basic skills and knowledge to enable him or her to function semi-autonomously and take increasing control of the learning process.

Also, mentors need to keep a judicious balance between support and challenge, since too much of either may undermine the learning process and professional growth, as suggested by scholars such as Harrison, Lawson and Wortley (2005:274) and Daloz (1986). In the same vein, Vermunt and Verloop (Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh & Wills, 2008:112) emphasise the importance of 'constructive friction', which balances guidance and self-regulation. Too much guidance creates a culture of dependency in mentees, discouraging creativity and innovation. On the other hand, too much challenge may create stress and anxiety, alienating mentees.

Following the implementation of the PLP, mentors and mentees reflect on it to check whether the goals have been attained. Where goals have not been achieved, they try to
come up with an explanation. This makes it possible for the problem to be corrected in the next round of the mentoring cycle.

3.5 ASPECTS OF MENTORING

As was clearly demonstrated above, the concept of mentoring seems to be a subject of continuing debate among authors. Different authors define mentoring from different perspectives, resulting in different aspects of mentoring being given different levels of emphasis. However, there seems to be some area of convergence among authors in relation to what aspects constitute mentoring. This section seeks to explore and discover the consensus that underlies the various views of mentoring.

Portner (2008:8) identifies four overlapping aspects of mentoring, namely relating, assessing, coaching, and guiding. These aspects will be explained in greater detail below.

3.5.1 Relating

The relating function concerns the establishment of interpersonal relationships between mentees and mentors, encouraging them to connect with each other socially and emotionally. Highlighting the critical role of relating, Pitton (2006:11) argues that mentoring is essentially a social relationship. Lai (2010:445), in agreement with Sundli (2007:204), underlines the need to cultivate a strong relationship between mentors and mentees, so as to facilitate closer personal engagement. Mentoring, unlike other approaches to facilitating learning, is both personal and professional, and can therefore not be carried out at a distance. In other words, mentoring implies socio-emotional closeness.

However, it is not always easy for mentors to establish effective interpersonal relationships with their mentees. Differences in personalities, among other factors, may
make the relating function difficult. Some personality types are difficult to match. Hence, it is necessary to appropriately match the personalities of the mentor and the mentee (Hale, 2000:224). In the same connection, Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum and Wakukawa (Sundli, 2007:207) suggest that allowing mentors and mentors to choose their mentoring partners may make the matching process easier. However, as Woodd, (1997:340) notes, although mentees may want to be involved in choosing their mentors, this may be made difficult by the limited knowledge they may have about the different mentors.

Also, in order for a good relationship to develop, mutual trust and confidence are required between mentees and their mentors (Li, 2009:156; Portner, 2008:12). A close and trusting social and emotional relationship enables the parties involved to know and engage with each other deeply and honestly. This enables them to understand each other better. More importantly, such a relationship makes it possible for mentors to know and appreciate the needs of their mentees better.

### 3.5.2 Assessing

A close and trusting relationship makes it easier for mentors to carry out the assessing function. The aspect of assessing entails collecting information about their mentees in order to develop a deeper understanding of their needs. Mentees’ needs encompass their skills and knowledge gaps, learning preferences and styles, and preferred communication modes.

Such information allows mentors to achieve two things. Firstly, if the mentors know their mentees’ skills and knowledge gaps, they will be able to prioritise the skills and knowledge that map onto the mentees’ deficiencies. Relatedly, mentors will be able to pitch the tasks or the learning content at the appropriate level of difficulty. These considerations are important, because they have significant implications for the balance between challenge and support in the learning environment, as emphasised by Daloz
Tasks that are pitched at inappropriate levels of challenge generate stress in the learning process, which makes them more difficult to perform (Daloz, cited in Woodd, 1997:340). This could alienate or demotivate the student teacher. On the other hand, if the tasks are too simple, they fail to provide enough challenge to mentees. This may also demotivate them.

Appreciation of mentees’ learning styles and preferred communication modes enables the making of decisions relating to the matching of mentors and mentees (Portner, 2008:39). It will be easier for mentoring pairs in which the parties have the same learning styles and communication modes to connect with each other and develop a sound working relationship. Where it is not possible to match mentees and mentors, knowing their mentees’ learning and communication preferences will enable mentors to adjust to their preferences in order to connect better with them.

3.5.3 Coaching

Coaching is another aspect of mentoring identified by Portner (2008:8). This aspect is oriented towards enhancing mentees’ mastery of skills and understanding in order to enhance performance (Garvey, 2011:66; Nilsson & Van Driel, 2010:1316). Coaching attempts to fill up mentees’ skills and knowledge gaps, as identified during assessment. Mentors as coaches may adopt styles that vary from directive to non-directive, depending on the level of skill, knowledge and understanding of their mentees (Hennissen et al., 2008:174). Where mentees lack basic skills and understanding, a structured and directive approach to coaching tends to be appropriate. Typical mentoring activities associated with the directive style are modelling and information giving, with the mentees taking a relatively more passive and reactive role.

However, where mentees have a relatively higher mastery of skills and understanding, coaching tends to be unstructured and non-directive. The thrust of coaching in this context will be to enable mentees to attain higher levels of skills mastery and
understanding. Mentors play a facilitative role, as opposed to a directive role. This may entail engaging mentees in discussions in which the mentors ask probing questions that expose the schemas that underlie their (the mentees’) practices as well as expectations. This enables the mentors to establish the gap between where the mentees are in terms of practice and where they want to be. This is a potential source of challenge for mentees, which may motivate them towards the attainment of higher standards. Such discussions are usually carried on within the context of the coaching cycle.

Scholars (Portner, 2008; Mohono-Mahlatsi & Van Tonder, 2006:388) generally agree that coaching comprises three phases, namely pre-observation conference, classroom observation, and post-observation conference.

3.5.4 Guiding

The fourth aspect of mentoring, as proposed by Portner (2008:8), is guiding. The purpose of the guiding function is to enable mentees to begin to operate independently of their mentors (Portner, 2008:8). This transition can be facilitated through improving mentees’ capacity for decision-making on professional matters.

The decision-making capacities of mentees can be improved through the use of appropriate coaching and relating strategies. The choice of coaching strategies is decided on the basis of the level of knowledge, skills and understanding possessed by the mentee. As noted above, where mentees possess low levels of skill, knowledge and understanding, structured and directive strategies would be more appropriate. Relating strategies are chosen on the basis of the level of willingness or confidence mentees demonstrate when tackling problem situations. Typically, all the relating and coaching behaviours used must challenge mentees to seek to attain higher levels of mastery.
3.6 FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVENESS OF MENTORING

The literature analysed suggests four major factors that are related to the failure or effective of mentoring programmes. These are school culture; motivation of mentors; mentor-mentee relationship; and mentor selection and training. Each of these factors will be examined below.

3.6.1 School culture

Several authors have suggested that the prevailing school culture may promote or hinder effective mentoring and professional learning (Day, 1999:77). Deal and Kennedy (Day, 1999:77) concur, stating that, ‘When culture works against you, it is nearly impossible to get anything done’. Hodkinson, Biesta and James (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010:268) view the culture of an organisation as a ‘... social phenomenon, a practice constructed through interactions between the members and the operational context of an organisation’. Adopting the same line of argument, Schain (Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge & Bipath, 2006:67) states that organisational culture is ‘... a pattern of basic assumptions that are invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its external adaptation or internal integration’. Synthesising the two views, organisations can be described as the web of meanings and practices that members of an organisation use as a basis for dealing with challenges emanating from their internal and external environments. These meanings are captured in what the organisation cherishes as valid and worthwhile knowledge, values and attitudes.

Given the above views of organisational culture, Clement and Vanden Berghe (2001:44) consider school culture to be ‘... the ethos of a school as reflected in the shared norms, symbols and traditions’. School cultures vary from one school to another, reflecting the unique circumstances of each school. Hargreaves (Day, 1999:78) has identified four different types of school cultures and analysed their implications for professional
learning in schools. These are individualism; balkanisation; collaboration; and contrived collegiality.

In collaborative school cultures, there are opportunities for professional interaction between teachers, hence it may be easier for mentoring to take place and become integrated into the school culture. This is so because the values and assumptions of teaching that underlie a collaborative culture are consistent and compatible with those that underlie mentoring. Such values include knowledge sharing, cooperation and openness. Hence, a mentoring culture may easily take root in such a school. In such a school culture, mentees benefit not only from their formal relationship with their mentors, but from an extended network of support in the context of informal mentoring in the school (Barth, 2006:10). Such informal mentoring opportunities readily arise during routine interaction with other teachers in the school. Therefore, mentoring in a collaborative school culture will not be the sole responsibility of the mentors, but a widely shared practice of the school.

On the other hand, school cultures may be characterised by individualism and balkanisation. In individualistic school cultures, teachers work in isolation from each other, implying that there is little or no collaboration between them. This suggests that there are no or only limited opportunities for professional interaction between the teachers in such schools. In a balkanised school culture, collaboration occurs only within groups or departments. Hence, there is limited professional interaction between the members of the different departments (Day, 1999:78-79). As a result of limited professional interaction in individualistic and balkanised school cultures, it may be difficult for mentors to interact feely with their mentees, since such a pattern of behaviour will not be consistent with the prevailing teaching culture. This limits opportunities for collaborative practice between mentees and mentors. As a result, the mentees will have limited opportunities for learning, since learning can occur only in the context of collaborative practices. In the same vein, Schön (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004) suggests that student teachers can only access their mentors’ practical
knowledge through reflective discussions that take place in the context of collaborative practices.

In their research on school cultures, Lui and Kardos (Ganser, 2006:44) have identified three types of professional cultures that are potentially existent in schools. These are veteran; novice-oriented; and integrated professional cultures. The veteran and novice-oriented cultures occur where beginner and experienced teacher groups work in isolation from each other. In these cultures, there is more professional interaction within than across the professional cultural groups.

Such patterns of interaction have negative consequences for professional learning and mentoring. The limited interaction between novices and veteran teachers means that the novices or mentees will not be able to access the practical knowledge of the experienced teachers. Yet accessing this form of knowledge is a vital starting point in their training. Although the teachers may collaborate with members in their respective teacher groups, they will still lack the intellectual stimulation and challenge that potentially emanate from interaction between novices and veterans.

Integrated professional cultures are similar to what Hargreaves refers to as collaborative school cultures. They promote professional interaction and collaborative practices between teachers. This results, as stated above, in enhanced learning opportunities for mentees.

3.6.2 Motivation of mentors

Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2003:333) contend that motivation involves providing someone with things that will drive him or her towards behaving in certain ways. Herzberg`s Two-factor theory (cited in Heystek et al., 2006:82) seems to be particularly useful in illuminating the motivation of mentors in a school. According to this theory, two categories of factors account for employee job satisfaction and performance. On the
one hand, there is a set of extrinsic factors, called the dissatisfiers or hygiene factors, which work to decrease job satisfaction if not properly managed and availed (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005:932; DeShields & Kara, 2005:132). These include job context factors, such as company policy, supervision, work conditions, relationship with supervisors and subordinates, status and job security (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003:334). On the other hand, intrinsic factors, termed satisfiers or motivators, encourage employees to increase satisfaction and sustain effort (DeShields & Kara, 2005:132; Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003:334). Motivators in an organization include job content factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, work itself, and opportunities for growth (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003:334).

In an organisation such as a school, hygiene factors for mentors include official recognition and due rewarding for undertaking the mentoring job, availability of time for mentoring, mentors’ relationships with student teachers and unfair work distribution. If the aforementioned factors are not properly handled and managed, mentors may grow dissatisfied and frustrated with their job, resulting in them not applying themselves. While improving such working conditions may not result in increased effort, these conditions may constitute the basic minimum that should be available for mentors to apply the normally expected effort to their duties (Herzberg, cited in Heystek et al., 2006:82). Reinforcing this view, Hale (2000:224) notes that mentoring relationships exist in organisational contexts, therefore, they are expectedly influenced by organisational factors.

In terms of Herzberg’s theory, an organisation undertaking mentoring may at a basic level need to improve the context of work to keep mentors satisfied so that they perform the job according to expectations. Such a measure primarily addresses hygiene factors and may include school-based regulations that make mentoring a boon, not a burden for mentors such as allowing them release time from other duties. Also, the school may give the mentors, officially recognised status for undertaking mentoring responsibilities, such as allowing them release time from other duties.
However, in order to motivate mentors in a sustainable way, the school may need to take the following measures. Firstly, the mentoring job may need to be officially recognised through integration into the human resources functions of the organisation such as performance appraisal and a reward system (human resources management). Young and Perrewe (2004:108) suggest that an organisation must explicitly communicate its mentoring-related reward structure to show potential mentors what is in there for them and that mentoring is valued by the organisation. In this regard, mentoring duties could be considered as a key consideration for promotion and staff development purposes. If their contribution is not recognised, mentors are likely to regard mentoring as an unfair burden. If that happens, they will not have the motivation to apply themselves fully to the performance of this duty. In this way, it may be possible to give the mentors formal recognition for taking on such a complex and demanding extra duty.

3.6.3 Mentor training and selection

That mentoring is a more complex and demanding responsibility than teaching seems to be a well established view among researchers. It follows then that mentoring is not something one should undertake without some form of training (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:166). Therefore, there is a need for training if one is to become an effective mentor.

Mentoring and teaching are different from each other in that the one involves working with adults, while the other involves working with children. The skills set and knowledge required for the respective duties are different (Daresh & Playko, cited in Coleman, 2006b:165). Hence, prospective mentors must be equipped with the knowledge and interpersonal skills (Coleman, 2006b:165) that will enable them to understand, communicate and relate effectively and appropriately with adult learners.
However, not every teacher at a school can or should undergo mentor training, since this would not be viable from a financial or logistical point of view. Therefore, some form of pre-training screening should be done during which those teachers who possess certain personality attributes and aptitudes that make them readily amenable to grooming and training as mentors should be identified. A consensus view emerging from literature is that, if given the appropriate training, effective classroom practitioners who have good interpersonal skills are likely to be effective mentors.

3.6.4 Mentor-mentee relationships

There seems to be a commonly held view among authors that effective mentoring takes place in the context of good interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the quality of the mentoring and professional learning that takes place is influenced by the quality of the relationship between mentors and their mentees (Portner, 2002:7).

Where there is mutual trust, commitment and honesty, mentors and mentees can establish an open, collaborative relationship (Fletcher, 2000:7-8). Such a relationship will potentially create increased and enhanced learning opportunities for the mentees. For example, a sincere and open reflective discussion of each other’s practices, encouraged by a good relationship, would enable the mentee to readily access his or her mentor’s practical knowledge. Also, such discussions would enable mentees and mentors to interrogate the theoretical foundation of their practical knowledge, with a view to modifying and improving it. In this way, mentees, if not mentors also, are likely to grow professionally.

Conversely, where such trust does not exist, it may be difficult for mentees and mentors to forge effective collaborative relationships. This would limit learning opportunities for mentees, if not for mentors also.
3.7 BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROGRAMMES

As originally conceptualised in Homer’s *The Odyssey*, mentoring was seen as solely benefitting mentees. However, as the following sections will demonstrate, mentors, mentees and their organisations derive psychological, social and career-related benefits from participating in mentoring programmes (Bouquillon, Sosik & Lee, 2005:239; Young & Perrewe, 2004:103; Pullins & Fine, 2003:259). The following sub-sections will explore the benefits from mentoring for mentors, mentees and organisations that undertake mentoring.

3.7.1 Benefits for mentees

Mentoring programmes would have no reason for being in existence if they did not benefit the mentees for whom they were primarily intended. However, surprisingly, in the literature analysed, this issue seems not to have been given due consideration. Mentoring undoubtedly makes a difference to the quality of learning that student teachers undergo. Everything being equal, it should follow that mentoring improves the quality of student teachers. Professionals trained through mentoring are likely to work with more insight and effectiveness. This is so because during mentored professional training, student teachers are provided with opportunities not only to learn the skills of the job, but also to engage critically with the theoretical foundations of their practices. As a result, they will gain a deeper understanding of the practices than student teachers who have not been mentored.

Some authors, such as Lave and Wenger (1991:29), argue that getting integrated and accepted into the community of practice facilitates the learning of a profession. In this regard, mentoring facilitates professional learning, not only through enabling the student teachers to learn the skills of a profession, but also inducting them into a school as a community of practice. In this way, student teachers in a mentoring programme will
learn their profession more easily than those who do not participate in a mentoring programme.

Mentoring does not merely aim at enabling student teachers to acquire job skills, but focuses on their all-round development through catering for all dimensions of their being. As mentees relate to their mentors on a day-to-day basis, they experience the emotionally stressful situations of learning a profession. As mentees adjust to these stressful situations, their socio-emotional faculty is developed. Thus, mentees not only learn job skills, but people skills as well. Such skills are a particularly significant aspect of professionalism in human service professions such as teaching.

3.7.2 Benefits for mentors

The possibilities of reverse mentoring and mutual learning by both the mentors and the mentees are notions now well-established among experts in mentoring (Simpson, Hastings & Hill, 2007:482; Cunningham, 2005:94). Contrary to traditional conceptions of mentoring where learning flows in one direction, namely from mentors to mentees, there is a growing awareness of the possibility of mutual learning for mentors and mentees. However, mentors benefit from the mentoring process incidentally, since mentoring programmes tend to be designed primarily with mentees in mind (Playko, cited in Bush & Middlewood, 2005:167). The claim that mentors also benefit from the mentoring process begs the question as to how they do so.

The picture emerging from literature is that mentors benefit in major ways, such as the personal and professional growth resulting from the challenge and the stimulation provided by the mentees and the increased job satisfaction and motivation that result from professional recognition and increased job responsibilities. Being hand-picked from a crop of teachers at a school as most suitable to serve as mentor represents recognition of the chosen teachers' superior professional and interpersonal skills (Cunningham, 2005:90). Mentoring is widely regarded as being a more complex
responsibility than teaching, hence being selected as mentors may be a basis for an enhanced sense of professional status, pride and confidence.

Furthermore, taking on a mentoring responsibility results in an extended job description and job responsibilities. This provides the selected teachers with the scope to increasingly exercise initiative and discretion in their job. In this way, their professional autonomy is enhanced as they make decisions on important issues at their schools. Such a work environment not only provides the mentor teachers with increased job satisfaction, but is also potentially motivating, as suggested by Leithwood (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:84).

However, mentoring responsibility may be a positive and rewarding experience only if the relevant organisation has the appropriate culture; for example, where mentoring is closely integrated with other organisational sub-systems or functions. In such organisations, mentoring is formally recognised as part of job descriptions and is accordingly rewarded. Also, if mentoring is integrated with other aspects of the organisation, the mentoring programme is likely to have organisation-wide support. Therefore, mentors will be more likely to enjoy their mentoring task and less likely to regard it as a burden.

Mentors also potentially benefit in terms of the enhanced personal and professional growth that results from the stimulus and challenge provided by the presence of mentees (Callan, 2006:12; Cunningham, 2005:90). Interaction with mentees on a daily basis in an interpersonal context enables mentors to improve their social and emotional skills. The demanding nature of mentoring may result in making the mentoring context a highly emotionally charged environment leading to frustration and anxiety in both parties. Sustaining an effective mentoring relationship takes a lot of emotional and social adjustment, resulting in increased maturity and socio-emotional intelligence (Melville & Bartley, 2009:810).
More importantly, mentoring affords the mentors with an opportunity to engage in critical discussions with the mentees on one another’s teaching practices. This reflection enables mentors to locate their practices in critical perspective, making it possible for them to seek to change and improve them, as noted by Tickle (Coleman, 2006b:166). This results in enhanced professional growth. However, this is less likely to happen in organisational cultures that do not structurally encourage collegiality and collaborative practices.

Furthermore, mentors may benefit from exchanging skills and knowledge with mentees. Mentees may bring into the school situation some skills and knowledge to which mentors would not otherwise had access. For example, young mentees may be more computer literate than their mentors, making them better placed to coach their mentor teachers in such skills. Also, mentees may be familiar with the latest research on teaching, which mentors may not necessarily be. In this context, mentees may keep the mentors up to date on the latest developments in educational research.

3.7.3 Benefits for organisations undertaking mentoring programmes

Mentoring does not benefit the mentors in their personal capacities only, but also the organisations that undertake the mentoring programmes. The precise ways in which an organisation may benefit, depend on the specific type or nature of the organisation. However, literature suggests that the following generic benefits may accrue to organisations that undertake mentoring. Mentoring may enable an organisation to culturally transform itself (Jamissen & Phelps, 2006:297). Such an organisation may realise that its culture is out of step with the context in which it is operating and may desire to change it to retain a relevant and competitive presence on the market. For example, a strict bureaucratic organisational culture may limit an organisation’s capacity to timely respond to opportunities in its environment, because of the rigid chains of command through which decisions are made and channelled. An organisation may therefore wish to move to a more flexible model that facilitates prompt decision-making.
In such a context, mentoring may facilitate the organisation’s cultural transformation through enabling the values of collegiality, sharing and mutual support to be diffused and entrenched.

As part of induction programmes in an organisation, mentoring provides a support framework that enables new entrants to be easily socialised into the organisation’s culture, policies and procedures (Coleman, 2006b:163; Meyer & Fourie, 2004:176). New employees to an organisation need to fit into the values and ways of doing things before they can productively contribute to it. The one-on-one learning support framework made possible by mentoring enables the new entrants to be quickly assimilated into an organisation.

Older, more experienced employees in an organisation may find that their skills and knowledge are no longer sufficient to ensure effective performance. This is particularly likely in a society characterised by knowledge explosion and rapid changes in technology, resulting in changes in professional roles and responsibilities. In such a context, mentoring may enable an organisation to keep its employees in ongoing programmes of continuing professional development as a way of updating their skills and knowledge. This would enable the employees to keep their knowledge and skills consistent with the demands of their professional roles and responsibilities. This is consistent with Young & Perrewe’s (2004:103) and Pullins and Fine’s (2003:260) views, in terms of which mentoring enables an organisation to properly handle its training and development function.

In the same vein, an organisation may also benefit from mentoring programmes through improving its performance as a result of the improved skills of its employees (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:166). Mentoring, in its modern form, based on reflective and collaborative work practice, encourages double loop learning, in which current practices are questioned with a view to continually modifying and improving them. In this way, mentoring increases the skills, knowledge and understanding of work groups (Argyris &
Schön, cited in Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004:13). This may result in improved performance and productivity.

3.8 DEVELOPING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

A commonly held view in the literature analysed, is that successful mentoring depends on the capacity of the parties involved to establish and maintain good interpersonal relationships. Hence it is important for those undertaking mentoring programmes to be aware of how human and mentoring relationships develop. Authors on mentoring are therefore obliged to give considerable attention to the issue of mentoring relationships.

In this connection, Portner (2002:6) applies Scholtes’s model of group development as a useful tool for understanding the development of mentoring relationships. Scholtes (Portner, 2008:6-7) proposes the following sequential four stages of development of group relationships: forming; storming; norming; and performing.

In the *forming* stage, which is the initial stage, mentors and mentees reveal their personalities and biographies for mutual exploration. At this stage, the parties involved in mentoring explore each other’s assumptions, values and interests in order to find common ground. The groundwork for developing a mentoring relationship is laid by getting to know one another, somewhat before committing to a mentoring relationship; a view also emphasised by Kochan and Trimble’s (2000:22). Where no common ground is found, mutual adjustment will have to happen. At this stage, there is a sense of uneasiness, as mentees and mentors anxiously anticipate how their new relationships will develop in the context of much uncertainty. During the *forming* stage, the focus is on developing the relationship, and not on goals and tasks. Hence it may not be surprising that little progress in terms of setting or achieving goals is achieved. This *forming* stage seems to parallel Kram’s (1985:32) initiation phase, as part of his five-phase model of the development of a mentoring relationship.
In the second stage, *storming*, mentees and mentors have to work together, although they may not yet have attained a common and mutual understanding that will enable them to relate to each other. Hence, difficulties may be experienced. The ensuing tension may lead to frustration and lack of confidence in each other.

However, the difficulties that are experienced during *storming* tend to abate in the *norming* stage. During this stage, the conflicts and clashes that occurred in the preceding stage are resolved. Mentees and mentors manage to strike common ground and begin to accept and appreciate each other. In this way, they lay the groundwork for a smooth, collaborative relationship.

The *performing* stage, which is the last stage of Scholtes’s model, represents the ultimate fruition of the mentoring relationship. At this stage, a good working and personal relationship has been developed on the basis of mutual understanding and acceptance. The focus shifts from the relationship itself to working towards the attainment of goals.

Meyer and Fourie (2004:65-70) also propose a four-phase model that accounts for the development of a mentoring relationship. In terms of this model, the first phase, called the *establishment* phase, involves mentors and mentees exploring each others’ backgrounds and personalities in order to find common ground and learn more about each other in terms of interests, expectations and concerns. Where overlaps are not found, mutual adjustments are made. In this way, a strong foundation for a good working relationship is established. This is similar to Scholtes’s forming stage.

During the *establishment* phase, mentees are still uncertain about what is happening in the work environment, the expectations held of them, and the best way of attaining goals. Therefore, mentees act largely on the basis of trial and error and may lack confidence in their capabilities. In this phase, mentees are still highly dependent on their mentors for support and generally still afraid to take the initiative.
Given these characteristics of the mentee, the mentor’s role mainly entails reassuring, motivating and confirming the correctness of what the mentee is doing, particularly in developing a career development plan. This will help boost and consolidate the mentees’ self belief and confidence. As a result of the mentees’ dependence on the mentor, the latter needing to pay close attention to what the mentee is doing. Therefore, the most appropriate style to adopt at this phase is the directive style, which entails modelling and giving feedback every step of the way.

In the second phase, the relationship becomes firmer and more established. The focus of the mentoring relationship shifts towards goal attainment. In this phase, mentees seek to acquire the skills needed for effective job performance. As their knowledge, skills and clarity about expectations increase, so does their confidence.

Based on the increasing confidence of the mentees, their mentors begin to groom them to take control of the learning situation by creating more opportunities for them to make decisions. Thus, mentors begin to wean their mentees by guiding and encouraging them to take on tasks on their own. As the mentees try out things on their own, they need to be given a lot of feedback and at times also instructions by their mentors.

The fourth phase involves assessing the mentoring relationship to establish if the objectives have been achieved. As part of assessment, a lot of information is collected, both during and on the conclusion of mentoring. Mentors and mentees co-reflect on the information, to check on successes and failures. Where things may not have gone well, the necessary adjustments are made.

When mentees manage to acquire the required levels of competence and development, their mentors gradually begin to withdraw from the mentoring relationship. This creates more space for mentees to take their own initiative, thereby consolidating their independence from their mentors. In such a context, mentoring is likely to be more informal than formal, as mentees seek their mentors out on a needs basis only.
However, Kram (1985) and Kochan and Trimble (2000) extend the above views of the development of mentoring relationships by positing a further stage where, beyond the fruition of their relationship, the mentor and mentee may separate and re-engage, reconfiguring the relationship into a higher form, where they interact at a deeper emotional level and work together as professional peers.

### 3.9 ROLES OF MENTORS

Pitton (2006:7) notes that mentors need to be clear about their roles, otherwise confusion may set in, potentially detracting from the quality of mentoring. Literature analysed in writing this chapter suggests the following major and generic mentoring roles: advising, supplying knowledge, facilitating or enabling, guiding, leading, coaching, counselling, monitoring the welfare of the mentee, giving feedback, instructing, modelling, directing, encouraging, inspiring, collaborating, and acting as a mentee’s critical friend. Meyer and Fourie (2004) seem to have given the issue of mentoring roles much thoughtful consideration, proposing a list that seems to capture the essence of the roles proposed by most other authors. These two authors provide extended accounts of what each mentoring role entails. This enables mentoring workers on the ground to form an idea of what mentoring practically involves. Hence, in the following section, Meyer and Fourie’s (2004) description of mentoring roles will be used as the point of reference.

- **Sounding-board**

As a sounding-board, mentors analyse their mentees’ practices and provide feedback on their development and practices (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:55). This role seems to fall within Kram’s (1985) career-related category of mentoring functions. Mentors do this through communicating effectively, sensitively and appropriately with their own mentees. This enables mentees to be aware of and diagnose their own strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of this diagnosis, mentees can consolidate their strengths
and correct their weaknesses. The sounding-board role seems to be related to the role of a critical friend, whereby the mentor provides the mentee with frank and honest constructive feedback (Li, 2009:149). Similarly, the mentor could also relatedly sound-board the mentee by providing confirmation or disconfirmation of the latter’s behaviour in the context of organisational expectations (Pullins & Fine, 2003:260).

- **Advisor and knowledge broker**

Mentors as advisors serve as sources of knowledge, information and insight into the implementation of specific aspects of their professional work. However, at some point, mentors may need to train their mentees to source information on their own. In an age of knowledge explosion, with mentors’ monopoly on knowledge increasingly challenged, student teachers may be well ahead of their mentors in terms of knowledge levels, hence they can also serve as a source of knowledge.

- **Inspirer**

In this role, mentoring drives the mentees to try out and explore new ways of doing things and to soar beyond routines, through stimulating their creative and imaginative faculties. As inspirers, mentors also help their mentees regain focus during times of stress. This is consistent with the view of Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum and Wakukawa (2003:51) of the mentor being, among other things, a source of moral support. The role of inspirer seems to resonate with Kram’s (1985:32) psychosocial support, described by Young and Perrewe (2004:103-4) as involving, amongst other things, lending a listening ear to the mentee’s concerns and encouraging her or him when the going gets tough. Relatedly, Golder and Mayseless (2008:414) point out that through her or his example, a mentor could tacitly inspire and motivate the mentee to strive for the best.
• **Role model**

As role models, mentors model expected professional practices to their mentees, in the expectation that the mentees will emulate these. Pitton (2006:11) highlights the fact that mentors are role models since “...hearing something is never as effective as watching it being done”. Golder and Mayseless (2008:414) similarly contend that mentors serve as role models, portraying certain behaviours and a status that they would want mentees to attain. However, problems arise when the mentor’s example does not represent the best. Even if it does, confining herself or himself within the example set by the mentor may limit the mentee’s personal and professional growth, an indisputably unwholesome scenario that some scholars refer to as cloning.

• **Networker**

Mentors as networkers extend and enhance the support system for mentee learning through putting them into contact with more people who can provide supplementary support (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:56). This implies acceptance by mentors that they do not know everything. The mentees may end up being at the centre of an ever-widening network of support. Most of the mentoring that takes place in such contexts may be informal. Highlighting the importance of the networker role, Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004:128) point out that mentors facilitate the mentee’s entry into some social networks where the latter could get assistance that is not available through formal channels. The networker role of the mentor seems to resonate with Kram’s (1985:32) career-related support, described by scholars such as Young and Perrewe (2004:104) and Pullins and Fine (2003:260) as, among other aspects, involving giving the mentee visibility in the organisation. Writing on the same issue, Bush and Middlewood (2005:164) note that mentors can help widen the mentees’ professional network, thereby reducing professional isolation. Relatedly, Day (2001:585) emphasises the importance of building networked relationships, termed social capital, which enables the mentee to secure the cooperation and support needed for effective performance. The
aforegoing seems to echo Lave and Wenger’s (1991) view of learning as taking place in communities of practice. However, for mentors who are not used to collaborative practice, this may be quite a distressing experience.

- **Champion**

In this role, mentors remain alert to learning and development opportunities in the organisation and help secure them for their mentees. Mentors accomplish this on the basis of their ability to understand and navigate the micropolitics of the organisation (Hicks, Glasgow & McNary, 2005:14). Micropolitics refer to patterns of power distribution, as they determine access to organisational resources (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:49). Although development and learning opportunities may arise, they may only be taken by those who are micro-politically literate and well connected in the organisation. Hence, mentors as champions should take advantage of their familiarity with the micropolitics of their school to ensure that their mentees do not lose out on any learning and development opportunities that may arise. Relatedly, Pitton (2006:11) points out that mentors may need to defend and speak supportively about the mentee when parents and administrators express reservations about the quality of the latter’s work.

- **Teacher and coach**

In the early stages, when mentees’ skills and knowledge are low, mentors may need to teach and coach their mentees directly in certain items of knowledge and skills.

3.10 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MENTORS

While it is generally agreed that mentors need training for their role and responsibilities, no consensus exists regarding exactly which competences are required for effective mentoring. However, the views of various authors on this issue suggest that effective mentors will have competence profiles that reflect the competences presented below.
Firstly, effective mentors must have **sufficiently developed language skills and concepts** to enable them to articulate, analyse and communicate practical knowledge (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997:201). This form of knowledge exists in an unarticulated form in the practitioners' subconscious. This suggests that practical knowledge remains tacit, unarticulated and inaccessible if practitioners do not discuss it with their professional colleagues. In fact, in its tacit state, craft knowledge is not only inaccessible to the mentees or fellow practitioners, but also to the practitioners themselves. The longer practitioners work in isolation, the further their tacit knowledge recedes into the subconscious. This is why it is important for mentors to have sufficiently developed language skills to discuss teaching.

While mentoring and teaching are different, there is undeniably a great of overlap in the skills required for classroom teaching and mentoring. This is why **effectiveness and experience as a classroom practitioner** recommends one for the task as a mentor, but does not necessarily make one a good mentor. Teaching skills, such as the ability to demonstrate a variety of strategies/approaches and lessons, are a key asset in mentoring.

The effectiveness of mentoring may also depend on the personal values and professional identity of mentors. Effective mentors must have the professional identity of life-long learners. This will enable them to appreciate the benefits of collaborative practice; they must make their practice readily available to others, for their critical review and commentary.

It is a widely shared view among many researchers that learning to teach is a complex process, punctuated by substantial stress on the part of student teachers. Stress emanates from self-doubt and disappointment, which characterises learning to teach. Hence, effective mentors of student teachers will also possess **counselling skills**. As counsellors, mentors assume the role of patient listeners, lending an ear to the
mentees’ problems and concerns as they learn how to teach. In this role, mentors do not only encourage their mentees to stick it out even if the going gets tough, but also reassuringly guide them to solve their own problems.

Above all, mentors must have the capacity to build and maintain good interpersonal relationships with their mentees. Researchers agree that relationship-building is the most important dimension of mentoring. Therefore, mentors must possess personal qualities that will enable them to form and maintain good interpersonal relationships.

3.11 TYPES OF MENTEES

Mentoring programmes can fail to achieve their objectives if the support given is not adjusted and tailored to suit the needs of individual mentees. Therefore, it may be worthwhile for mentors to get to know the types of mentees they are working with. In this connection Meyer and Fourie (2004:60) have identified and metaphorically described four types of mentees, namely passengers; pedestrians; patients; and pilots. This classification is based on the mentee’s level of focus on goal achievement and level of dependence on the mentor. These four mentee types are examined below.

- **Passengers and pedestrians**

Mentees described as passengers are passive and docile, waiting for their mentors to lead the way (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:60). They typically avoid taking responsibility; do not exercise initiative, and lack self-drive and motivation. They tend to have low focus on goal achievement, since they do not set their goals themselves. As a result of their lack of initiative; mentees who are classified as passengers are highly dependent on their mentors. Taylor (2008:67) cautions against passivity, noting that students who play an active role in learning tend to attain deeper levels of processing information and learning than their passive counterparts.
Unlike passengers, mentees who are described as pedestrians are not completely dependent on their mentors. They are prepared to exercise initiative through making some decisions on the mentoring programme (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:60). Thus, they do take some degree of responsibility for their training. However, pedestrians tend to lack motivation towards the attainment of goals.

- **Patients**

Mentees categorised as patients are as dependent on their mentors as patients are on their physicians. The mentoring process is largely beyond their control, with all the decisions being made by the mentor. The patient’s focus on goal attainment needs to be sustained by his or her mentor. Therefore, patients focus on goals, but not because of self-drive, but as a result of their mentors’ efforts (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:60).

- **Pilots**

Pilots are self-driven individuals, strongly oriented towards the attainment of the goals of their training programme. They closely identify with the goals of the training programme, because they contributed significantly towards setting these goals. Pilots do not only contribute to the setting of goals, but also make decisions on other important aspects of the mentoring programme. Mentees classified as pilots can work on their own, with minimal mentoring. This is consistent with Melville and Bartley (2009:810), who highlight the need to allow mentees to operate independently when they demonstrate potential to do so.

In addition to the above types, mentees can be classified on the basis of their learning styles, as explored below.
Knowledge of the nature of mentees may need to be supplemented by knowledge of their learning styles. Grosser and De Waal (2006:19) agree with Zhang (2002:332) that learning styles are learners' individually preferred modes of approaching and processing information, as well as solving problems. The concept of learning styles suggests that learners are different, hence they bring different and sometimes unique learning needs to the mentoring relationship. Understanding mentees' learning styles will enable the mentors to tailor mentoring and support in a way that precisely maps onto and suits the needs of the mentees. Holiday (2001:127) has identified the following learning styles, which can be used as a basis for classifying mentees: authority-driven thinkers; deductive thinkers; sensory thinkers; emotional thinkers; intuitive thinkers; and scientific thinkers.

**Authority-driven thinkers** will not act on any idea unless they have been given permission to do so by someone in authority (Holiday, 2001:127). Such mentees will wait for instruction and direction from the mentor. They typically do not take control of and responsibility for their learning process; similar to those whom Meyer and Fourie (2004) refer to as passengers and a category of thinkers whom Sternberg (1997) terms Type Two thinkers, characterised by the inability to think outside prescribed limits and the inclination do things in a norm-confirming and simplistic ways.

**Deductive thinkers** do not accept and internalise information unless it makes logical sense (Holiday, 2001:127). Based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI), deductive thinkers could be seen as operating mainly on the basis of a logico-mathematical intelligence, which mainly manifests itself through proclivity towards deductive reasoning (Dymoke & Harrison, 2008:54; Gardner, 1993:8). Fielder and Silverman (1988:677-678) similarly describe deductive learners as those who prefer to proceed from principles, logically deducing the consequences of those principles. They try to integrate isolated bits of information into a coherent and connected whole before
they accept them. They typically require a lot of detail showing how things have developed to be what they are. Deductive thinkers are inclined to ask questions whenever they discern some logical disconnection in information. This category of thinkers is seen to overlap with reflective thinkers, described by Fielder and Silverman (1988:678) as preferring to deeply think through things, as well as Kolb’s (1984) thought along the same lines. Their mentors may need to take their time to explain and defend an idea as well as allow them time to think through, issues on their own. This category of learners seems similar to what Grosser and De Waal (2006:19), following the work of Kolb (1984), term assimilators, whose learning approach involves logically analysing issues for themselves before accepting it.

**Sensory thinkers sensors** need to see, touch, hear and feel before they accept information (Holiday, 2001:127; Fielder & Silverman, 1988:676). This suggests that such thinkers prefer working with a lot of empirical data, inductively processing it to come up with solutions. This category of thinkers was first identified by Briggs Myers, who developed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator which sought to measure the extent to which individuals preferred either mode of mental functioning, namely sensing and intuition (Fielder & Silverman, 1988:676). Sensory thinkers could be seen as being especially endowed with visual-spatial as well as bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. Gardner (1993:9) describes this form of intelligence as primarily evidenced through the tendency to solve problems using the whole body. This is perhaps why such mentees need to be allowed to make use of the widest possible range of sensory experience with the information. Grosser and De Waal (2006:19), following Kolb (1984), refers to learners who uses such an approach to learning as convergers, sensors or feelers.

Drawing on the earlier work of Smith (1996), Dymoke and Harrison (2008:55) identify categories of learners who operate in ways similar to sensory thinkers, namely visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Visual thinkers prefer to learn through visual representations, such as charts, diagrams, demonstrations or visual images, while
auditory learners learn through listening to oral presentations or participating in a discussion. Kinesthetic learners learn by doing, through being physically involved.

However, different mentees do not use the different senses to the same extent. One mentee may prefer a specific sensory mode, which predominantly manifests itself in the way he or she receives and processes information. This allows mentors to package information in the modes favoured by their mentees.

As noted above, the other category in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicators are the intuitive thinkers. In contrast to sensors, intuitors are content with grasping principles, without tracing how such principles have been arrived at, implying that they become impatient when required to work with detailed information (Fielder & Silverman, 1988:676). Such thinkers do not operate on the basis of a consciously held rational model. Rather, they process information on the basis of unconscious mental processes, whose steps cannot be clearly articulated and communicated. However, they still manage to come up with solutions to problems through sudden insights, somewhat akin to the Eureka moment. Intuitive thinkers seem to be similar to the category of thinkers known as global thinkers described by Fielder and Silverman (1988:679) as not following any discernible steps in their learning, but simply intuitively arriving at solutions without explaining how they managed to do so.

Holiday (2001:127) describes emotional thinkers as those who accept information through their emotions, echoing what Grosser and De Waal (2006:19) describe as feelers, a category these scholars lump together with the convergers/sensors, comprising learners who would always want to experience and emphasise the emotional aspects of a learning context. They cannot respond to and effectively apply themselves to the learning material unless they are made to experience it in terms of a positive emotion. In this regard, emotional thinkers need to feel good about their job experience, job outcomes or skills.
People respond to four basic emotional needs, namely the need for control, the need for attention, the need for love, and the need for justice. Mentees who have a strong need for control seek to have a sense of mastery over their learning environment to continue applying themselves to their assignments. Therefore, they need constant feedback from the mentor, affirming that their contribution is making a significant difference to the assignment or learning environment.

However, at some point, mentors may have little or no reason for reassuring their mentees that things are on course or under control. Those mentees who have a strong need for control may grow upset and demotivated when tasks become so complex that it becomes difficult to retain a sense of control. Hence, mentees who have a strong need for control may require counseling to assure them that they will ultimately succeed. This is particularly necessary in learning or teaching situations, where one cannot have certainty about the outcome of one’s actions. Also, in the early stages of their training, mentees with a strong need for control may face particular difficulties, since they may not have the knowledge, skills and understanding to sustain a sense of control.

Mentees who have a need for attention cannot respond to and effectively apply themselves to learning tasks unless their mentors put them in the spotlight of positive attention. Such mentees are sustained and kept going by their mentors’ constant appreciative feedback. They need to be reassured every step of the way that their contribution is being valued.

Some mentees may also be driven by the need for love from their mentors. This relates to love in both professional and personal contexts. In the personal context, mentors may demonstrate love to their mentees by showing that they care about them. In a professional context, the mentors may demonstrate love for their mentees by recognising and appreciating how their mentees’ unique attributes are making a difference.
The fourth category of emotional thinkers comprises those who need to confirm the rightness or justice of an idea before implementing it. Such mentees cannot work unless what they intend to do, is confirmed to be right, whether from a cultural point of view or with reference to the organisational environment. They are not prepared to explore things on their own initiative and require confirmation of the appropriateness or justice of the proposed actions every step of the way. This puts their own learning beyond their control.

Scientific thinkers do not accept information unless they have tested it. Such mentees are not satisfied by being told; they want to confirm things on their own. This category of thinkers parallels the active learners described by Fielder and Silverman (1988:678) as being comfortable with actively experimenting with information as well as discussing or testing it. This implies that they will require more time to process and accept information. Accordingly, mentors need to allow them enough time and space to experiment with ideas in a safe environment.

Mentoring does not occur in a vacuum; contexts determine the nature of mentoring, as well as the quality and extent of learning that takes place. Structural factors in a specific school in which mentoring is taking place, can promote or limit the working of a mentoring programme (Wang, cited in Ganser, 2006:47).

3.12 SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES: The school as a learning organisation

All the efforts to learn by the mentors and mentees in the classroom may be ultimately futile if not widely supported and sustained by the broader school culture. One of the latest learning theories, the situated learning perspective, posits that learning is both individual and collaborative (Avalos, 2011:12). This suggests that mentors and mentees cannot learn effectively if the broader school does not support and sustain that learning.
Also, as Avalos (2011:12) postulates, teacher professional development involves ‘...teachers learning, learning how to learn, transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of students’ growth’. Therefore, learning cannot sustainably occur in an organisational environment that does not cherish learning as an organisation-wide and on-going process, so that whatever change occurs in the mentor-mentee micro-context, will spread throughout the organisation. Eraut (Day, 1999:84) seems to confirm the preceding argument, contending that the climate of the workplace substantially influences the quality of learning support. It is therefore vital that schools in which mentoring is taking place, are sustainably and systemically supportive of mentoring. Schools as organisations must transform themselves as the individuals in them transform themselves. In other words, schools must learn, just as the people within them learn.

From what has been written above, it appears that an organisation that is likely to be sufficiently supportive of student teachers will not be based on the industrial bureaucratic model, where workers operate in isolation in assembly line fashion.

If schools do not change mainly in relation to their cultures and structures and transform themselves, all the transformative attempts that mentors and mentees may make, will be futile. In this connection, Knight (2002:293) aptly postulates that the quality of teacher learning is as good as schools or departments. Cochran-Smith and the Boston College Evidence Team (2009:458) similarly contend that no attempt to bring about change will be successful if it does not involve a corresponding change in institutional culture.

The foregoing highlights the need for institutional ‘reculturing’ on the part of schools if they are to provide support for transformative teacher learning. MacGilchrist and Reed (Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010:268) similarly call for schools to become ‘... intelligent organisations that synthesise different kinds of knowledge and experience to enhance teaching and learning’. This implies that schools will need to adopt and cherish a culture
that embraces continual reflection on and the critical interrogation of their own teaching cultures.

Senge’s (1990) concept of a learning organisation seems to come closest to the organisational model of a school, as described in the preceding paragraph. This implies that for schools to be fully supportive of student teacher learning in a way that will effectively prepare them for the 21st century classroom, they will perhaps have to adopt the structural model of a learning organisation, as enunciated by Senge and his associates. Highlighting the need for 21st century schools to become learning organisations, Revans (Fulmer, Gibbs & Keys, 1998:2) avers ‘… organisations that do not learn and change as their environment were doomed’.

Heraty (2004:456) observes that the concept of a learning organisation, although highly popular and fashionable nowadays, is a vexed one, with little consensus among scholars. As described by Redding (Heraty, 2004:456), a learning organisation is one that has ‘… purposefully built its capacity to learn into all of its aspects: vision and strategy, leadership and management, culture, structure, systems and processes’. Since learning implies enduring change (Spector & Davidsen, 2006:65), a learning organisation necessarily has an increased capacity to continuously prepare for, deal with and adapt to changes in its environment. Pedler (Heraty, 2004:456) argues that a learning organisation ‘… facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself’.

The learning organisation’s learning capacity increases in proportion to the degree to which it has developed an appropriate infrastructure of learning (Heraty, 2004:458). To paraphrase Heraty (2004:458), the term infrastructure of learning refers to the structural, systemic and cultural features of an organization, which can either facilitate or hinder learning. An appropriate learning infrastructure for a learning organisation includes the following three aspects: a common vision and a shared value system; systems and routines that facilitate learning and a shared understanding, based on an orientation
towards continuous learning; and a well-developed communication system that enables easy communication within the organisation as well as beyond.

Kis and Konan (2010:797) apply the concept of learning organisation to education, extensively describing the nature of a learning school. These two authors consider the learning school to be an appropriate organisational model that can cope with the fast-changing environment of the 21st century.

Kis and Konan (2010:798) have also formulated the characteristics of a learning school. Firstly, a learning school has a positive school culture that encourages teachers to openly and freely share ideas about teaching and learning in the context of routine social interaction. Secondly, a learning school demonstrates a practical commitment to lifelong learning and self-renewal through providing enhanced opportunities for its workers to ‘learn anywhere, anytime’.

Thirdly, such a school develops nurtures and encourages interpersonal relationships, both on formal and informal levels, so that the workers have a sense of common identity and collective sensibility. This promotes a non-competitive, collaborative and collegial atmosphere, which makes for open and positive dialogue. Such an atmosphere will in turn encourage knowledge exchange, sharing and mutual support among the staff. Teamwork and mutual support are major hallmarks of a learning school. Teamwork brings individuals together, working interdependently, something which demonstrates to them that they need each other. Teams provide opportunities for formal and information interaction between members of an organisation as they solve problems in the authentic work situation. In these interactive spaces, everybody talks to each other openly and reflectively, not only about their collective experiences in the team, but also about personal situations, challenges, teaching practices and thinking. In the context of teams, individuals are able to freely critique and interrogate each other’s thinking and practices. Thus, interaction in the workplace promotes collaboration and feedback, providing the basis for reflection. Everyone will then be prepared to learn. In a
team, there is the possibility of co-mentoring and multiple mentoring, in terms of which teachers work together as equals and peers.

By willingly submitting own thinking and teaching practices to possible critique by others, teachers implicitly embrace a possible shift in their teaching practices. If all the members of the team are in this mode, the team as well as the organisation would have generated momentum for change and development. In this way, learning schools are able to continually learn, renew and transform their cultures and teaching practices, thereby expanding their professional knowledge and capabilities. Thus, as Kis and Konan (2010:799) aptly note, learning schools prioritise learning over teaching. Accordingly, the organisation will have enhanced capacity to anticipate and readily adapt to changes in its environment. This is probably why Uysal (2005:34) observes that the learning school constitutes the best organisational model for schools to adapt to the conditions of the 21st century.

However, for a learning culture to take root in a school, a leadership team is required that embraces the need for continuous learning and transformation (Day, 1999:82). Kis and Konan (2010:801) and Barth (Day, 1999:83) highlight this, stating that in a learning school, principals must be the most avid and leading learners. Among many other roles, principals must not be authority figures, prescribing solutions, but context setters and designers of learning (Kis & Konan, 2010:801). In the same connection, Schlecty (1997:73) adds that principals must not be problem-solvers, but problem definers who cherish and practise democratic school governance and leadership.

### 3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter examined published literature on issues related to mentoring. Overall, authors suggest that although the classical Homeric context continues to influence the interpretation of the concept of mentoring, there is an emerging tendency to conceptualise mentoring in ways that represent a significant departure from the
classical and traditional view. Whereas in the traditional view, mentoring is seen as a necessarily asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship, researchers now increasingly interpret mentoring as a potentially balanced and horizontal relationship, marked by possible reciprocal learning and mutual support by both mentees and mentors. It was argued in this chapter that perhaps the latter view was more in keeping with 21st century circumstances where, owing to the ever-changing social and institutional geography, accompanied by equally fluid and changing roles and demands, it may be difficult for one party in a mentoring relationship to sustain a claim to superior status on the basis of a static set of skills and knowledge. This chapter also highlighted the need for mentoring programmes to be based on a clearly defined theoretical foundation, since this informs the goals and nature of the roles and relationships in the mentoring programme. In this regard, the chapter argued that mentoring programmes that seek to produce transformative and critical professionals need to be based on an eclectic theoretical foundation that incorporates element of both the situated apprentice and the critical constructivist perspectives.

In the same breath, it was noted in this chapter that for a mentoring programme based on the situated apprentice and critical constructivist perspectives to take root, the host school must undergo fundamental ‘reculturing’ so that it becomes a ‘learning school’. This will allow such a school to learn and transform together with the professionals in it, to ultimately provide an adequately supportive environment for the transformative and critical professionals working in it.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters explored literature on teacher education and mentoring in order to gain insight into the theoretical context of the problem under investigation. However, these literature-based insights could not provide a secure base for recommending ways in which the mentoring model could be improved, since there was little fit between such insights and the mentoring contexts in Zimbabwe. This suggests the need to come up with a substantive body of knowledge that more closely resonates with the contexts in which the mentoring model is being implemented. Such a knowledge base could be best attained through an empirical investigation into the current state of affairs regarding the implementation of the mentoring model in Zimbabwe.

This Chapter will therefore articulate an overall plan for the empirical investigation of the existing mentoring model. The main focus of this Chapter will be the research paradigm, research methods as well as measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The Chapter will also look at the measures taken to safeguard the ethical integrity of the study.

4.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

During 1995, a school-based mentoring model for student teachers was introduced in Zimbabwe, with much hope and expectation that it would improve a flawed system (Chiromo, 1999:63). Now, more than fifteen years later, the mentoring model is not regarded as having made any positive difference to the quality of the learning experiences of student teachers who completed their practicum during this period (Mavhunga, 2004:56). Given the potentially negative implications of this state of affairs
on the quality of teachers and school education in general, it is necessary that whatever has gone wrong in the mentoring model must be addressed with due promptitude.

Several issues have already been raised in research and policy circles as contributing to the ineffectiveness of the mentoring model. These include the lack of training and motivation of mentor teachers, and the focus on assessment and supervision, as opposed to support (Chireshe, 2004:1; Chiromo, 1999:63).

Unfortunately, the above insights from literature seem to be unhelpful in enabling policymakers and others involved in education to make informed suggestions about how the mentoring model may be improved. This is the case, because most of the studies conducted to date were based on survey designs, which did not allow the researchers to adequately capture the full context of what was actually happening at schools where the mentoring model was being implemented. In other words the conclusions deducted from such studies were far removed from actual experiences and cannot truly be considered as a valid basis for decisions on how the mentoring system in Zimbabwe may be improved. Therefore the situation above necessitates research to gather a body of theoretical insights that resonates more closely with mentoring contexts in Zimbabwe as such relevant information may enable policy-makers and other role players in education to make informed decisions on how the existing mentoring model could possibly be adapted and improved.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.3.1 Primary research question

• How can the existing mentoring system at Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher education model, be improved?
4.3.2 Secondary research questions

- What are the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for students as it is at present applied at Zimbabwean primary schools?
- How can the difficulties being experienced by teachers in mentoring prospective teachers at Zimbabwean primary schools be adequately addressed?
- What support systems can be developed to improve the mentoring system at Zimbabwean primary schools?

4.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4.4.1 Primary research objective

- To determine how the mentoring system as part of the teacher training model at Zimbabwean primary schools can be improved.

4.4.2 Secondary research objectives

- To determine the shortcomings of the mentoring system for students as it is at present applied at Zimbabwean primary schools.
- To determine how the difficulties being experienced by teachers in mentoring prospective teachers at Zimbabwean primary schools could be adequately addressed.
- To determine the support systems that could be developed to improve the mentoring experience at Zimbabwean primary schools.

4.5 DEMARCATION OF FIELD OF STUDY

This study focused on the mentoring taking place as part of the framework of support for initial student teachers on practicum at Zimbabwean primary schools. The study was carried out in the Masvingo Province, located in south-eastern Zimbabwe. A core of
nine schools was selected to participate in the study, comprising three from each of the following socio-geographic environments: rural, peri-urban and urban environments. In the schools, the primary participants were mentor teachers and student teachers but principals were also involved, when they were available. The researcher was in the field collecting data for at least three months, spending at least ten working days at each of the nine participating schools. Over and above collecting data from this main sample, the researcher also collected data from 18 more schools in the same Province, six more schools in each of the above-mentioned geographical environments, with the objective to support and validate data obtained from the main sample, as explained in Chapter One.

4.6 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF STUDY

Corbin and Strauss (2008:8) describe the philosophical foundation of a research study as mainly having to do with the world view guiding the study’s methodology. Researchers agree that research is not merely a mechanical and technical undertaking in which decisions are made purely on the basis of their potential technical suitability. Rather, as Scott and Usher (1999:11), in agreement with Morgan and Smircich (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:178), aptly note, research is a social practice underpinned by certain culturally based values and rules that govern decision-making with regard to what is taken as valid knowledge. Grogan and Simmons (2006:37) similarly contend that those researchers inevitably bring into research practice their own philosophical presuppositions about the world and knowledge.

Philosophical presuppositions denote the assumptions which the researcher brings to a study. These assumptions provide an overarching framework for all the decisions and choices the researcher makes when carrying out the study, particularly regarding the methodology (Huff, 2009:109). Such assumptions fall into two main categories, namely ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the researcher’s views of the nature of the world that s/he is investigating (Creswell, 2007:17; Crotty, 1998:10). In contrast, epistemological assumptions relate to
the researcher’s views on how knowledge about the world can be constructed (Crotty, 1998:10). The philosophical premises of this study were informed by phenomenology; particularly social phenomenology, as propounded by Schutz & Luckmann (1973:16) and Wagner (1970:17).

Phenomenology as a philosophical orientation to research owes much to Husserl in the early twentieth century (Jupp, 2006:220-221; Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:67). Two major sub-streams of phenomenology can be distinguished, namely the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl and the social phenomenology, mainly outlined by Pring (2000:99) and Holstein & Gubrium, 1998). As social phenomenology spoke more to the nature of this study, a decision was made to adopt it.

The major philosophical premises of phenomenology informing this research were as follows: firstly, phenomenologists posit the socially constructed and negotiated nature of social reality (Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:68; Bassey, 2002:38; Pring, 2000:98; Holstein & Gubrium, 1998). Rejecting the positivist claim of a reality that exists independently of human experience, phenomenologists contend that human beings are social beings who actively attach meaning to their own and other people’s behaviour (Pring, 2000:98). Social reality is not merely accepted as it is observed, but as it is perceived and interpreted by social beings inside the reality, as well as those looking in on the reality (Gage, 2007:153). Furthermore, people’s actions embody certain intentions and motives that they intend other people to interpret (Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:68; Pring, 2000:100-101). In epistemological and research terms, phenomenology therefore implies that the investigator cannot be separated from the world s/he is investigating Lincoln and Guba, 1985:38).

### 4.6.1 Interpretive paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011:11) and Bogdan and Biklen (Mukherji & Albon, 2010:11) agree that a paradigm is a general theoretical framework that guides a research study and is composed of philosophical and methodological
assumptions that orient the researcher’s decision-making while carrying out the study. This study was informed by an interpretive paradigm, also referred to as the qualitative or naturalistic paradigm. Merriam (2009:8) identifies three major research paradigms, namely interpretive, critical and positivist paradigms. The researcher did not dwell on the last two paradigms, because it were not used in this research.

The socially negotiated nature of meaning implies the existence of an interpretive scheme or code, which governs how actions are constructed and interpreted. When a person acts or interprets other people’s actions, she or he draws on a relatively stable, socially shared and publicly available set of meanings (Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:68; Pring, 2000:101). This body of meaning is encoded in the language in use in specific social, historical and/or cultural contexts (Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:68; Pring, 2000:101-102) and provides the basis of mutual understanding and successful communication between people.

However, this set of meanings is not rigid, but rather open-ended, flexible and elastic, making it possible for participants to extend it. Changes in people’s experiences may therefore necessitate the extension of the interpretive code. Also, individual may select specific aspects from the body of meaning to use on the basis of relevance to their personal situations or backgrounds and needs, a point also noted by Babbie (1992:2). This makes it possible for different people to respond to or interpret the same social phenomenon differently (Morrison, 2007:24). Thus, experience is mediated or filtered through life experience, based on different locations and times (Pring, 2000:100-101).

Thus, the social world cannot be understood by observing it from a distance. In order to understand the social world, the researcher needs to study the participants in naturally occurring situations as context aids the interpretation of participants’ perspectives and views (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:322). Adding to this, phenomenology emphasises the importance of grasping the perspectives of more than one participant in order to gain a holistic and well-rounded appreciation of the social world under study as single participant’s point of view on its own presents only a partial view of the social world.
Having said that, a question that may logically present itself to the reader is why phenomenology was chosen as the philosophical framework for this study. The purpose and the research questions guiding this study imply the question: *What is the nature of being mentored or working as a mentor at Zimbabwean primary schools?* This suggests a typically phenomenological question: *What is being?* (Aspland, 2003:130). Such questions essentially call for the participants’ subjective experiences of mentoring at Zimbabwean primary schools. The problem therefore necessitates the exploration of the lived experiences of those involved in mentoring, namely the mentors and student teachers. For this kind of research, the phenomenological framework seems particularly appropriate, since its theoretical constructs allow the researcher to enter the participants’ life-worlds. As suggested by Van Manen (Ehrich 2003:55), the researcher is attempting to ‘understand the phenomena of their world in order to see the pedagogical significance of the situations under investigation’. In this way, it was possible for the researcher to build a body of substantive theory that could be used to inform recommendations on how the mentoring system in Zimbabwe could be improved.

The philosophical assumptions and paradigm of a study guide and underpin the choice of its methodology. In this study, the philosophical foundation articulated above clearly aligned with a qualitative methodology as discussed below.

### 4.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Jupp (2006:175) describes methodology as, ‘The philosophical stance or worldview that underlies and informs a style of research ... the philosophy of methods’. Methodology is underpinned by philosophical presuppositions about the nature of knowledge, what can be known and how can it be known (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:1; Crotty, 1998:7).

Researchers such as Corbin and Strauss (2008:1), Marvasti (2004:3) and O’Leary (2004:85) commonly view the term *method* as denoting the specific techniques and
procedures used to guide the practical aspects of conducting a research study. Methods are therefore seen as more specific and practical guidelines for conducting research. Seen in relation to methodology, a research method can be described as a more specific manifestation of methodology at technical and procedural levels. The assumptions of qualitative methodology can accommodate several methods of collecting and data analysis including ethnography, case studies, life histories, biographies, and so on. This study utilised a qualitative, case study method, as explained below.

### 4.7.1 Qualitative methodology

Qualitative methodology has a long and diverse lineage, evolving over many years and drawing on the work of researchers from divergent disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and history (Gay & Airasian, 2000:201). Research of the Chicago School Sociology, which flourished between 1915 and 1930, looms prominently along the timeline of the evolution of qualitative methodology (Bulmer, 1986:6). Typically, sociologists of the Chicago School emphasised participating in and observing the lives of the researched in order to be able to accurately capture and understand the problems.

The use of the term qualitative research may misleadingly suggest a homogenous research tradition. However, the qualitative research tradition encompasses a wide diversity of sub-traditions (Thomas, 2003:2). Such traditions include ethnography, ethnomethodology, and a spectrum of Action Research approaches. There are, however, some generic characteristics that cut across all the sub-traditions and are used as points of reference in defining qualitative research.

The fact that qualitative research comprehends a variety of ways of understanding research perhaps accounts for the difficulty of pinning it down in terms of a precise definition. Merriam (2009:13) has attempted to capture the essence of qualitative research as follows:
‘... an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world’.

In terms of this view, qualitative research is seen as adopting a unique concern with the meaning allocated to the actions and feelings of people, rather than with the quantity of social phenomena (Thomas, 2003:33). Picciano (2004:32) similarly observes that qualitative research derives its name from the word quality, which ‘refers to the essence (what, why, when and how) of things ...’ As opposed to its quantitative counterpart, which relies on measurements and counts, qualitative research therefore seeks to discover patterns of meaning through examining words, actions and documents (Picciano, 2004:32; Sowell, 2001:7).

In order to convey a full understanding of qualitative research, these features will be examined in greater detail in the sub-section below.

- **Takes place in naturalistic settings**

Qualitative research is conducted in naturally occurring and on-going social situations (Creswell, 2003:181). This suggests that the researcher gets into the natural settings that are the focus of the research and interacts closely and personally with both the participants and the context. In this regard, Picciano (2004:32), in agreement with Sowell (2001:8), notes that in qualitative research, the researcher directly experiences and/or learns about social phenomena as these occur in their natural environment.

In order to be able to access the participants’ subjective meanings and perspectives, the researcher needs to develop close, trusting relationships with the participants. Such immersion in the context must be of a sufficient length of time to enable the context to unfold itself fully so the researcher makes an effort to immerse her/himself and blend into the social ecology of an on-going, undisturbed social situation (Morrison, 2007:27).
The researcher’s personal presence in the research setting enables her or him to capture and understand the historical, cultural and socio-political factors that shape the human action in that context. More importantly, close personal interaction with the participants in natural settings enables the researcher to access perspectives and knowledge that cannot be expressed in propositional and verbal form. Blanshard (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) refers to such understandings as tacit knowledge with Leibling and Prior (2005:153) describing tacit knowledge as ‘... the knowledge we acquire without consciously knowing that we have acquired it’. Such knowledge can be accessed only through participating in on-going and naturally occurring situations.

The use of a qualitative research methodology in this study allowed the researcher to give due attention to contexts of mentoring so that a complex and variegated picture of the concerns and perspectives of the mentors and student teachers could be captured. As Patton (Mertens, 2010:250) implies in a different context, the specific institutional context in which mentoring occurs, shapes the nature of mentoring experiences and practices. This made it possible for the researcher to develop a body of substantive theory that would closely map what was really happening in mentoring contexts at Zimbabwean schools. Such a knowledge base was likely to provide a useful basis for making recommendations on how the mentoring model could be improved.

- **Captures a holistic picture**

Qualitative research focuses on studying social phenomena in their entirety, rather than isolating a few elements of interest. This is so because qualitative research methodology is premised on the view that social worlds are complex and closely integrated systems composed of co-influential and interdependent elements or variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:8-10; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:37-38). Sowell (2001:7) elaborates on this, stating that social phenomena are complexly made of multiplicities of factors; variables closely and intricately bound together in multifaceted relationships. These variables cannot be understood in isolation from each other, since they are engaged in perpetual mutual shaping (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:8-10; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:38).
Therefore, the qualitative researcher does not seek to explain the social phenomenon under study in terms of a linear model of causality. Instead, he or she adopts a more open and exploratory approach, seeking a holistic, rounded understanding of complex social phenomena.

The holistic orientation of a qualitative research design enabled this researcher to reach a better understanding of mentoring practices at Zimbabwean schools in their full complexity and subtlety. Such an understanding was more likely to enable the researcher to recommend specific ways of intervening, and specifying what minimal elements ought to be introduced for mentoring to occur successfully. Relatedly, on the basis of a holistic understanding of mentoring practices, the researcher was able to recommend what could be done to block or neutralise the operation of constraining factors in the mentoring situations (as implied in a different context by Lincoln and Guba (1985:153).

- **Adopts an inductive approach to data collection and analysis**

Research in the qualitative tradition operates on the basis of an inductive model of explanation, moving from data to theory (Babbie, 2005:389). Following the same line of argument, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009:3) contend that an inductive approach ‘... proceeds from a number of single cases and assumes that a connection that has been observed in all these is also generally valid’. Thus, the qualitative research process proceeds from collecting data in specific instances, to analysis and interpretation (Babbie, 2005:389; Gay & Airasian, 2000:205). However, scholars differ on the extent to which the result of a qualitative study can be generalised, given the context embedded nature of research findings. Qualitative studies typically seek to generate rather than test theory.

As pointed out before, this research study sought to develop a body of substantive theoretical insights that would inform efforts to modify and improve the current model of mentoring in Zimbabwe. This was possible only because an inductive approach was
adopted, as such an approach allowed the researcher to gather empirical data, soliciting the views of mentors and student teachers. Therefore, the inductive model seemed more appropriate than its deductive counterpart in enabling the development of a context embedded body of knowledge that accurately captured what was happening in mentoring situations at primary schools in Zimbabwe.

- Recognises the value-bound nature of social inquiry

As noted in the previous section, the interpretive paradigm posits that the 'knower' and the 'known' cannot be separated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:38). The researcher is seen as an inevitably socially located being who brings into the study the baggage of values and assumptions from his/her social class, gender, cultural and racial background (O’Leary, 2004). Therefore, data have no value in their raw state, but become more meaningful as the researcher interprets them filtering through the researcher's personal analysis and value framework (Creswell, 2005:182).

Likewise, the participant brings into the research values and assumptions emanating from the context of the study, and her or his cultural and historical background (Ary et al., 2006:453). The participant’s values are inextricably interwoven with her or his perspectives as integral part of their personal reference system, from which participants derive their understanding of how they should interpret others’ actions; hence the latter cannot be understood in isolation from the former (Ary et al., 2006:450)

In this regard, qualitative researchers such as Flick (2006:45) and Lincoln and Guba (1985:160) recognise the role values play in social science research. That is why they do not seek to eliminate values, as their quantitative counterparts have futilely attempted to do. Following their stance on the role of values, qualitative researchers see objectivity as impossible to attain; at the same time rejecting pure subjectivity as the selectivity that results from subjectivity will allow the researcher only a partial and inaccurate view of the social phenomena, thereby undermining the credibility of the research findings. Instead, qualitative researchers seek to adopt a stance of empathic
neutrality towards what they are studying meaning that the researcher open-mindedly lets the social phenomena under study unfold itself without the researcher exercising selectivity of focus on the basis of a personal agenda and intentions. In this way, the researcher is likely to capture social phenomena in their complex and multi-dimensional nature.

To attain empathic understanding, the researcher needs to reflexively interact with her or his personal values and remain alert to how these may influence the way the research is conducted (O’Leary, 2004:59). Morrison (2007:32) describes reflexivity as, ‘The process by which researchers come to understand how they are positioned in relation to the knowledge they are producing’. This involves identifying, documenting and monitoring biases and how they affect the research process. By doing this, researchers establish a basis for putting the findings in their proper perspective.

From what has been said about values, one may conclude that by investigating the perspectives of the mentors and student teachers on the mentoring system, this study effectively sought to explore the participants’ values in relation to what mentoring is or ought to be, implying that perspectives cannot be understood in isolation from values. This study therefore did not seek the objective truth about the state of mentoring at Zimbabwean schools, as Denzin (Thomas, 2003) intimates. Rather, the researcher had to seek ideas about mentoring that could be viably and effectively used as a basis for co-ordinating and organising action in specific locales, as Lyotard (1984) and Alvesson and Skolberg (2009:193) argue that the criterion of knowledge is no longer its truth value alone, but rather whether or not it works.

In this study, use of the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to fully acknowledge the value basis of mentoring practices and he could exercise reflexive awareness in order to fully account for and understand the perspectives of those involved.
• Has an ideographic orientation

In qualitative research, depth and intensity of focus seem to be more emphasised than extended scope and generalisability. Researchers in this tradition seek to increase understanding and assign meaning and so generate new knowledge by these new insights. The knowledge and meanings that emerge from qualitative studies rely on the researcher’s specific interaction with the elements of a particular site and the values she or he brings to it. Because of this close relationship between meanings and context, it is difficult for knowledge generated in one setting to be relevant and meaningfully applied in a different context as ‘qualitative researchers recognise the uniqueness of each project, with little expectation that the same results occur in alternate settings with other individuals’ (Sowell, 2001:8).

However, qualitative researchers have shown increasing interest in extending the range of application of their findings. This has seen the traditional notion of generalisability being modified to suit the paradigmatic assumptions of qualitative research. In this regard, the quest for extending the range of application of findings has been variously referred to as transferability, translatability, fuzzy generalisation, and naturalistic generalisation.

The ideographic orientation of qualitative research makes it appropriate for a research study such as this one, which sought an in-depth understanding of the mentoring practices at Zimbabwean schools in order to inform efforts to improve and modify the existing mentoring model. In this regard, the qualitative research tradition allowed each school context to be intensively and deeply studied.

4.7.2 Case study

The use of the case study is rooted in fields such as sociology, anthropology and psychology (Blaikie, 2010:187; Merriam, 2009:39). Case studies are not confined to qualitative research; they can also take a quantitative orientation so the nature of a case
study is often a subject of contention among scholars (Merriam, 2009:39; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:360). This controversy primarily revolves around the question whether a case study is a method, methodology or paradigm. These theoretical disagreements aside, some researchers seem to have struck a commonly agreed position in regard to what a case study entails in practical terms.

The idea of a case study seems to be based on the concept of a 'case', which is defined by Stake (2000:23) as '… a constituent member of a target population'. Based on a similar understanding of a case, Blaikie (2010:187) and Merriam (2009:40) describe a case study as involving an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. However, bounding a case does not mean that it is insulated from its wider context.

The case study can arguably be best understood by distinguishing it from other forms of research, such as experiments and surveys. Thus, case studies can be distinguished from experiments and surveys along the following dimensions: the number of cases pursued; amount of detailed information pursued; nature of the data collected; and the purposes for which detailed data collection is sought.

Typically, case study research focuses on a smaller number of cases than survey research and experiments ranging from a single case to fewer than a dozen. The cases are not created for the purpose of the research, but are drawn from naturally occurring social situations as unit of analysis ‘… of a real individual, social event or group of people, where the individual, events or group are treated as a whole’ (Blaikie, 2010:189).

Case study research allows social phenomena to be investigated in their full breadth and depth through gathering and analysing data on as many dimensions of the case as possible (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:46; Picciano, 2004:450). In this way, the case study takes due regard of the integrated nature of social systems, so that none of their elements could be understood in isolation (Blaikie, 2010:188). Furthermore, case study research utilises a variety of data sources and therefore multiple data collection
methods (Freebody, 2003:82). The use of an eclectic methodological framework and multiple data sources enabled the researcher to obtain a thorough and holistic understanding of the case.

In this study, the use of the case study allowed the researcher to examine a few cases intensively and deeply in order to develop a body of substantive knowledge that accurately captured mentoring practices in these specific contexts (Babbie, 2005:293; Fouché & De Vos, 2000:272). According to Merriam (2009:43), ‘This specificity of focus makes it (case study) an especially good design for practical problems for questions …. arising from everyday practice’. This tied in with the purpose of this study, namely coming up with a body of substantive theoretical insights on mentoring, as practised in different contexts. Such substantive theory was more likely to resonate with the actual experiences of the people in practical situations, thereby potentially providing a reliable basis for recommending how the existing mentoring model could be improved.

In this study, the units of analysis were the nine primary school at which mentoring of student teachers on practicum was underway.

- **Types of case studies**

Bassey (1999:58) identifies three forms or types of case studies, which roughly correspond to the three purposes of case studies noted above, as follows: ‘theory-seeking’ and ‘theory-testing’, ‘story-telling’ and ‘picture drawing’, and evaluative case studies.

The third type, the evaluative case study, is concerned with determining the case’s worth, and seeks to identify and diagnose problems in the case, as well as suggesting appropriate intervention strategies to solve the problem. The evaluative case study therefore seems to incorporate some elements of theory-seeking. Thus, in this type of case study, the researcher goes beyond a theoretical understanding of issues to include evaluation and the suggestion of solutions, hence the use thereof in this study.
Bearing in mind that the purpose of this study was to recommend how the existing mentoring model at Zimbabwean primary schools could be improved, the evaluative case study, as described above, seemed to be the most appropriate for a study such as this one as it allowed the researcher to focus on specific mentoring contexts and develop a theoretical model of mentoring practices in these contexts. Such a substantive body of theory would then be used as a basis for recommending the minimal conditions that need to be introduced in the mentoring contexts to make mentoring work more effectively.

Furthermore, substantive theoretical understanding of the prevailing mentoring in Zimbabwean schools allowed the researcher to determine which elements should be introduced in the mentoring contexts to block or minimise the operation of factors constraining the effective functioning of the mentoring model.

In this study, cases were not of interest in and of themselves, but were selected solely on the basis of whether they could potentially illuminate what was happening in mentoring contexts at Zimbabwean primary schools. Creswell (2005:440) and Wellington (2000:92) describe such a case study as an instrumental case study. It is instrumental as the case itself is not the primary consideration, but is selected due to being instrumental in providing insight into an issue. Creswell (2005:440) and Wellington (2000:92) further define the former by referring to a multiple instrumental case study, or the collective case study that examines a number of similar cases that provide insight into an issue. This study adopted the form of a multiple instrumental case study based on the rationale that theoretical understanding abstracted from examining several cases would constitute a firmer and more credible basis for informing the development of the improved model.

4.7.3 Sample and sampling procedures

Every research study involves some form of sampling, because logistical and resource considerations make it difficult for the researcher to investigate the entire range of
possible units of analysis (Blaikie, 2010:171). Sampling involves the selection of a small part of a broader phenomenon, which is seen as standing for the whole (Ary et al., 2006:472). Sampling then seems to also be a pragmatic and strategic imperative, as it allows the research study to be carried out even in the face of resource constraints.

Sampling comprises two broad types, namely probability and non-probability sampling. Wellington (2000:60) describes probability sampling as ‘… a sampling plan in which it is possible to specify the probability that any person, school, college or other unit on which the research is based will be included in the sample’. In contrast, in non-probability sampling, it is not possible to specify the probability of the inclusion of a unit.

The choice of a specific type of sampling depends on the purpose of the study. Probability sampling suits large-scale quantitative studies that aim to generalise results to a population that is believed to be known. Also, the probability of inclusion of every unit of a population can be specified. Such probability provides the basis from which sample results can be generalised to the population, within given confidence limits (Thomas, 2003:92). Conversely, non-probability sampling is useful where the nature and size of the population may not be unknown. This makes it difficult to determine the probability of inclusion of each population unit. Hence, no statistical basis for generalising from sample to population exists.

However, in some research studies, such as this one, the purpose of the study makes probability sampling unsuitable, even if the nature and size of the population are potentially knowable. This study sought to generate a body of context embedded insights into the mentoring practices at Zimbabwean primary schools. The focus was on specific contexts, which made generalisability a secondary consideration. Based on this, non-probability sampling was considered to be useful, since it would allow the researcher to focus on cases that would enable him to understand the phenomenon under research.
Non-probability sampling, as a general orientation to sampling, translates into specific sampling strategies that can be readily applied by the researcher at a practical level. Such strategies include purposive (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:156). As its name implies, this strategy recognises the fact that the researcher selects the participants with a purpose in mind. The key criterion guiding the selection of cases in purposive sampling is the potential information richness of the units as this will provide information that will support the researcher in achieving the stated research objectives, as Sowell (2001:450) suggests.

The purposive sampling strategy seemed to be a more suitable sampling strategy for this study, as it would allow the researcher to focus on a few schools that embodied the phenomenon under investigation. In practical terms, purposive sampling implies a wide range of specific sampling techniques, each of which is chosen on the basis of best fit for the purpose in relation to the research objectives. Although many purposive sampling techniques exist, this study utilised an eclectic sampling strategy, combining three of the above sampling techniques, namely the typical case and maximal variation sampling techniques. Typical case sampling involves the selection of cases that represent the norm or average of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2005:204) while maximal variation techniques seek to capture as much variety or diversity as possible of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009:79). Each of these techniques was used to select the following aspects of the sample, namely settings, participants and events as suggested by (Miles & Huberman, cited in Creswell, 2003:185). For a simplified diagrammatic illustration of the sample, see Figure 4.1 next.
Figure 4.1: Diagram of the sample

**RESEARCHER: PARTICIPANT OBSERVER**  
(Relief/support teacher)

**RURAL**  
CORE:  
Three rural schools  
ADDITIONAL SAMPLE:  
Six schools

**URBAN**  
CORE:  
Three urban schools  
ADDITIONAL SAMPLE:  
Six schools

**PERI-URBAN**  
CORE:  
Three peri-urban schools  
ADDITIONAL SAMPLE:  
Six schools

**DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

**CORE SAMPLE:**  
Focus group Interviews  
Individual semi-structured interviews

**ADDITIONAL SAMPLE:**  
Questionnaires (Mainly open-ended)

{Mentors, Student teachers, School principals}

**PURPOSE OF ADDITIONAL SAMPLE**

- Validation of findings from CORE sample
- Giving voice to a larger number of stakeholders
• **Settings**

In the qualitative research tradition, researchers need to have physical access to specific socio-geographic locations that embody the phenomenon of interest. In this study, the phenomenon of interest was the mentoring taking place at Zimbabwean primary schools, where student teachers were being mentored during teaching practice.

The maximum variation sampling technique was used to select a sample of primary schools located in three socio-geographic environments, namely urban, peri-urban and rural environments, in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. In the researcher’s judgement, these environments captured the full range of socio-geographic environments in primary schools in which student teachers were mentored in teaching practice in Zimbabwe. Examining the potentially varying mentoring practices across the three settings provided the researcher with a fine-grained appreciation of the mentoring practices followed.

The typical case sampling technique was used to select case schools from the three socio-geographic environments. In each environment, three primary schools were selected, totalling nine primary schools. The criterion of typicality was the consistency with which and the period over which a school had participated in the mentoring programme. Information on the typicality of schools was obtained through consulting one of my colleagues, a tutor at a teacher training college located in the same Province. Given the college tutor’s vast experience working with schools on issues related to the placement of student teachers into schools, there is little reason for the researcher to doubt the usefulness of the tutor’s advice concerning the typicality of schools. Based on the foregoing line of argument, it may be reasonably assumed that my reliance on the tutor’s advice could not be expected to have any appreciable negative impact on the trustworthiness of the study.

The researcher took cognisance of the possibility that more schools than the number needed in this study might meet the typicality criterion, making it difficult for him to make
inclusion-exclusion decisions, therefore schools that were easily accessible, both geographically and socially, were selected, making the sample also one of convenience as suggested by Thomas (2003:92) and Wellington (2000:62).

- **Participants**

Once the participating schools had been selected, the researcher chose the participants in those schools from whom the data were going to be collected. This study mainly focused on mentors and student teachers at the participating schools. Participating mentors were assumed to have sufficient experience and knowledge of mentoring schools enabling them to provide information on the working of the existing mentoring model. At each school, two mentor teachers and two student teachers were selected totalling four participants per school and thirty-six participants from the nine participating schools.

The maximal variation sampling technique was used to select a sample that reflected the diversity of participants at each case school. Given the possibility that at any given school there might be male-female, female-female, and male-male mentoring pairs, the researcher attempted to select samples that reflected these varying mentoring combinations. Diversity among the participants could also occur along the dimension of the teaching or mentoring experience of the mentors. Thus the researcher also sought to capture the diverse levels of experience among the mentors who participated in the study. Such selections would enable the researcher to gain a fine-grained appreciation of the mentoring practices, by tracing how mentoring practice possibly interacted with these varying permutations.

Acting consistently with these sensitising ideas, the researcher used the maximal variation technique to choose a sample that included both mentors who were new to mentoring and those who were relatively more experienced in teaching and mentoring. This allowed the researcher to gain a nuanced understanding of mentoring practices
through exploring how mentoring practices interacted with the teaching and mentoring experiences of the mentors.

A maximal variation sampling technique to select a sample that reflected the diversity among student teachers was also implemented. Student teachers potentially varied in terms of the specific teachers’ colleges from which they were deployed and the stage of the practicum at which they were. In schools where there were several student teachers from different teachers’ colleges, a sample that reflected a balanced mix of student teachers from the different teachers’ colleges was chosen. Similarly, in schools where there was a mixture of student teachers at various stages of the practicum, a sample that reflected such diversity in the student teacher community was also selected. Using the maximal variation sampling technique therefore allowed the researcher to trace and explore how perspectives and mentoring experiences interacted with the stages at which student teachers were in their practicum, as well as with the different institutional factors at their colleges.

In order to broaden the database, where necessary, the researcher also focused peripherally on human players at the participating schools who did not meet the selection criteria specified for the main participants, but were willing to contribute their views on the mentoring taking place at their schools as suggested by (Morse in Flick, 2006:131). Such participants included school principals, non-mentoring teachers and college tutors who would visit the participating schools on assessment visits during the research period. These would participate in the research on a needs basis, making them participants by default. The researcher would turn to such participants when he wanted to elaborate on, or validate information. Due to the contingent nature of their participation, the researcher could not specify their number beforehand.
4.7.4 Data collection methods and instruments

- Negotiating entry into research sites

Having identified specific settings and participants of interest to the research study, the researcher sought physical access to these sites in order to be able to collect the relevant data. Research sites or settings can be classified either as public or private domains (Foster, 2006:65), with significantly different implications for how they can be accessed. Public places are generally easy to access with usually, no formal permission needed to do so. By contrast, private domains are typically more difficult to access, because of the presence of gatekeepers who control access to them (Foster, 2006:74). Schools are private domains, irrespective of whether they are publicly or privately owned; therefore, in this study, formal permission needed to be sought before any research could commence.

As Marvasti (2004:46) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) commonly note, gatekeepers are those people who, by virtue of their positions of influence or authority in an organisation, can make binding decisions regarding access by outsiders to that organisation. Therefore, a researcher who intends to gain access to a formal organisation for the purpose of research will usually be required to negotiate access at several levels, making the process of negotiating access a potentially difficult and complex undertaking.

Gatekeepers do not simply inhibit access to research sites for the sake of it. What is at stake is the protection of their own interests and those of the people who live or work at the site (Foster, 2006:66). In order to access a research site, it is therefore important that the prospective researcher demonstrates that these interests will not be harmed by the research study. Such an exercise does not merely involve supplying reassuring information, but also impression management and navigating the micro-politics of bureaucracies (Foster, 2006:67; Delamont, 2002:101). This makes negotiating entry a very delicate, unpredictable and possibly prolonged affair. In this study, the formal
gatekeepers were likely to be found at the both the meso- and micro-levels of the educational bureaucracy in Zimbabwe.

At the meso-level, the researcher made initial contact with the Office of the Provincial Director of Education’s headquarters of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe as all the primary schools in the Province fall under the jurisdiction of that Office. This first contact was made one month before the onset of the research, given the inherently prolonged and complex nature of access negotiations.

The initial contact was made by way of a formal letter, prepared and hand-delivered by the researcher, as suggested by Delamont (2002:97). The purpose of the letter was to provide information about the researcher, and the purpose and nature of the research. On the visit to the Office of the Provincial Director of Education to present the access request letter, the researcher took care to dress in a way that would create a positive impression on the officials with whom he sought to interact as suggested by Marvasti (2004:48) and Delamont (2002:101).

Having taught for nine years, the researcher was fully aware that dressing was a central aspect of teacher professionalism; anyone who entered school premises dressed in obtrusively casual clothes was likely to be seen as a potentially disturbing presence. The researcher therefore traded his favourite golf shirt, denim jeans and tekkies – the standard dressing at University - for a double-breasted suit and tie, in the hope that that would give the impression that he would not be a disturbing or disruptive presence in the schools. Although this was necessary from a pragmatic point of view, in the same breath, the researcher could not help but think that there was an element of deception and manipulation in dressing to manage impression.

After receiving official permission to enter schools from the Provincial Education Directorate, the researcher needed to negotiate access into specific schools. At this micro-level, the formal gatekeeper was the school principal. Although the principal could
not officially refuse the researcher access once the Directorate had given permission, it
would be practically difficult and ethically indefensible for the researcher to conduct the
study without securing the agreement of the principal. Principals wield great power at
school level to incite non-cooperation among mentors and student teachers. Further,
trying to conduct research at a school without the principal's personal consent, would
arguably amount to coercion and was therefore objectionable from an ethical point of
view.

The researcher personally contacted the principals of the selected primary schools. At
this level of negotiating access, interpersonal factors were likely to influence the
outcome of the access request. Hence the researcher invited a colleague who could
vouch for his integrity and *bona fides* to accompany him on this visit, as suggested by
Foster (2006:68), Marvasti (2004:46) and Vidovich (2003:82). The colleague who
accompanied the researcher was a tutor at a local teachers' college who enjoyed a
good working relationship with local principals, developed through supervision visits to
their schools over many years. Only after the principals had agreed informally and
orally, did the researcher seek to formalise the agreement by handing them an informed
consent form to complete.

The principals' permission did not necessarily entitle the researcher access to potential
participants in the schools. The researcher was therefore still ethically obliged to seek
informed consent to participate in the research from individual mentors and student
teachers. The process of securing the informed consent of participants is fully explained
in the relevant section below.

Given the fact that the participants were located or worked in different sub-settings in
the schools, blanket permission secured at the outset did not suffice for the purpose of
access to such sub-contexts. Hence, the researcher negotiated access to sub-settings
on a case by case basis. This made the negotiation of access in this research study an
ongoing rather than a once-off affair, as discussed by Delamont (2002:95).
**Researcher’s role**

The capacity to negotiate entry into sub-settings depends on the researcher’s ability to establish and play an appropriate role in the field. Foster (2006:73-74) considers the work of Junker (1960) and Gold (1958:217) as representing early and ground-breaking attempts to engage the question of the roles of a researcher in qualitative research. As Foster (2006:73-74) notes, these scholars (Junker, 1960; Gold, 1958:217) conceptualise the possible roles of a researcher in terms of a continuum, from complete observer, through observer as participant, participant as observer to complete participant.

A researcher who adopts the first role accesses a research site to collect data, but does not interact with the participants but when interacting with participants, he or she becomes observer as participant with the main remaining that of researcher.

Occupying a third place on the continuum is the participant as observer role, where the researcher takes on an established role in the group as active members involving partial immersion in the on-going social activities in the group, which is balanced with the need to accomplish the research agenda brought into the setting (Adler & Adler, cited in Marvasti, 2004:51). The researcher pragmatically and strategically carves an identity and role that enhances access to and understanding of what is happening on the research site from an insider’s perspective.

Lastly, the complete participant role involves total immersion in the social setting while the researcher uses her or his established role in the group to conduct the research (Foster, 2006:73). The role taken in the group tends to overshadow the researcher’s role, implying that the research completely loses the outsider perspective.

In this study, the researcher adopted the role of the participant as observer as it allowed the researcher to observe at first hand and so achieve a better to understanding of mentoring practices at Zimbabwean primary schools from the mentors, and student
teachers’ points of view. This was consistent with the purpose of this study, namely to develop a theoretical model of the mentoring practices, fully anchored in the perspectives of the practitioners as suggested by Foster (2006:73). Such theoretical insights were likely to be a viable foundation for suggesting how the current mentoring model could be improved. At the same time this partial immersion allowed the researcher to maintain the required critical and scientific distance from the participants to avoid completely losing his external perspective. In this way, the participant observer role enabled the researcher to negotiate a delicate balance between outsider and insider perspectives. Neither total immersion nor total researcher aloofness from the group would augur well for a full understanding of the mentoring practices.

The researcher occasionally played the role of a support teacher, helping out with the classes of teachers who, for officially sanctioned reasons, could not come to work. The support role also brought involvement in a wide range of other teaching and learning related tasks in the classrooms, in the presence of both mentor and student teacher who may have requested this.

Assuming a support teacher’s role allowed the researcher to access classrooms as primary sub-contexts which would otherwise have been difficult and sensitive for the researcher to access. In this role, the researcher could develop a first-hand feel for naturally occurring and on-going contexts in the classrooms. In the role of the relief teacher, the researcher therefore also had the opportunity to experience and observe the moves and routines of student teachers’ classroom work, thereby getting an opportunity to observe mentoring–related issues such as seating patterns, distribution of socio-geographic space and pedagogical authority between the former and the latter. During these times the researcher in general advised mentors and student teachers with pedagogical problems in their classrooms, when requested to do so.

Moreover, adopting a support teacher’s role enabled the researcher to cultivate rapport with mentors and student teachers. Helping out participants with their job-related tasks demonstrated the researcher’s commitment to the participants’ interests and projected
him as one of them. To reinforce this insider identity, the researcher emphasised his past career as a primary school teacher, projecting himself as a one of the teachers. Relatedly, having adopted the support teacher’s role, the researcher had to dress in accordance with the dress code at the schools, so that he could blend in. Such measures enabled the researcher to fit into the social ecology of the participating schools, ensuring that he would be viewed as a legitimate member of the school staff, who deserved to be trusted.

The data collection process took more than three months. The researcher spent at least ten working days at each of the nine participating schools, as only one case school was dealt with at a time.

**Data collection methods**

Interview guides for both focus group and individual interviews and questionnaires were pilot-tested a month before data collection on student teachers and mentors at three schools that did not form part of the sample. On the basis of the pilot test, the researcher was able to adjust the structure and content of the items to fit the knowledge, experience and status of the respective groups of participants in a way that enhanced the instruments’ capacity to accurately capture the participants’ experiences. To further enhance the effectiveness of the interview guides and questionnaires, the researcher’s promoter served as a critical reader, subjecting the interview guides and questionnaires to thorough critical review, making the necessary changes to ensure that they effectively captured participants’ experiences.

After securing entry into the case schools, identifying the participants and determining the appropriate role he was to play, the researcher needed to make a judicious choice on the specific methods to be used for effectively gathering the relevant empirical materials from the research site. The quest for a complete and well-rounded understanding of the mentoring practices and the variety of the data to be gathered, necessitated that a multiple method approach be adopted in this study. Thus a strategic
methodological mix, consisting of participant observation, focus group and semi-structured individual interviews, as well as self-administered questionnaires, was used to gather data for this study. Full details relating to when, how and why these methods were used in the study are provided below.

**Focus group interviews**

Focus groups originally gained their popularity in market research and were adopted as a research method in the social sciences only at a much later stage. The work of Laserfeld in the 1930s and Robert Merton and his associates at the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University in the 1950s represents the earliest efforts to use focus groups as a research technique (Lichtman, 2010:153; Bloor et al., 2001:16-17).

Roulston (2010:35) captures the essence of focus groups by stating that they involve bringing several people together for a discussion on a topic introduced by the facilitator. Merriam (2009:93), in agreement with Creswell (2005:215), similarly sees focus groups as characteristically involving simultaneous engagement with more than one respondent in interactive manner. In this regard, Scott and Morrison (2006:113) observe that this, more than any other method, allows participants to react to each other’s views on issues of common interest to them, thereby generating group dynamics in which shared meanings and understandings emerge among group members (Bloor et al., 2001:5).

Focus groups can vary in terms of structuredness. In highly structured focus groups, the participants and facilitator tend to follow questions decided on beforehand while in less structured focus groups, the facilitator simply sets the ball rolling through the use of a prompt and allows the discussion to proceed in unforeseen directions on its own internally generated momentum (Lichtman, 2010:153). In this study, the unstructured format of focus groups allowed the participants to fully and freely express themselves. This practically entailed using a vignette appropriate with each group, as a prompt to set off the focus group discussions. The researcher as facilitator played a mainly non-
directive role, letting the discussion follow the course dictated by its own logic and dynamics. This unique capacity of focus groups for allowing access to group norms and meanings enabled the researcher to explore mentors and student teachers’ uncharted general concerns on the mentoring system. In this connection, when used at the beginning of data collection, focus groups allowed the researcher to develop a tentative framework of sensitising concepts and categories of inquiry, which provided the initial focus to the subsequent phases of the data collection process. This allowed the researcher to refine the focus of data collection at an earlier point, instead of waiting for the focus to gradually emerge on its own as the study unfolded. Also, a constrained resource base made waiting for the research focus to emerge on its own an imprudent and ill-advised option for this study. However, where participants seemed to stray too far from the broad topic area delimited by the research questions, the researcher judiciously guided them back to the relevant topic.

Relatedly, focus groups represented a pragmatic option for this researcher, since they allowed him to optimise the use of the limited resources available. Focus groups made it possible for the researcher to reduce the financial and logistical costs that would have resulted from carrying out an exploratory wave of interviews on a one-on-one basis. This round of interviews was replaced by the less costly and logistically simpler alternative, namely focus groups.

Focus group interviews were conducted at the outset of data collection, before observation and individual interviews took place. Two focus group interviews were conducted at each school for both mentors and student teachers separately.

Furthermore, where they were strategically used at the outset of the data collection, focus group interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to begin to cultivate rapport with participants. In this regard, the focus groups created an interpersonal face-to-face situation in which the researcher could personally acquaint himself with the participants, setting him up well for subsequent phases of data collection. Also, the researcher used
the opportunity afforded by the focus group to attend to any concerns, questions and grey areas which the participants had about the researcher and or the project.

Separate focus group interviews were held for mentors and student teachers, because given the power differentials as well as their different social locations, experiences and roles in the mentoring programme, mentors and student teachers were likely to differ in their interpretation of their mentoring experiences. Hence, it was arguably prudent to allow each group an interactive framework in which it could forge its own consensus, without the inhibitions potentially emanating from the power dynamics generated by combining the two groups of participants.

In order to capture as unobtrusively as possible, the non-verbal and contextual details the researcher enlisted the services of a colleague to assist with taking notes during the focus group discussions while all verbal interactions were captured using a digital voice recorder.

**Observation**

Focus group discussions allowed the researcher to focus the study early enough by enabling him to tentatively define the general topic areas and categories of enquiry on which subsequent methods, such as observation and individual interviews, were to focus on. The researcher could only firmly decide on the specific sub-settings, contexts and events to concentrate on during observation on the basis of the preliminary analysis of focus group data.

Moyles (2007:237) suggests that observation is a common feature of everyday life and the experience of human beings anywhere. In formal research, observation is seen as gathering information by means of ‘watching and/or listening to events, recording what occurred’ (Thomas, 2003:60). Therefore, as used in research, observation takes on a systematic character focusing on specific research questions and includes interpretation of gathered data.
Several types or forms of observation can be identified on the basis of the following dimensions: the degree of researcher involvement in the setting in which the research study is being conducted; the degree to which the participants are aware that they are being observed; whether observation is quantitative or qualitative; and laboratory or naturalistic.

Moreover, observation has been thought of in terms of the degree to which the participants are aware of being observed. During overt observation, the participants have full knowledge that they are being observed. In contrast, during covert observation, observation is conducted without the full knowledge of the participants (Foster, 2006:76). While the former could potentially expose the research study to reactivity, the latter was not be used in this study, since it raised serious ethical questions.

*Overt participant observation*

Participant observation was used throughout the entire period of data collection at the selected primary schools. The researcher used insights derived from a preliminary analysis of data from focus group to decide which sub-settings and events in the school he would focus on during observation.

Of primary interest to the researcher were formal sub-settings, in which mentors and student teachers carried out activities related to mentoring in the classroom. In this regard, the researcher was interested in observing the day-to-day mentor teacher and student teacher interaction and listening in on conversations taking place between them in the classroom. This enabled the researcher to establish the mentoring roles assumed by mentors and student teachers and understand the micro-context of mentoring at Zimbabwean primary schools.
Mentors and student teachers' formal and informal activities and interactions with other members of staff in the broader context of the school were also of interest to the researcher. Examples of such activities included extra-curricular activities, staff meetings, and socialising during coffee breaks, lunch and so on. Observing such activities enabled the researcher to establish whether school routines supported the mentoring process. The occasional role of relief teacher assumed by the researcher did not only enable him to take part in the day-to-day routines of the schools, but also allowed him access to naturally occurring conversations taking place, thereby him to fit into the natural ecology of the school.

Data from observations were recorded in the form of field notes on observational guide. An observational guide was prepared for each event or activity (see sample observational guide in Appendix 9, adapted from Creswell (2005:136). The observation guide was loosely structured, consisting of broader section headings merely meant to remind the researcher of the salient issues relevant to the study. Arguably, such a guide helped the researcher to remain focused on the goals of the research in the face of the potentially overwhelming stream of experiences in the school. However, the researcher was fully wary of imposing too much structure on the observation, given the fact that this was a qualitative study.

Elaborate notes were written from memory soon after the activity had taken place, capturing two major categories of information, namely the descriptive detail of the context and the researcher's own reflections and preliminary analysis of what was going on. The descriptive notes captured aspects such as the context while reflective notes captured the emerging themes and the researcher's personal impression of what had occurred. By virtue of the timing, the researcher hoped to minimise the procedural reactivity that could emanate from taking notes while the activity was taking place. If the researcher obtrusively took notes in the midst of an activity, the participants were likely to stop acting naturally, thereby undermining the validity of the data.
Interviews

Like observation, interviews seem to be related to the communication habits of human beings, similar to conversations in their everyday life (Kvale, cited in Hobson & Townsend, 2010:224). An interview can be seen as engaging in purposeful verbal interaction, with the intention of obtaining specific information from respondent(s) (Mukherji & Albon, 2010:118; DeMarais in Merriam, 2009:87). The purpose of an interview determines the nature of information sought, and the latter influences the form the interview takes. Devers and Frankel (2000:268) further note that if little is known about a phenomenon under investigation, interviews tend to be less structured. Along the spectrum of structure, three types of interviews can be distinguished, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews

In structured interviews, also called standardised interviews, the questions and order in which they are presented, are decided beforehand (Hobson & Townshend, 2010:224). This inflexibility and restrictiveness rendered standardised interviews unsuitable for a study such as this one, which sought to explore, as deeply and holistically as possible, mentors and student teachers’ perspectives on the mentoring taking place at their schools.

Informal unstructured interviews

At the other end of the spectrum of structure is the unstructured interview. Best conceptualised as the obverse of its structured counterpart, the unstructured interview is not planned ahead. The researcher plays it by ear; hence the timing and content of the questions are determined by the logic and direction of naturally occurring conversations. This spontaneity and the unprepared nature of the context in which the unstructured interview takes place are likely to render it informal.
The flexibility of this form of interview is well-suited to the purpose of this study, namely capturing as fully as possible the perspectives of mentors and student teachers on the mentoring taking place at their schools. Utilising this type of interview gave the participants an opportunity to express themselves freely and fully, allowing the researcher to capture their perspectives fully.

As the researcher observed and took part in various activities in different contexts and sub-settings, he obtained access to issues relating to mentoring that were not clear and therefore called for further exploration during informal conversations.

Furthermore, the informal unstructured interviews allowed the researcher enter into ongoing activities or conversations, with the least possible disturbance of the naturalness of the social interaction. Because of the highly contingent and uncertain nature of opportunities for relevant conversations, it was difficult for the researcher to specify beforehand the number of informal unstructured interviews to be held. It should also be noted that the researcher set out to hold informal structured interviews with whomsoever availed him-/herself at the participating school, therefore, even members of staff who were not part of the main sample could be engaged in conversation by the researcher, should they provide an opportunity for gathering data relevant to the study.

Informal unstructured interviews were recorded in the form of interview notes, written from memory immediately after the informal discussions and then integrated with the rest of the field notes from participant observation for the purpose of data analysis (Ary et al., 2006:480). Given its non-directive nature, the informal unstructured interview could not be used to focus the informal conversations on the specific issues without disturbing the natural flow of the social interaction. Yet the researcher needed to pursue some issues arising from focus group interviews or participant observation. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews proved to be useful.
Semi-structured individual interview

The semi- or partially structured interview represents a compromise between structured and unstructured interviews and as Thomas (2009:164) observes ‘… combines the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points …’ In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher can identify specific areas of interest and questions to be pursued as well as flexibly adjust the format and questions to suit the developing logic of the interview (Mertens, 2010:123). Be able to clarify and follow up was useful and necessary as semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to deepen his understanding of specific issues relevant to the research through asking more focused questions gaining a fuller and deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Typically, the semi-structured interview mainly utilises open-ended questions, to allow respondents to express and fully elaborate on their perspectives. However, closed questions are often used to a limited extent, particularly for gathering demographic information in the early stages of an interview (Merriam, 2009:90).

Based on the above, the semi-structured interview seemed to be appropriate for a study such as this one, which sought mentors and student teachers’ perspectives on the mentoring system implemented at primary schools in Zimbabwe. A mentoring model proposed without a deep understanding of current mentoring practices is unlikely to work, because it would be inconsistent with the situation on the ground.

Planning to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews in mutually agreed venues with at least thirty-six participants, depended on their availability. The interviews would last one hour at most.

An interview guide was prepared beforehand, specifying the topics and questions to be pursued during the interview, not as a priori of pre-conceived notions of the researcher, but determined on the basis of the categories of inquiry and issues emerging from focus group interviews, participant observations and unstructured interviews.
The interview guide consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. However, the latter constituted the largest section of the interview guide; soliciting information on the participants’ perspectives on mentoring practices at their schools. Usage of closed questions was limited and peripheral. Such a question format was used only to gather demographic data on the respondents, such as gender; years of experience in mentoring and teaching at primary school level of education; and nature of the mentoring combination.

Reflecting on the type of questions to be included in the interview guide, the researcher found the typology of questions proposed by De Vos (1998:318-319) insightful and questions were carefully constructed with the intention of eliciting the most possible information from participants about their mentoring experiences.

An audio-digital voice recorder was used to record all semi-structured interviews. The researcher posed the questions himself and also operated the recording equipment. The digital format of the recording equipment is relatively immune to disturbances that may threaten data recorded on magnetic tape recorders and the format of the audio files meant that they could be directly converted into computer files, thus readily amenable to proper storage.

However, the digital voice recorder could not capture the visual aspects of the interview situation; therefore contemporaneous notes were captured during personal reflection time afterwards.

The interview guide was prepared following the format suggested by Creswell (2007:136). It consisted of two main sections, the first of which captured information on the time, venue and place of the interview, as well as the names of the interviewer and interviewee (possibly a pseudonym). The second section consisted of questions and spaces for recording the responses.
Questionnaires

A supplementary set of data was also gathered from mentors, student teachers and principals from the twenty-seven participating primary schools. These included the nine schools in the main sample and a further eighteen schools (six each chosen randomly from the urban, peri-urban and rural environments). The rationale for gathering data from this additional sample was articulated in sub-section 1.6.2.2.

Jupp (2006:252) describes a questionnaire as, ‘A set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to group of people in order to collect data about some topic(s) in which the researcher is interested’. Different questionnaires were prepared for the mentors, student teachers and principals at the twenty-seven schools and solicited information on various aspects of the participants’ mentoring experiences. Items on the questionnaires were largely open-ended, except those soliciting biographical information.

4.7.5 Data analysis

Creswell (2007:150) notes that data collection and data analysis in qualitative research are not separate steps; they overlap considerably, with the researcher iteratively moving back and forth between data collection and analysis. However, for the purpose of clearly communicating design issues in this study, the researcher presented data collection and analysis procedures separately.

According to Mouton (2002:108) “...analysis involves breaking the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships”. This normally necessitates that all recordings carried out be transcribed. The effort invested in producing large volumes of interview transcripts and observational notes would count for nothing if the data were not meticulously processed so that the research questions could be answered. In this regard, Creswell (2007:148; 2005:241) and Merriam (2009:176) share the view that data analysis involves taking a close-up look at data, with a view to
describing and developing themes that enable the research questions to be answered. Data analysis can therefore be seen as extracting key ideas and concepts from the mass of concrete details to describe and explain the phenomenon under study. Perhaps the observation of Ary et al. (2006:490) that qualitative data analysis involves, “… reducing and organising data, synthesising information, searching for significant patterns and discovery of what is important”, best conveys the essence of qualitative data analysis.

However, Creswell (2007:150) suggests that there is no single correct and prescribed way of analysing qualitative data. This lack of a generally agreed mechanical and algorithmic template makes it difficult for one to generalise about how qualitative data ought to be analysed. This necessitates that every research study makes its own data analysis procedures explicit so that readers can follow how the researcher arrived at the findings.

Authors such as Saldana (2010), Merriam (2009:165-188), Creswell (2007, 147-163) and Boulton and Hammersley (2006:246-255) have over the years devised data analysis procedures that worked well in their circumstances. The researcher used these as a point of departure, modifying them to suit the purpose of this research study that utilised a largely inductive model of analysis, eclectically informed by the views of such researchers. In this regard, De Vos (1998:345) gives the following tips on data analysis, which the researcher found useful:

- Careful reading of the transcripts to get an overall sense of the whole
- As starting point, randomly picking any transcripts, read through it while writing down any ideas and initial impressions
- Reread the transcripts, taking note of and marking out relevant units of meaning
- Relating the units of meaning to the sub-categories and major categories
- Integrating sub-categories and major categories, as a basis for theory building

As stated in the section on data collection, the researcher used insights drawn from an analysis of focus group data to define the focus of subsequent stages of data collection.
This is line with Morgan’s view (Flick, 2006:197), who sees focus groups as helpful for giving the researcher a general orientation to the field. This makes it imperative that focus group data be analysed as soon as collected. However, to do so, would not be possible, given the complex nature of the task of transcribing focus group data (Bloor et al., 2001:60). In the face of this dilemma, Creswell (2005:233) and Krueger (Bloor et al., 2001:59) reassuringly counsel that it is not always necessary to transcribe focus group data, arguing that analysis can be carried out through listening to the audio recordings and the notes.

Taking expedient cognisance of this piece of advice, the researcher during the data collection process did not transcribe focus group interview data before analysing them, as this would have delayed the onset of the more intensive data collection process. Rather, the researcher took the pragmatic option of listening to the audio-recordings and closely examining the notes so as to compile summaries capturing the gist of focus group discussions (Boulton & Hammersley, 2006:246). Following that, the researcher examined the summaries in order to identify the key issues and concerns of the participants about mentoring practices and experiences. This mode of analysis sufficed for the purpose of quickly determining the categories of inquiry as a basis for defining the focus of subsequent phases of data collection. However, following the completion of data collection, focus group data, along with other interview data, were transcribed before being analysed more deeply.

The researcher analysed data on the basis of the counsel derived from such researchers as Merriam (2009:165); Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:490); Boulton and Hammersley (2006:246); and Creswell (2005:231), who generally see data analysis as comprising three stages, namely data management, coding, and data integration.

- **Data management**

  Data management involves organising and transcribing the data so that it is ready for analysis. Transcription, as Creswell (2005:233) notes, involves “converting audiotape
recordings or field notes into text data”. Organisation involves developing a scheme for storing and managing the database because if data are not organised properly, the researcher may find her-/himself overwhelmed by the large volumes of data.

As soon as the first interview audio recordings, interview notes and field notes came in, the researcher set about typing them, verbatim, into a word processing program. A margin of approximately two centimetres wide was left on either side of the page to accommodate memos and codes.

To facilitate retrieval, each page of the interview transcript was marked to indicate the kind and source of data, with each line on the transcript being numbered. For example, the notation I/2/R-ST-R indicated a second interview (I/2) held at Riverside Primary School (pseudonym) with a student teacher (STR).

Field notes were also typed into the same word processing computer program. Each page of the field notes had the same identifying information as used in the observation and interview guides. However, the researcher added page numbers to separate sets of field notes. Additionally, the researcher wrote line numbers on field notes to facilitate subsequent retrieval and reference.

After transcribing the data, the researcher sought to organise and store the data in a way that would facilitate subsequent retrieval by creating separate computer folders for data collected from each of the core nine participating schools. In other words, one folder was created for each school. Within the folders for respective schools, different files for data from different sources were created and two copies of all the interview and field notes transcripts were printed, one for filing, and the other as a working document on which the researcher carried out the next data analysis task, namely coding.
Coding

After transcribing and coming up with an organisational scheme for storing and retrieving the data, the researcher set about coding the data. In Creswell’s (2005:237) formulation, coding is “… the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data”. Coding involves breaking down data into units of meaning and rearranging them together into analytical concepts, called categories (Ary et al., 2006:493). Thus, coding essentially represents an attempt to move from the empirical to the conceptual level of understanding data.

Coding comprises several stages, the first of which is called open coding, as termed preliminary or provisional coding. According to Grbich (2007:74), open coding involves trawling word by word, line by line, paragraph by paragraph, through the data record, questioning the data with a view to identifying concepts. This implies repeated close reading and examination of the data record, identifying and labelling segments that may answer question(s) asked in the study (Merriam, 2009:176).

Every transcript was repeatedly read in order to obtain an overall sense of the information in each data record. This is consistent with Agar’s (Creswell, 2005:237) caveat cautioning qualitative data analysts to first get a general impression of the data before breaking it into parts. While reading through each transcript, the researcher liberally inserted notes, comments, observations, queries, hunches, concepts, ideas and short phrases next to segments he thought were relevant to the study, using a different font colour in the margins.

The next step in the data analysis process is called axial or analytical coding. According to Urquhart (2007:342-343), this form of coding involves “relating categories to sub-categories”. Axial coding entails going through the open codes in order to identify groupings. The process was carried out on each transcript, attaching a list of grouped codes to the relevant transcript, checking whether certain open codes appeared on
subsequent transcripts. Codes that recurred on several transcripts represented patterns or regularities across data sets.

Lists of concepts derived from the transcripts were consolidated list, so capturing patterns and regularities in themes or categories. Creswell (2005:243) aptly describes such themes as “… similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database”. These themes were labeled reflecting their content. This thematic framework was subsequently used as a tentative and preliminary classification system for sorting data items from the transcripts analysed subsequently. As the researcher proceeded with data analysis, he open-mindedly dropped categories that did not get empirical support from the data sets and revised and refined the categories based on emerging empirical evidence from the transcripts. Thus, the number of categories or themes was progressively reduced as the data analysis process continued. However, the researcher did not look only for confirming data; as several scholars counsel, he also remained alert to and took into account discrepant evidence.

File folders were created on the word processing computer program for each category and each unit of data relevant to each was cut and put into the file folder.

To facilitate subsequent retrieval and reference, the researcher retained the original identifying information for each unit of data placed in a category. For an interview transcript, such information included the participant’s identity (number), the line numbers of the excerpt, and the name of the participating school (pseudonyms were used).

- **Data integration**

Deriving a scheme of themes or categories is arguably not a sufficient level of analysis for a study such as this, which sought to come up with a firm theoretical understanding of mentoring practices. Consequently, the researcher developed a stronger explanatory framework or theoretical model of mentoring practices through interconnecting or
integrating the themes (Creswell, 2005:246). Themes from the three different types of participating schools were integrated into an integrated explanatory framework. Where possible, the researcher sought to connect themes through the visual representation of relationships such as network diagrams, flow charts and conceptual maps. The specific configuration of these interconnections could not be precisely anticipated, being subject to what emerged from the data.

Due to resource constraints, the researcher did not wait to reach the point of saturation as a cue to stop data collection and analysis. The limited time-frame for collecting data at each school necessitated that the researcher moved on once a picture of mentoring practices sufficiently broad for the purposes of this study had emerged. At most, ten days were set aside for collecting data at each of the nine participating schools.

The supplementary data set gathered through questionnaires was also qualitatively analysed according to suggestions articulated by Akyeampong and Stephens (2002:265). The researcher located similar responses to a question under a single and typical response category. Each new response was allocated to a different category, until an exhaustive list of categories had been compiled. Thereafter, the response patterns were tallied and presented on matrix displays and charts, as explained by McKnight, Magid and Murphy (2000:8). Finally, the findings from the main and supplementary data set were compared and integrated.

4.7.6 Measures to ensure trustworthiness of research findings

This study sought to come up with a body of substantive theoretical insights into the workings of the mentoring programme for student teachers on practicum at primary schools in Zimbabwe. The ensuing understanding was, however, not an end in itself, but intended to provide a basis for suggesting how the existing mentoring model could be improved, suggesting that the findings of this study could have a direct bearing on social institutions and people’s lives. If the proposed mentoring model does not work, the cost in human and material terms and wasted time would arguably be too great and
in such circumstances, the researcher may possibly be blamed for not conducting the study with due rigour and diligence. To avoid the costly consequences of implementing recommendations based on faulty findings, policy makers are likely to closely scrutinise the conduct of the study on which the recommendations were based. The major point of reference of that examination is likely to be whether the study was carried out in a way that would inspire trust and confidence in the findings by the potential users of the findings.

If no basis for confidence can be found in the way the study was conducted, the findings may suffer a credibility crisis, resulting in the recommendations not being implemented. It was therefore important for the researcher to demonstrate due diligence and rigour in carrying out the research, so as to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, to avoid the above worst-case scenario. Merriam (2009:209) describes the trustworthiness of a study as the degree to which the study was carried out with rigour.

The question of what criteria can acceptably be used for judging the rigour of research seems to be a perennially contested one. Traditionally, rigour has often been conceived of in terms of validity and reliability. The former, which is more central to trustworthiness, is conventionally understood as the degree to which the findings match the reality of the world being studied. This view of validity implies the existence of a singular and static reality out there against which the findings of the study can be tested to determine whether or not they are valid.

Qualitative scholars, such as Flick, Von Kardoff and Steinke (2004:6), De Vos (1998:240) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), reject claims on the existence of a singular, static and independent reality. Such a view is fundamentally inconsistent with qualitative research’s presupposition that the world is constituted by multiple realities, socially constructed by people who interpret the world from different social locations, personal and cultural-historical backgrounds. In their view, it is not possible to assess the validity of findings against reality, which is multiple and changeful in nature.
The rejection of the conventional notion of validity does not, however, mean that qualitative researchers are not concerned about the trustworthiness of their findings. In this connection, qualitative inquirers have sought alternative criteria of assessing the rigour of research findings. Such criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The choice of a particular criterion of rigour to use in a study, however, is dependent on the purpose of the research, as Golafshani (2003:602) observes. The researcher used credibility and transferability as the central criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of the findings in ways explained below.

- **Credibility**

As indicated above, in order for the recommendations of this study to be adopted and implemented at Zimbabwean schools, policy-makers and educational practitioners involved in the mentoring programme need to be convinced that the recommendations underpinning the proposed mentoring model are based on an accurate and truthful understanding of the mentoring programme as it is applied. This means that such a mentoring model must map onto and closely resonate with the practitioners’ needs and concerns as they construct them in their various localised contexts. If the proposed mentoring model runs against the perspectives and concerns of those involved, then it would be difficult to apply, if not rejected altogether. In order for this not to happen, the researcher needed to capture as accurately and truthfully as possible the perspectives of mentors and student teachers. This seems to suggest credibility (internal validity) as an appropriate criterion of ensuring and assessing the rigour of the findings of this study.

Researchers generally view the concept of credibility as closely allied to the concept of internal validity in quantitative research. O’Leary (2004:56) succinctly describes credibility as the ‘quality, capability or power to elicit belief’. Credibility implies the rejection of the quantitative research’s concept of validity, which insists on matching findings with reality. Instead, qualitative researchers content themselves with a more flexible and modest concept of validity, which implies the quest to capture as fully and
accurately as possible the perspectives of participants so as to inspire confidence and belief in the consumers of research (Ary et al., 2006:504). Sowell (2001:5) aptly captures the concept of validity as, ‘... the degree to which outcomes are accurate and grounded in data’ while Lichtman (2010:228) similarly contends that credibility suggests that research is evaluated from the point of view of the participants. Thus, credibility relates to the capacity of the researcher to demonstrate to the users of the research findings that due diligence was taken in accurately depicting the features of the perspectives of the participants on the phenomenon under study.

Several strategies for establishing the credibility of research findings are at the disposal of the qualitative researcher. This includes strategies such as triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, and so on. In this study, the researcher utilised triangulation and member checking the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, McNiff and Whitehead (2002:32) describe triangulation as “... cross-checking the existence of certain phenomena and the veracity of individual accounts by gathering data from a number of sources and subsequently comparing and contrasting one account with another in order to produce a full and balanced study as possible”.

According to Flick (2004:178), Denzin, the pioneer of triangulation in qualitative research, proposed four types of triangulation, namely use of multiple methods; multiple sources of data; multiple investigators; and multiple theories. In this study, the researcher employed the first two types of triangulation, namely multiple sources and methods.

The use of multiple methods, or data triangulation, as Ary et al. (2006:505) prefer to call it, involves an attempt to seek support for research findings from more than one data source. The data sources so combined may either be distinguished on the basis of the categories of participants from whom data were gathered and/or the method used to collect the data. In this study, data triangulation was employed as follows:
Firstly, the researcher sought to solicit the views of participants, drawn from various categories and sub-categories of participants, on the same issues. Thus, the views of both mentors and student teachers were sought on the same issue.

Also, bearing in mind that there was potential variation within these categories of participants with respect to various differentiating factors, the researcher sought to capture the full range of the views of sub-categories comprehending the heterogeneity. For example, student teachers could vary in terms of the time they had spent on the teaching practicum, the college from which they were deployed, whether they were male or female, and the sex-based mentoring combination. The researcher therefore solicited the views of participants on the same issue across the whole spectrum of participant sub-categories. The same procedure was repeated with mentors. This strategy allowed the researcher to understand and capture the participants' perspectives in their nuanced and fine-grained nature. Such rigour arguably provided reasonable grounds for confidence in the resultant account of participants' perspectives.

Data triangulation in this study also took the form of cross-checking and comparing data gathered through one method, but at different times and places. For example, the researcher cross-checked and compared data collected through observation or interviews at different points during the three months' fieldwork at the case schools. The persistence of the same theme or category across the observations or interviews may provide reasonable grounds for belief and confidence in the finding.

The other type of triangulation used in this study, was method triangulation, as described by Guion (Lichtman, 2010:229). According to Ary et al. (2006:505), method triangulation involves the use of more than one method in a study, so that data collected through one method can be cross-checked by that collected through another. As demonstrated clearly in the section on data collection, this study utilised at least four methods of data collection, namely focus group interviews; participant observation; semi-structured interviews; and questionnaires.
As part of the above triangulation strategy, insights emanating from the preliminary analysis of focus group data were further pursued through observation and interviews.

The general issues raised by the participants during focus group discussions were used as a basis for defining the initial focus of observations and interviews. Also, issues emerging from observational data were followed up through interviews. Such a triangulation strategy enabled the researcher to thoroughly examine the participants’ perspectives, allowing greater understanding of the issues in their subtle and complex nature. Such a rigorous approach arguably constitutes legitimate grounds for confidence on the part of the potential users of the findings.

- **Transferability**

Given the envisaged wider public availability of the research report, the findings of this study are likely to be of practical interest to a wider readership and consumer base, encompassing even those mentors, administrators and student teachers working in schools outside the study sample as they may wish to use the findings as a basis for solving problems in their own contexts. Unfortunately, they do not have any reasonable basis for thinking that the findings of this study, conducted outside their immediate context, will also work for them.

This quest for wider applicability of findings is known as the generalisability or external validity. It is traditionally associated with quantitative researchers. Qualitative researchers are not traditionally interested in seeking to extend the range of application of their findings, because they are typically interested in understanding relatively small-scale and localised contexts. In recent years, however, qualitative researchers have begun to show interest in extending the application of their research findings beyond the immediate context of the study.

Given the scarcity of financial resources in Zimbabwe, it makes economical sense to optimise the use of the limited resources by ensuring that the research findings are of
wider applicability. Arguing in a different but relevant context, Schofield (2000:72) notes that the worth of an ‘... evaluation is greatly enhanced to the extent it can inform programme and policy decisions relating to other sites’. Therefore, the researcher sought to provide the basis upon which those case schools that were not part of the study could also confidently apply the research findings in their own locale.

Yet, this being a qualitative study, the wider application of findings cannot be ensured on the basis of the traditional conception of generalisability. This is so because the notion of generalisability as conceptualised by quantitative research is inconsistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative research. Fortunately, qualitative research is increasingly embracing the possibility of generalising from the findings of small-scale studies. Researchers have attempted to reconceptualise the concept of generalisability in a way that makes it congruent with the philosophical premises of qualitative research. In this regard, the quest for generalisability has been variously reinterpreted in terms of concepts such as transferability, extrapolation, naturalistic generalisation, and fuzzy generalisations.

Of all these concepts, the term transferability seems to have gained wider general currency in the research community. This term, coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985:296-297), concerns the possibility of applying research findings in contexts other than the one in which the study was conducted. The extent of applicability depends on the degree of similarity between the contexts. To Lincoln and Guba, it is not for the researcher to determine the applicability of findings, but for the potential users themselves, based on their judgement about the similarity between contexts. This calls to mind Bassey’s (2001:119) concept of Best Estimate of Trustworthiness (BET). Bassey describes BET as a ‘professional judgement, based on experience in the absence of research data’. This is so because the researcher is not familiar with the nature of all the contexts to be able to make informed ‘best fit for purpose’ decisions.

The best the researcher can do is to empower potential consumers of research findings with adequate contextual detail about the context to enable them to make informed
decisions about the applicability of the findings in their own contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:135). In other words, transferability implies an attempt to apply lessons drawn from a study in one context in another similar context. Whether such lessons work, is entirely a matter of probability.

In addition to supplying the potential users with information to make informed transferability decisions, the researcher can alternatively use the following strategies to enhance the transferability or internal validity of the research findings: maximum variation sampling, typical case sampling, and studying multiple cases at different sites. In this study, the researcher utilised all three these strategies to enhance the transferability of the study. Blaikie (2010:194), in common with Marshall and Rossman (2006:71), sees maximum variation sampling as involving the selection of a small sample that captures the range of variations in the population. As demonstrated in the sampling section above, the case schools that participated in this study were drawn proportionally from different socio-geographic environments, namely rural, peri-urban and urban areas. Two schools from each of these environments were selected to participate in the study.

Such a sample widened the range of application of the research findings by the readers or consumers of the research (Merriam, 2009:228). A varied sample would increase the possibility for more schools outside the study sample to find some in the sample with which they shared some characteristics. In this way, the schools outside the sample would have a basis for applying with confidence the findings of a study carried out outside their contexts. Relatedly, the multiple site nature of the case study also enhanced transferability in the same way.

Additionally, within the case schools, participants were selected in a way that ensured that the widest range of variation had been captured. In this connection, the sample of student teachers was a balanced composition of those at different stages of the practicum and those in different mentoring pair combinations in terms of gender, age and so forth. Also, mentor teachers were selected in a way that balanced the
composition in terms of teaching experience, mentoring experience, qualifications, and so on.

This again broadened the range of application of the findings. It is therefore possible for the schools outside the sample to closely match themselves with the characteristics of particular schools in the sample. This will enhance the confidence with which the schools could apply the research findings in their own context.

4.8 ETHICAL MEASURES

The use of methods such as participant observation and, to a lesser extent, qualitative interviews, made it necessary for the researcher to spend some time at the schools, insinuating himself rather manipulatively into the normally placid social ecology of the schools. As a result of this prolonged stay at the participating schools, the researcher intensively involved himself socially with the participants. Yet strictly and honestly speaking, such relationships were seldom natural and genuine; rather, they tended to be instrumental, primarily motivated by the data-gathering objectives of the researcher.

No wonder then that in contemporary times the ethical status of a research study has come to be closely tied to its credibility. Likewise, this researcher was interested in demonstrating the ethical integrity of the potential findings of his research in order to enhance its credibility in the eyes of fellow researchers and potential users. Given the applied nature of this study, the way it is viewed by potential users becomes particularly important in order to enhance the uptake of the recommendations.

Before exploring how ethics relate to the research in this study, it may be helpful to clarify the concept of ethics itself. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:140) etymologically trace the origin of the term ethics to the Greek word *ethos*, which means character or disposition. Ethics are clearly concerned with the quality of human behaviour.
This implicitly ties in with Pring (2000:142) and Mukherji and Albon’s (2010:34) description of ethics as having to do with moral principles or rules governing human conduct. Relating ethics to research, Simons (Pring, 2000:142) describes ethics as, ‘the search for rules of conduct that enable us to operate defensibly in the political context in which we have to conduct research’.

Based on the above, ethics in educational research can be seen as having to do with values, manifesting themselves in terms of principles and guidelines, intended to guide the researcher’s conduct. The fact that ethics are essentially values, suggests that they can be defined only in relative terms; they are bound to vary between people and societies. This explains the multiplicity of ethical codes internationally that are meant to guide research. Given the availability of many ethical codes that can potentially guide research, the researcher cannot discuss ethical issues in this study without locating himself within a specific ethical code.

Despite the variation in ethical codes, most seem to place overlapping emphasis on the following values or general principles: respect for persons; beneficence and non-maleficence; and justice. These are the principles on which the Belmont Report (1979:4), which constitutes the ethical framework of this study, is based. The researcher chose the Belmont Report as the ethical framework for this study, because it is the frame of reference used by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) at the tertiary institution at which this research is registered.

According to the Belmont Report (1979:4), three principles or values should govern biomedical and behavioural research involving human subjects. The principles are as follows: respect for persons; beneficence; and justice. Respect for persons basically implies giving due regard to a person’s autonomy as expressed through capability, allowing him or her to formulate opinions and choices. The principle of beneficence suggests two twin guidelines, namely doing no harm, which is also called non-maleficence, and the maximisation of benefits. Non-maleficence means avoiding injuring others for whatever reason. The notion of harm relates to physical and/or
psychological damage. The maximisation of benefits concerns the use of the opportunities provided by the research study to secure the well-being of the participants, as well as minimising risk. Justice refers to fairness in the distribution of the benefits and burdens during the research process.

Several scholars note that threats to the ethical integrity of a study can occur at any stage of the research process. In this study, ethical threats mainly arose during data collection, analysis, and writing up and dissemination.

The first ethical issue in this study related to the researcher’s assumption of the role of participant observer. The central question in this regard was whether to conduct overt or covert observation, or to mix the two. For me, a purely covert option would have entailed getting into the targeted schools by assuming some false role. Despite the practical difficulties involved with such a role, such as fitting myself within the social ecology of the schools, overt participant observation would have meant less procedural reactivity, thereby enhancing the internal validity of the findings. However, such a role would have clearly violated the principle of respect for persons, as it entailed involving persons in research without their knowledge and consent. The researcher therefore avoided such an ethically indefensible route.

The researcher opted for the more ethically defensible overt participant observer role. Consequently, the study was conducted with the participants being fully aware that they were being observed. The choice of this role obliged the researcher to seek the participants’ informed consent to the research.

Informed consent is a well-worn and classical strategy of ensuring that the conduct of a study is consistent with the principle of respect for persons. It is a cardinal guideline in most professional ethical codes, the Belmont Report (1979) included. As several scholars (Abbot & Sapsford, 2006:295; Flick, 2006:46; Marvasti, 2004:139) note, informed consent relates to the requirement that participants in research should not be studied without their prior agreement, hence they (participants) are supposed to agree
to participate on the basis of sufficient information about the purpose and nature of the research project. In this connection, the Belmont Report (1979) seems to capture the views of most scholars by insisting that participants be told about research procedures, the purpose of such procedures and the anticipated benefits, and that the participants be offered the opportunity to ask questions and to withdraw from the research at any time.

In this study, the researcher sought informed consent from the school principals, mentors and student teachers. The informed consent was sought as described below. Since the researcher was relatively unknown to the potential participants, he made use of a colleague to facilitate the negotiation of access and informed consent, a strategy Vidovich (2003:82) found useful in his/her own study.

As pointed out in sub-section 4.6.2 above, the researcher's afore-mentioned colleague had been a teacher educator at a local college for many years and had established a wider circle of acquaintances among the principals and teachers in the project focus area. The colleague accompanied the researcher when he negotiated access with the principals. The context of such discussions was likely to be a mixture of informality and formality.

The informal element entailed attempts by the researcher's colleague to vouch for his integrity prior to presenting the informed consent form and the access permission letter from the Provincial Education Directorate. During the discussions, the researcher provided verbal information about the nature and purpose of the research. As a pragmatic measure, the researcher presented the access permission letter from the Provincial Education Directorate only at a point in the discussion when the relevant principal seemed to have made up his or her mind about whether or not to allow the researcher to conduct research in the school. Doing so at the outset, would have given the impression that the researcher was trying to undermine her or his authority. Although the researcher went to the principal only after having obtained permission from
the Provincial Directorate, presenting the letter at the outset would have constrained the principal's choices, implying coercion.

The formal aspect involved presenting the Provincial Directorate’s access permission letter to the principal, pointing out to her or him that the letter did not necessarily entitle the researcher access to the school. Thus, the letter was presented only to demonstrate that the researcher had followed due bureaucratic protocol.

At this point in the contact between the principal and researcher and his colleague, the informed consent form was presented. The form needed to be completed by the principal as formal proof of informed consent.

The principal’s consent did not, however, ethically suffice in relation to securing access to the mentors and student teachers. These prospective participants were mature and intellectually competent adults who had the right to determine what happened to their lives. Thus, informed consent was also sought from them in their individual and personal capacities.

Firstly, the researcher asked his colleague to identify one contact person in each participating school who would help with the distribution of the informed consent form, as well as clarify any queries or misgivings that the potential participants may have about the proposed study. The consent form contained information about the research procedures, purpose, benefits and anticipated risks, and stated that the participants could opt out of the research at any time without prejudice. The consent form was supposed to be completed and signed in duplicate, so that the participants could also keep a copy.

The principals were not involved in the process of seeking informed consent from the mentors and student teachers. This was necessary in order to avoid a situation where the power differentials between the principals, mentor teachers and student teachers would force the latter to consent even if they (student teachers) would not have done so
had they been allowed to decide without the principal's involvement. The principal's involvement might have created a situation of subtle and implicit coercion. This would have potentially undermined the voluntariness of the consent given, creating an ethically culpable situation.

As pointed out above in this sub-section, informed consent also involves providing the participants with information about the risks that can potentially emanate from their participation in the study, as well as the strategies that will be used to mitigate or eliminate such risks. This relates to the twin principles of beneficence and non-maleficence. Murphy and Dingwall (Flick, 2006:46) describe non-maleficence as the requirement that researchers should avoid harming participants. The possibility of physical harm in this study, as in all social science projects, was only remote. The harm that can happen in social science research is mainly of a psychological or emotional kind (O'Leary, 2004:53).

In this research, the psychological harm to participants potentially emanated from the disclosure of sensitive information, particularly during the writing and dissemination phases of the study. Such information possibly related to issues such as problems in mentoring relationships, particularly cross-gender mentoring pairs. It was, however, not possible for the researcher to precisely anticipate the full range of potential psycho-emotional forms of harm that could occur to participants.

Psychological risks were primarily associated with breach of confidentiality and anonymity. It therefore follows that protecting participants from psychological harm mainly involved safeguarding their confidentiality. Hennink et al. (2011:71) and Israel and Hay (2006:76) agree that confidentiality involves making an undertaking that private information that has been exchanged between the researcher and the participant will not be disclosed without the latter's consent. Such an undertaking needs to be accompanied by specifying which practical measures the researcher will take to safeguard the confidentiality of participants.
In this study, the confidentiality of participants was safeguarded in the following ways. Firstly, the researcher disguised the names of participating schools through the use of pseudonyms or aliases. Additionally, the researcher removed any other identifying information from the research report. It was necessary to disguise school identity to avoid the danger of embarrassing the school if information portraying it in a negative light got into the public domain.

Similarly, the confidentiality of human participants was also protected, through the use of pseudonyms or aliases. Each participant was allocated a number that was used for identifying him or her in the research report. It was important to disguise the participants’ identity in this way, because there was a possibility of them being embarrassed or antagonised if specific bits of information in the research report were associated with them. Also, there was the possibility that specific mentoring relationships at the schools could be disturbed if the information tied to specific participants portrayed other mentoring parties in a negative light. This could also at a more general level disturb the social ecology of the school.

Closely related to the principle of non-maleficence is the principle of beneficence. Murphy and Dingwall (Flick, 2006:46) see beneficence as the undertaking to maximise the benefits of participating in the research for participants and schools. Certainly, a study conducted for its own sake would not justify the efforts of the participants and schools in accommodating the researcher in their daily routines for ten days. The schools could have used these efforts to achieve some more constructive ends.

In this connection, the researcher attempted to reciprocate by adopting an observer role that was in line with the core business of the school. The researcher assumed the role of a relief or support teacher. Such role basically involved taking the classes of teachers or student teachers who for various reasons could not report for work. Also, the researcher was readily available to take up any mutually agreed tasks to support learning at the schools. Fortunately, the researcher had nine years of primary school teaching experience, which equipped him to perform the role of relief and support
teacher. Perhaps more importantly, playing such a role helped the researcher blend into the delicate social ecology at each school, thereby avoiding being seen as a disruptive or destabilising influence.

4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter took the reader through the issues that related to the empirical procedures that were used for achieving the purpose of the study. The chapter opened with highlighting the need to develop an effective plan for the empirical investigation of the problem, as well as describing the research problem and its context. Taking centre stage in the chapter was the research paradigm in which the researcher articulated and justified phenomenology as the philosophical foundation of the study, as well as suggesting, describing and justifying qualitative research as the main methodology to be employed. The need to understand mentors and student teachers’ perspectives on the mentoring of their schools seemed to point towards the suitability of such a qualitative methodology.

As part of the methodological plan, a multiple case study approach was adopted. This decision was primarily justified in terms of its potential for extending the range of application of the research findings. True to the qualitative research tradition, focus groups, participant observation and semi-structured interviews were presented as the primary methods of data collection.

Lastly, concerned about safeguarding the integrity of the research findings, the researcher anticipated and reflected on the challenges and issues arising from the study, suggesting appropriate mitigatory measures. Finally the chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical matters and how this research adhered thereto in this study.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter articulated the methodological framework guiding this research. This chapter will inductively analyse and interpret the data gathered during the field work and present the findings on a case-by-case basis. The main data set for this study was collected from nine schools in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe, with an equal number of schools selected from urban, peri-urban and rural environments. The data were primarily collected from mentors, student teachers and principals in the nine schools, through focus group interviews, semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews, observations and questionnaires. Both focus group and individual interviews were typically conducted in the afternoons of teaching days to avoid disturbing or interrupting teaching/learning programmes at the schools. Observations took place throughout the period of the researcher’s presence at the schools.

Interview guides and the predominantly open-ended questionnaires for student teachers broadly solicited information on the following key issues: their readiness for teaching practice, experiences during the practicum at the schools, allocation of mentors, preferred characteristics of mentors, forms and adequacy of support they received from their mentors, and how the mentoring support framework could be improved (see focus group interview guides, individual interview guides and questionnaire in Appendices 6, 7 and 10, respectively).

Furthermore, interview guides and questionnaires for mentors sought information on the following key aspects: allocation/deployment of mentors, perception of their duties as mentors, forms of support they gave student teachers, problems and challenges encountered while performing mentoring duties in the schools, their needs as mentors, as well as the benefits they derived from participating in the mentoring programmes.
Data were collected from the principals of the nine (one of them was not available) schools through individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, focusing on criteria for selecting mentors in the schools, preparedness of mentors to perform mentoring duties, major duties of mentors in the schools, general effectiveness of mentoring in the schools and how this could be improved, the relationships between schools and colleges, how mentors supported student teachers, as well as the benefits of participating in the mentoring programme for the mentors and the schools as organisations (see questionnaire in Appendix 12).

Data were also collected from student teachers and mentors through unstructured focus group interviews in which the researcher used a general prompt to initiate the discussion of mentoring experiences with the participants, following up with probes to pursue leads or seek clarification. The researcher used the following prompt to set off discussions with the mentors: “If someone asked you to give a brief account of your mentoring experiences in this school, what issues would you include?” The following prompt was used to initiate discussions with student teachers: “Being mentored! What issues come to your mind when I say this phrase, given your experiences of learning how to teach at this school?” (see focus interview guides for mentors and student teachers in the Appendix).

The observation largely took place in an unstructured and participant mode, focusing primarily on the interactions of student teachers with mentors and other teachers in various contexts in the schools, such as the classroom, meetings, co-curricular activities, after-work hours, recess times, and so forth (see the observation guide in Appendix 9). Observation (utilised in conjunction with informal unstructured interviews) and questionnaires were essentially used as supplementary data collection strategies to come up with an additional data set that would be instrumental in helping clarify, cross-
verify and triangulate the data gathered through the interviews in the context of trying to address credibility of the findings.

In the presentation of the findings, letters and numbers were used to disguise the identity of schools and individual participants. Data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed inductively by the researcher, while field notes (integrated with informal unstructured interview notes) were fully written out and similarly analysed. The findings emerging from analyzing the above-mentioned data are presented, case-by-case, under the following headings and sub-headings.

5.2 BACKGROUND OF CASE STUDIES

5.2.1 Case study One: Rural schools A, B and C

The three schools were located in a rural environment, within a radius of fifty kilometres from the nearest urban centre. All the schools were day primary schools, offering classes from Grades One to Seven, with an average learner population of 800. Each of the schools had an average of twenty-five qualified teachers, whose teaching experience varied from five to twenty-five years. The teachers were generally non-degreed, holding a generalist primary teacher education college diploma, which qualified them to teach all subjects from Grades One to Seven.

In addition to the qualified teachers, each of the schools hosted an average of nine student teachers, attached to teachers in Grades One to Six, who were supposed to serve as their mentors as they learnt to teach. Grade Seven teachers could not be allocated student teachers because they were deemed being too busy with preparing pupils for final primary school examinations for them to effectively undertake mentoring duties. The student teachers were studying towards a three-year generalist diploma in primary teacher education offered by one of the three primary teacher training colleges in the Province.
Data were primarily gathered from mentors, student teachers and principals in rural schools through focus group and individual semi-structured interviews. In addition, the researcher observed mentoring-related activities taking place in the broader context of the school as well as informally interviewing (informal unstructured interviews) mentors and teachers.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide a summary of information on the participants from the rural schools.

**TABLE 5.1: Information on participants in rural schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Student Teachers</th>
<th>Student Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5.2: Interview matrix for rural schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>Student teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 shows that 37 (19 mentors, 18 student teachers) participants took part in the research at the three rural schools (Schools A, B and C) that make up Case Study One. As Table 5.2 indicates, 19 mentors and 18 student teachers participated in the focus group interviews while 14 mentors and 15 student teachers were individually interviewed. At each of the three above-mentioned schools, the researcher also interviewed the school principal.

Mentors at schools A, B and C were quite happy and ready to participate in the interviews. By contrast, in all the schools, student teachers were initially nervous when asked to contribute their ideas, but became much more cooperative and forthcoming following the researcher’s repeated assurance of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. During each interview, individuals nominated by the participants recorded non-verbal details of the interviews, while the researcher recorded the discussions using a digital voice recorder. The focus group interviews at these three schools took an average of 50 minutes each, while individual interviews for both mentors and student teachers lasted an average of twenty-five minutes each. However, the interviews with rural school principals took more time, lasting an average of thirty-five minutes each.

5.2.2 Case study Two: Urban schools D, E and F

Schools D and F were day schools located in the high-density, low-income side of town, while E was a boarding school in a low-density, affluent section of the same town. On average, the schools in the high-density area had forty teachers each, while the one in the low density area had forty-five teachers. Each of the schools had a learner population of just over 1,000 and hosted an average of between fifteen and twenty student teachers annually. A small number of the teachers held undergraduate degrees in education, while most of them possessed a generalist primary teacher education college diploma, which enabled them to teach all subjects at all Grade levels in primary schools.

In the urban schools, the school principals requested the researcher to shorten focus group interviews, due to the hectic schedules in these schools. Accordingly, the
researcher reduced time taken for focus group interviews at urban schools in an attempt to balance the need to obtain valid data as well as taking into account the school principals’ aforementioned concerns about time. Consequently, the focus group interviews took an average of thirty minutes only, relatively shorter than the group interviews at the rural schools.

Also, as a result of the school principals’ concerns about time, the researcher could not conduct individual interviews with mentors and students teachers as they could not avail themselves on account of pressure of work. Individual interviews were conducted with the school principals of two urban schools only while the third principal was unavailable due to a busy work schedule. Each of the school principals’ interviews took an average of twenty minutes. Despite the mentioned obstacles, all the participants in urban schools encouragingly appeared quite cheerful and ready to participate in the focus group interviews.

At each of the three urban schools, separate focus group interviews with mentors and student teachers were held during the afternoons to avoid disturbing the smooth flow of teaching and learning. To avoid disturbing the teaching and learning programmes at the schools, in line with the researcher’s ethical obligations, the interviews were spread over three days. Also, the researcher observed mentoring related activities during his stay in all the schools as well as carrying informal conversations (informal unstructured interviews) with teachers and mentors when an opportunity to do so presented itself. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 below summarise the information on the participants from the three urban schools.
TABLE 5.3: Information on participants in urban schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Student teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5.4: Interview matrix for urban schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 shows that 37 (17 mentors, 20 student teachers) participants took part in the research study at the three urban schools (Schools D, E and F) that make up Case Study Two. Table 5.4 indicates that 17 mentors and 20 student teachers participated in focus group interviews across all the three urban schools. In addition, two principals at the three urban schools (E and F) were individually interviewed, while the principal for School B was not available. The researcher also observed mentoring-related activities at each of the schools, in addition to the aforementioned research activities at the urban schools.
5.2.3 Case study Three: Peri-urban schools G, H and I

The three peri-urban schools (G, H and I) were located about fifteen kilometers from the nearest town and had an average of twenty one qualified teachers each. These schools had an average learner population of 800. The peri-urban community formed part of a newly resettled farming community in a medium- to low-income area. Most of the mentors at these schools held a primary school teacher’s diploma, which qualified them to teach all subjects and grades in primary schools. Each of the schools annually hosted about six student teachers allocated to mentors in Grades One to Six.

Data were gathered from mentors, student teachers and school principals using focus group and individual face-to-face interviews, as well as observations (combined with informal unstructured interviews). Detailed information on these aspects is shown in the tables. The interviews were spread over three days, to avoid disturbing or interrupting teaching and learning, consistent with the ethical undertaking that the researcher made at the outset of the research. On the fourth day at each school, the researcher interviewed the school principal.

In the focus group interviews, the researcher facilitated discussions, as well as recording them, using a digital voice recorder. Information on participants in the peri-urban schools is shown in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 below.

**TABLE 5.5: Information on participants in peri-urban schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Student teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5.6: Interview matrix for peri-urban schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>Student teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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Table 5.5 shows that 48 (22 mentors and 26 student teachers) participants took part in the research at the three peri-urban schools (Schools A, B and C) that make up Case study Three. Table 5.6 indicates that 22 mentors and 26 student teachers participated in focus group interviews in the three peri-urban schools. In addition, eight mentors, eight student teachers and school principals were individually interviewed. The researcher observed mentoring-related activities during his stay at each of the schools.

Since much of the information in the three case studies was similar, despite different geographical and socio-economic circumstances, the themes have been discussed together.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 Mentor support for student teachers

Mentors and student teachers agreed that the most common form of support for student teachers in the early days of teaching practice involved modeling ‘good’ teaching practices, as student teachers observed lessons delivered by their mentors: ... the student teacher observes how I as her mentor performs various teaching tasks and tries to do the same ... (FGI-M/SC-A/R). As mentors took their teaching quota every day,
student teachers had an opportunity to learn how to teach through observing the teaching: *When I deliver lessons, the student (teacher) will observe how I introduce my lessons and he or she will then know how to introduce and conclude lessons* (FGI-MENT/SC-A/R). In the same vein, another mentor stated: *Student teachers will begin by repeatedly observing the mentor’s lessons … but even in those days the student (teacher) can also attempt to teach. From there the mentor and the student teacher can also sit down to discuss issues such aims and objectives …* (FGI-MENT/SC-C/R). Most student teachers confirmed modeling as a major way in which they learnt to teach: *I started by observing the mentor, I think for two weeks. Then she sometimes asked me to try it … but she would often intervene, but thankfully in ways not obvious to the kids. It seemed so natural, her interventions* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-F/U). Mentors revealed that after the observations, student teachers were occasionally allowed opportunities to comment on their (mentor) lessons, generally passing positive comments, but often not saying anything at all.

A second form of support mentioned by all the categories of participants was mentor observation of the lessons delivered by student teachers, giving the latter some feedback in a post-observation discussion, touching on strengths and weaknesses and providing suggestions for improvement. In this regard, one mentor said: *When the student (teacher) teaches, I observe her lessons, noting weaknesses and strengths. After that I tell her what to do … maybe I do so once a week* (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U). Participants stated that during the post-observation discussions, mentors attempted to assist student teachers in relating theory to practice by giving examples from immediate practical situations, using their teaching practice situation as a point of reference, often reluctant to locate issues only in the context of theory learnt at college. The researcher observed that most of the mentors bristled, smiled suggestively or looked at each other pointedly whenever this issue came up in the interviews. In the researcher’s view, such body language possibly suggested the mentors’ discomfort about discussing the issue.

These post-observation discussions were typically conducted in the afternoon, after the hectic schedule of teaching and learning had abated, as the school timetable did not
provide for mentoring discussions immediately after lessons. This was possibly the reason why most of the mentors rarely engaged in the formal observation of the lessons delivered by the student teachers: ... honestly, I only observe one lesson per week or sometimes not at all (FGI-MENT/SC-C/R). Confirming the foregoing, most student teachers complained that mentor observation of their lessons and feedback occurred quite irregularly: For the whole of last term, my mentor did not even check my plans, does not pass comment or do anything. Only when marks were requested did she ask for my plans, but even then she did not comment on them. She only used it to compile the report that had been requested (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U). Another student teacher added: Sometimes after a lesson I wonder in my mind whether my teaching is good or bad (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U). If anything, observation of lessons delivered by student teachers usually occurred informally, without the mentors having to take themselves out of the routine stream of classroom work: I don’t wait until the end of the lesson; I tell the student teacher straightaway when he or she makes a mistake (FGI-MENT/SC-C/R).

The researcher’s observations at most of the participating schools similarly established that the timetables were fully packed with activities throughout the day, none of which had a direct bearing on the mentoring programme.

Some mentors were very tactful in providing student teachers with feedback in such a way that it did not give learners the impression that the student teachers were learners themselves, who did not quite know what they were doing: ... where possible, I don’t want to correct student teachers in front of class ... pupils might think the student teacher is not competent. Sometimes I have to take over the lessons whenever the student (teacher) makes serious mistakes. But I have to do so in a way that pupils do not notice (MENT-4/SC-C/R). Also, some mentors indicated that they conducted post-observation discussions out of learners’ earshot and notice to make sure that the student teachers were not projected as learners to the learners: ... when a student (teacher) teaches, I cannot loudly point out the mistakes to him (or her). I call him (or her) in a diplomatic way to tell him (her) about the mistake so that he (she) also feels like a teacher in front of the kids (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U).
Mentors further observed that most student teachers were largely passive during the post-lesson discussions, uncritically and unquestioningly taking their advice. Student teachers also seemed reluctant, even scared, to contribute new ideas to the discussions, perhaps due to a sense of inferiority: *I have not met a student (teacher) who sought to go ahead of me, bringing up new ideas. Even if I tried to encourage them, students (teachers) are always docile, following what the mentor does or says, without a word* (MENT-2/SC-G/P-U). One student teacher echoed the foregoing remark: *Even at college we are usually advised by lecturers not to try to show that we know more than mentors. We were cautioned that they (mentors) would fail us if we did so or they would not help us; they would leave us to our own devices* (ST/TR-2/SC-F/U). However, student teachers tended to contribute more freely to professional discussions when the mentors habitually communicated with them in a less formal situation. This grew over time as a trusting, social relationship developed: *Whether or not I can also sometimes correct my mentor depends on the relationship between the two of us. You can't correct her (mentor) when you know she does not like it* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-D/U).

Most mentors also supported student teachers through helping them handle the technical/practical aspects of their work, such as interpreting syllabuses and preparing professional documents, including schemes and plans of work and record books: *I help my students (teacher) interpret the syllabus, formulating objectives for their lessons, how to write on the chalkboard, scheme, plan and evaluate lessons, preparing resource files and comforting and encouraging them when they sometimes lose confidence and get nervous. Most students (teachers) find much difficult with these aspects of teaching* (MENT1/SC-A/R).

Mentors inspected the professional documents and records once a week to make sure that they had been planned correctly, noting and correcting flaws. Sometimes, mentors discussed the lesson plans with student teachers before they delivered the lessons. However, the mentors observed that such discussions mainly dealt with practical/technical issues, hardly linking the technical issues to any theory. This was
particularly so in the early days of the teaching practice period. Student teachers also pointed out that they received the above-mentioned forms of support from mentors, adding that mentors mainly used their own teaching experience to justify their guidance on methods and strategies of teaching.

Unfortunately, student teachers hardly contributed anything to pre-lesson delivery discussions, passively and uncritically accepting the mentors’ suggestions. Student teachers echoed the mentors’ view that they (the student teachers) played a largely passive role in pre-lesson and post-observation discussions, explaining that they did not want to appear as if they were challenging the mentors’ pedagogical authority, for fear of upsetting the social relationship between them and their mentors.

Regarding the practical significance of ideas learnt at college, mentors felt that they had not fully succeeded in engaging student teachers to reflect and internalise, saying: *I don't have time to discuss theory … asking what Piaget or theorist so and so says on this … we never do that, our business in class is to teach and demonstrate teaching. In fact, people just learn theory at college in order to pass the course … but for most of us it (theory) remains there where it belongs (MENT-5/SC-C/R).* Thus, the mentors seemed not to have the capacity and confidence to encourage and help student teachers rework theory in the context, thereby allowing them to construct own practical knowledge.

Psycho-socially, student teachers were provided with moral and counselling support, as one mentor noted: *We support them when they face personal problems … some of these students (teachers) have spouses and children and sometimes face family problems and I support them with counselling … although we have not been trained for it … mentors are like fathers and mothers (FGI-MENT/SC-H/P-U).* Such support included encouraging student teachers to continue trying hard, even when things were not going well, particularly in the early days, when most of them were nervous and lacked confidence to deliver lessons in front of the class, especially when facing their first teaching session. One student teacher expressed this view, saying: *My first day
was very terrible, and I was feeling very nervous, doing something I had never done before in my life ... and to think you will be working with a supervisor who has a lot of knowledge and experience (FGI-STR/TR/-SC-H/P-U).

Curiously, mentors revealed that they felt especially protective towards student teachers when college lecturers came to schools on supervision visits. Mentors indicated that they were prepared to do all they could to ensure that their student teachers attained at least a passing grade. Unfortunately, the intensity of mentor support did not reflect what usually happened after such visits, as the support then tended to diminish. Therefore, it seems as if during the assessment visits by college lecturers, mentors engaged in impression management to ensure that they projected the positive outlook that the student teacher was making progress, even if no or little progress had been made by the student teacher. Mentors wanted to avoid student teacher failure, because that would project them and their school as failures, too.

Student teachers, however, generally considered the support provided by mentors to be inadequate: *Most of the time I teach without getting comments from my mentor. So I don't know whether what I am doing in the class is correct ... no, no, I can't say the support she gives me is enough* (FGI-STR/TR/SC-H/P-U). Some of the student teachers even complained that mentors did not render them any form of support at all. Under such circumstances, student teachers and their mentors operated in a parallel and uncoordinated fashion, with each of the parties largely working independently and in isolation from the other. When support was not readily offered by mentors, student teachers often had to take the initiative to openly solicit feedback.

One ironic scenario was that some mentors conveniently shifted the bulk of their classroom responsibilities on to the student teachers, instead of supporting them. These mentors would frequently absent themselves from their classes, leaving the student teachers to take full charge. Student teachers had no choice but to go beyond their official teaching quota. They resented the fact that some mentors discreetly referred to them as 'Sarapavana', which literally translates into 'the one who is left to take care of
the children’. Such derogatory and mocking referential language used in relation to student teachers was repeatedly confirmed in several informal conversations the researcher held with and listened to during his stay the three schools.

Ominously, student teachers attached to mentors who shifted their classroom responsibilities on to them, reported that they felt overwhelmed. They confessed that as a copying strategy, they focused on just working in order to pass their teaching practicum, even at the expense of classroom learning. However, student teachers commented that mentor support would become more readily available around college lecturers’ supervision visits, with mentors typically getting into a ‘firefighting’ mode, protecting student teachers from getting failing grades.

Despite the above problems, student teachers generally thought that the mentoring scheme should not be discontinued.

5.3.2 Benefits for mentors

The mentors admitted that student teachers lessened their teaching load, as they shared classroom duties: My classroom workload is lessened, as I share most of my classroom duties with my student (teacher), especially marking pupils’ exercise books … (FGI-M/SC-A/R). Student teachers took a teaching quota of up to twenty out of fifty-two lessons per week, thereby significantly reducing their mentors’ workload. Student teachers could also sometimes take full charge of classes: … there are some mentors, who when you get into the classroom, you become its owner, you will be the only one working … she or he will be there in the classroom, but doing nothing (FGI-ST/TR/SC-C/R). However, some student teachers did not consider this to be a benefit: … and the student (teacher) will be doing all the donkey work, teaching the whole day. You can go the whole month without being told feedback on your teaching (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U).

Confirming and regretting the above-mentioned tendencies, one of the principals stated: Some lazy teachers would just leave their classes without notice. So absenteeism
increased as qualified teachers took advantage and left student teachers in charge of the classes (P/SC-E/U).

On the other hand, mentors saw themselves as benefitting socially as student teachers provided a source of companionship: When you have someone in the same class, a personal relationship naturally develops and we end up sharing personal stories and experiences (FGI-MENT/SC-I/P-U).

However, as the interviews with the mentors revealed, most student teachers came to schools for practice, without an adequate grasp of educational theory; hence for most mentors, the presence of students teachers in the classroom may not make much difference. However, a few mentors claimed that some student teachers provided mentors with a challenge and stimulation, as it was easy to fall into lax ways after years of teaching: Students (teachers) help us to be disciplined … We qualified many years ago and have a sense of satisfaction, which could make some of us very complacent, so working with a student (teacher) we need to rededicate and refocus ourselves to our work (FGI-MENT/SC-H/P-U).

Mentors also noted that teaming up with student teachers allowed them (mentors) to get used to teaching in the presence of another professional – a work culture that most teachers found difficult to embrace. By working closely with others, new ideas and skills could potentially be acquired. In fact, some mentors insisted that they had learnt new skills from the student teachers, which they afterwards introduced into their own teaching, especially in music.

Despite the benefit of possibly learning new skills from the student teachers, many full-time teachers and school mentors did not feel comfortable about opening up their teaching practices to the scrutiny of others. Many also did not acknowledge that they could in fact learn from student teachers, claiming that student teachers had low levels of subject and theoretical knowledge, as well as low levels of competence in the various teaching skills. Most student teachers felt that bringing new ideas into the schools would
not be welcomed, as most mentors did not want to accept new ideas from them. One of the mentors attested: Some among us do not want to accept change and such mentors feel belittled when student teachers suggest something (MENT-1/SC-E/U).

Although mentors did not get any financial or material incentives for taking up mentoring duties, they were still committed to helping the student teachers. Some curiously indicated that the above-mentioned benefits somehow compensated for the lack of financial or material incentives. However, some mentors claimed that they simply got satisfaction from seeing young student teachers being transformed into teachers. Our benefits are there, although they may not be tangible. If a student (teacher) comes out of my hands and I feel that I have helped her or him .... I feel a sense of having served the nation (FGI-MENT/SC-H/P-U). In the same vein, another mentor stated: We get nothing from this (mentoring), we only want to help these youngsters, since we were also helped during our training (MENT-1/SC-A/R).

A few mentors, however, felt that there was a need to provide them with an incentive, given the fact that mentoring was an extra duty that lay beyond their job description: ... but there are other mentors who feel that they are being burdened with extra work for nothing. Myself, however, I just want to learn. But an incentive would help motivate such mentors (MENT-2/SC-G/P-U).

### 5.3.3 Organisational support for mentoring programme

Most mentors revealed that they could not frequently observe and engage in detailed discussion with student teachers, because the school time-table was always packed, leaving no time for the mentors to carry out formal observation of lessons presented by student teachers “...you cannot find breathing space; lesson after lesson and if try to sit down with the student teacher, all the time is gone...and my own pupils will lose out. Really, really, there is no time to help the student teachers”.
Another mentor lamented “...sometimes I sit with the student in class in the afternoon when others are in the sports fields...oh, my, the moment they know about you are called to help with training the teams. Our friends don't understand that we need time with the student teachers; it appears no-one cares about what we should do with the student teachers”.

Official non-recognition of the mentors was also confirmed by most principals, who disclosed that the schools did not have any extra financial rewards for mentors “…the issue of giving the mentors a little extra incentives came up in several meetings and parents and non-mentoring teachers did not like the idea...so we have since kept quiet about it”.

However, mentors, student teachers and principals agreed that the school administration at irregular times supported mentoring efforts through organizing forums for professional engagement for all school teaching staff. These included workshops, classroom visits and demonstration lessons. The workshops focused on aspects of teaching that proved to be particularly difficult for the members of staff, including the student teachers. During demonstration lessons, teachers, mentors and the school principals delivered lessons, while other members of teaching staff, including the student teachers, observed. After the lesson presentations, the whole staff discussed the weaknesses and strengths of the lesson, giving suggestions for improvement. Classroom visits entailed groups of teachers touring each other’s classroom to observe and discuss classroom displays, exercise books and learning centres.

Mentors revealed that during the above-mentioned activities of professional engagement, they seldom tried to relate practical issues to their theoretical underpinning, but rather focused on practical or technical issues, in spite of the principals’ hope that the workshops could help student teachers relate theory to practice in addition to mastering some teaching skills.
Student teachers often received support in the form of informal feedback from other teachers who were not their mentors. However, the mentors revealed that they felt undermined if student teachers attached to them sought assistance from other teachers at the school. At the same time, some student teachers ended up being reluctant to seek assistance beyond their mentors, even though they may have the need to do so, for fear of upsetting them: *Most mentors do not want us to be assisted by other teachers in the school ... they feel disregarded and would not be forthcoming with support if we do so (ST/TR/SC-G/P-U)*.

Student teachers added that support and guidance from the school administration also came mainly through inspecting their professional documents, giving the student teachers the opportunity to correct mistakes. Student teachers also pointed out that members of the school administration, especially the principals, observed and assessed delivered lessons. Observation was often followed by detailed discussions. Student teachers passively and unquestioningly accepted assessors’ comments and advice during the discussions. However, the school administration sometimes asked mentors to write a progress report on their student teachers: *Sometimes we can visit all the classes as much as we should ... but then the mentors help us with assessment reports on their student teachers ... and we would later follow up to check progress (P/SC-E/U)*.

### 5.3.4 Selection and placement of student teachers and mentors

As the schools’ administrative bodies took sole responsibility for the selection of mentors, student teachers complained that they had no say in the matter. Once a mentor had been allocated, it was difficult for student teachers to change, even if there was a problem in the mentoring relationship. Student teachers felt that they should be allowed a choice after a window period during which they would be familiarizing themselves with the different mentors, to give them a basis for comparison and choice.

The criteria of mentor selection were not clear and the school administration did not try to match mentors and student teachers in terms of the potential compatibility of their
personalities. In some cases, teachers who were frequently absent from work were allocated student teachers so that they could take over the classes in the formers' absence, seeking to make certain learning would not be negatively affected. Similarly, lazy and ineffective teachers were sometimes allocated student teachers so that the student teachers would make up for their mentors' weaknesses: ... *sometimes teachers who, in addition to classroom teaching, have some administrative responsibilities, were given preference when allocating students (teachers) so that they could have time to carry out the administrative duties* (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U). Another mentor added: *In some schools, classes where there were lazy teachers would be allocated student teachers so that pupils are uplifted* (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U).

For this reason, student teachers recommended that only hard-working teachers must be allocated student teachers: ... *lazy teachers only see us as their servants, to relieve them of their pressure of work ... only effective teachers must become mentors* (ST/TR-5/SC-G/P-U).

### 5.3.5 Social relationships between student teachers and mentors

Mentors commonly noted the importance of establishing and maintaining a good social relationship between the parties involved in order for the mentoring relationship to work effectively: *Where there is a good social relationship, the student teacher fails or passes together with me* (FGI-M/SC-C/R). Given this, it is no wonder that most mentors took early initiative to cultivate a good social relationship with student teachers.

For the student teachers, a sound social relationship with their mentors was vital; otherwise it would be difficult to work with the mentors professionally: *The social aspect is very important. From social, even if you want to deal with work issues ... I feel free to approach her, because of the social relationship. It depends on the personality of the person (mentor). Even outside work, we visit each other* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U).
Where the social relationship was not working well, there was often a complete breakdown of or no smooth communication between the student teachers and their mentors. Consequently, the mentoring parties would work in an uncoordinated manner. *There was no coordinated way of working together, always working independently of each other … After delivering a lesson, instead of passing comments, my mentor would often re-teach it (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U).*

Some mentors even displayed unprovoked hostility towards student teachers, remaining socially aloof from the student teachers from the outset: *Although the principal received me well, when the mentor was called to be introduced to me, she looked the other way while I was extending my hand to greet her (FGI-ST/R/SC-H/P-U).* Such mentors would completely ignore the student teachers, often not communicating with them, even though they were in the same classroom.

Lack of mutual commitment that characterised mentoring relationships that were not based on viable social relationships, led some mentors to abdicate their classroom responsibilities, giving the student teachers the responsibility of taking over significant proportions of their (the mentors’) teaching quotas. Under such circumstances, student teachers shifted into survival mode, only seeking ‘*kufambira mberi necourse*’, suggesting that they would do whatever it took for them to pass their practicum, even at the expense of learners’ learning: *When the mentor rejects me there is nothing I can do … I have to do all I can to go ahead with the course and pass. I just rush on and evaluate, even when pupils did not understand, I give it (lesson taught) a positive spin when evaluating (ST/TR-4/SCC-F/U).* In contrast, where mentors and student teachers had a good social relationship, the former treated the latter in a fair and sensitive way: *When you know your mentor and act properly, she can stand by you, no matter what (ST/TR-3/SC-I/P-U).*

As part of developing social relationships, mentors and student teachers set and clarified the terms of engagement in the classroom early on in their mentoring relationships: *When we got to the classroom, we started talking about personal issues,*
and I pleasantly discovered his wife had the same totem (clan name) as me. From that day I called him brother-in-law and we talked happily about how we were going to work together (ST/TR-5/SC-G/P-U). The mentors would communicate expectations and obligations relating to their working together, setting boundaries. Crossing certain limits in these professional or working relationships was likely to undermine and disturb the social relationship: ... you can't just act without first knowing whether she would be happy being talked to like that ... some get quietly upset, just ignoring and leaving you on your own (ST/TR-4/SC-A/R).

It was observed that poor mentor-mentee relationships were often demonstrated by the two parties physically sitting too far from each other for easy verbal communication; for example, at tables at opposite ends of the classroom. Observations by the researcher in classroom settings across the nine schools participating in the study corroborated the prevalence of the above-mentioned sitting pattern. During break times at meetings and after school, mentors and mentees rarely engaged with each other socially. This was corroborated by the researcher's observation at most of the schools, where mentors and student teachers sat separately during meetings or in the tea-room during breaks, and never met socially after school.

5.3.6 \textbf{Student teachers’ preparedness for teaching practice}

Most mentors complained that student teachers were often not adequately prepared for teaching practice, entering the schools without the basic skills and knowledge necessary for them to participate in a meaningful way. In this regard, one mentor remarked: \textit{Doing this mentoring job is a big challenge, as the student teachers we get don't know anything about teaching. I have had to begin with them from scratch, teaching them how to scheme, plan and formulate aims and objectives. In fact they need help in most areas. It's a hell lot of work we have to do ...} (FGI-M/SC-C/R). Confirming that they were mostly unprepared for teaching practice, a student teacher said: \textit{My early days in the classroom were difficult, I was not sure what to do and lacked}
confidence, I needed support. But sometimes the support given further undermined my confidence and caused me confusion (FGI-ST/TR/SC-G/P-U).

At the entry level, many student teachers faced difficulties with technical issues such as the layout of work, writing on the chalkboard using the correct script, syllabus interpretation, scheming and planning, particularly formulating objectives, and a lack of confidence, which caused them to get nervous when they had to face learners in their attempts to deliver lessons. Conveying a commonly held view in connection with the issues raised above, one mentor said: The students (teachers) are different, some seem to be prepared, but some of them still need much practice, in terms of lesson preparation and even lesson delivery. In fact, some of them, from our observation, seem to lack self-confidence, have stage-fright, and even speaking in English with pupils. Communication, at times, is something which is difficult to them (FGI-MENT/SC-B/U).

As a result, most mentors claimed that in the early days of student teachers’ teaching practice, the latter needed so much professional ‘hand-holding’ that the former ended up concentrating more on them (student teachers) than on the learners: I was caught in-between helping her and the pupils, it was difficult to ignore the pupils. But she really demanded much of my time (MENT-4/SC-G/P-U). Most mentors also bemoaned the student teachers’ lack of the basic communication skills necessary for classroom teaching, making it difficult for them to clearly and logically articulate their ideas when delivering lessons as well as in their teaching documents.

Some of the transitional difficulties student teachers themselves confessed to facing included shyness, nervousness and lack of confidence, leaving them unsure of what to do and afraid of making mistakes, and the inability to relate theory to practice: I was really not quite prepared, especially when it came to scheming and planning. At college we are only told about these things without actually doing it in a practical way (FGI-ST/TR/SC-B/R). In the early days on TP (Teaching Practice), I found it very, very difficult, not knowing where to start. I honestly got scared of having to teach … it was my first time to meet pupils as a teacher (FGI-ST/TR/SC-B/R). As a result, they felt they
needed close guidance, but oftentimes this guidance was not readily forthcoming from their mentors.

In the same vein, most principals complained that schools sometimes had no choice but to do work that was supposed to be done at college: *We have realised over the years that student teachers are not equipped with knowledge about how the job of teaching is done. When we look at their schemes and plan books, we find that we have to do the job of the lecturers to teach them how these things are done. They find it difficult to express their ideas in writing, and also when they stand in front of class, they would be ignorant of what to do …* (P/SC-B/R).

Student teachers explained their inadequate preparedness for teaching practice mainly in terms of the fact that key aspects of the teacher education curriculum had not been covered with due thoroughness. Additionally, the student teachers complained that their College-based preparation for teaching practice was too theoretically oriented, characterised by limited effort to relate theory to practical teaching situations: *… most of our work there at college is based on theory. At college we are taught most of the stuff we need on teaching practice. But all of this is taught in a theoretical way, without being given time to practice them* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-G/P-U).

Mentors generally explained student teachers’ low level of preparedness in terms of the poor academic caliber of teaching recruits: *You wonder whether some of the students (teachers) passed their ‘O’ levels … they can hardly construct a single sentence of correct English … maybe someone wrote school examinations for them* (FGI-MENT/SC-B/R). In the same vein, some mentors thought student teachers lacked commitment: *I think teaching is no longer a noble profession. So student teachers are no longer dedicated to their work, having chosen teaching just because there are no other career options available to them. They just sit idle in the classroom, not forthcoming to perform their part of classroom duties. Student teachers do not even bother to try to emulate the mentor’s example or making use of the professional learning opportunities that are available in the classroom* (FGI-MENT/SC-H/U).
Some mentors blamed the colleges for abdicating their responsibility of preparing student teachers for teaching practice: *At colleges there is something seriously lacking in the way in which lecturers prepare student teachers* ... (MENT-1/SC-H/U). Another mentor further complained: *Students come from college not fully prepared ... they have to learn most of the things in the classroom; I wonder what they were doing at college* (FGI-MENT/SC-SC-D/U).

Some mentors expressed frustration at student teachers' low levels of preparedness for teaching, disclosing that they sometimes wished they had no student teachers attached to them. In this connection, one mentor despondently said: *If I continue to get student teachers who give me such, sometimes I feel it's better for me to work alone in my class* (FGI-MENT/SC-H/U).

Surprisingly, student teachers revealed that some mentors increased their sense of professional inadequacy by acting in ways that undermined their confidence. For instance, some mentors tended to correct student teachers in front of the learners, thereby embarrassing the student teachers, eroding their confidence even further and discouraging them from trying out their ideas. In this respect, one student (teacher) said: *During the first days I felt undermined, lost confidence when the mentor commended negatively, but now I have gotten used to it* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-D/U). Student teachers felt that mentors should not give them feedback in front of learners, but should rather wait until the end of the lesson, or if they had to correct in the course of the lesson, they should do so in a more professional and sensitive way.

5.3.7 Student teachers’ contribution to professional dialogue

Most mentors agreed that student teachers should be allowed to contribute new ideas on teaching and learning in the classroom and the school at large. However, mentors indicated that student teachers were supposed to express themselves in subtle and indirect ways in order for them not to appear as if they were challenging the pedagogical
authority of their mentors in the classroom: A student (teacher) cannot come to tell me what to do ... The mentor will just quietly realise on his or her own if the student has introduced something good ... no need for the student (teacher) to tell the mentor openly about it (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U). Some mentors even felt that they had to veto some ideas, as these were not considered appropriate and suitable to learner learning: In my class they can do anything as long as it is not harmful to pupil learning (FGI-MENT/SC-E/U). A mentor from the same school added: When bringing their theory and things work well (for pupils), it will be okay. But the student (teacher) might mix it up and misunderstand the theory ... oh, then we need to stop them (FGI-MENT/SC-E/U).

Student teachers added that the scope that the student teachers had to contribute to professional dialogue largely depended on the personality of the individual mentor: I think it's a matter of individual differences. Mentors are different with different personalities. Some may be accommodating, welcoming new ideas, while others may not want to accept suggestions (FGI-MENT/SC-G). If student teachers directly challenged or questioned their mentors' authority in the class, they risked upsetting the social relationship between themselves and the latter: You need to find an indirect way of correcting your mentor. Otherwise, tomorrow she will leave you to your own devices when you need help (FGI-ST/TR/SC-F/U).

Some mentors speculated about the reasons why student teachers tended to play a passive role, ascribing student teachers' lack of confidence to an insufficient of grasp of the theoretical and technical aspects of teaching. Echoing the mentors' views about them, a student teacher stated: What was difficult was stage-fright ... afraid of making mistakes and I lacked confidence whether the content I wanted to deliver was correct (FGI-ST/TR/SC-G/P-U). Some student teachers seemed awed by the fact that mentors were more qualified and more experienced, believing that this necessarily meant they had more knowledge and skills: My early days in the classroom were terrible and I was feeling very nervous .... To come to think that I was going to work with a supervisor (mentor) who was far more knowledgeable and experienced ... made me feel like I was an empty vessel (FGI-ST/TR/SC-H/P-U).
For their part, mentors seemed to see themselves in the same light in which they were regarded by the student teachers, considering themselves to be necessarily more knowledgeable and skilled than student teachers, oftentimes patronizingly referring to student teachers as *vana*, which translates into *my child, son or daughter*: If the student teacher is not organised, he or she can even fear the mentor ... So for a student (teacher) to suggest something new to me is out, he or she should do what I do, following behind me like that (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U). Perhaps because of their high dependence on mentors, as *sons and daughters* certainly would, student teachers were extremely wary of socially alienating their mentors: *If you try to debate with them, they will not be open to you ... they will think that you are disregarding them and not be cooperative ... next time, the mentor may not provide assistance when you need it* (FGI-ST/TR/SC-F).

Even if student teachers could contribute something, mentors pointed out that because of the hectic schedule of the classroom, they could not allow student teachers to try out ideas, which after all had no guaranteed utility value for learner learning: *When the student (teacher) wants to learn to teach, struggling and taking time ... honestly I feel she or he will be wasting my time to teach pupils* (FGI-MENT/SC-G/P-U). And this pressure increased as one went up the ladder of primary school grades, with mentors in Grades Five, Six and Seven completely precluding the possibility of allowing the student teacher to suggest and experiment with teaching ideas when they had to prepare learners for Grade Seven examinations.

### 5.3.8 Relationship between schools and colleges

Mentors complained that college lecturers often did not consult or engage them (the mentors) when they visited schools to assess student teachers on teaching practice, taking a strict unilateral approach, often excluding them from the post-observation discussions they held with the student teachers. Only in rare cases did college lecturers consult or involve mentors when they visited schools to assess student teachers: ...
most lecturers just come in and supervise their student and go away, as if you are not there. It seems some of the lecturers think mentors know nothing (FGI-M/SC-C/R).

It was also revealed that mentors and student teachers were often unclear about college expectations due to the absence of documents that clearly articulated such expectations: Without clear expectations, mentoring becomes a burden on us as we try to find out to work out how to help student teachers (FGI-MENT/SC-E/U). Student teachers sometimes even held different and conflicting versions of college expectations.

5.3.9 Mentors’ preparedness for mentoring duties

The participating mentors stated that they had not received any formal training in mentoring or formal discussions of what mentoring was supposed to entail. In spite of this, all mentors confidently asserted that they were capable of mentoring student teachers and that they mentored student teachers in the same way in which they had been mentored themselves during their initial teacher training, We were given no orientation on mentoring … we use the experience we got during our teaching practice at college (FGI-MENT/SC-E/U). However, most mentors declared that lack of training would not stop them from assisting student teachers, whom they regarded as their vana (sons and daughters). Some mentors also admitted that they sometimes simply copied how their fellow mentors supported their student teachers. Nevertheless, the mentors confessed that they often found themselves somewhat out of depth when it came to supporting student teachers theoretically.

5.3.10 Age/Gender and effectiveness of mentoring relationship

Generally, mentors felt that the gender of the parties to a mentoring relationship did not make a difference to the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship, contending that it was more a matter of personality than gender. However, on persistent probing by the researcher, most mentors noted that communication was easier in same-gender mentoring relationships than in cross-gender mentoring relationships. It was perceived
that older student teachers tended to be readily cooperative, more mature, more focused and more receptive to advice than their younger counterparts. At the same time, mentors generally agreed that it was easier to advise younger student teachers.

The data showed that female mentors generally did not want to work with male student teachers, complaining that these did not readily take advice from females and were more likely to be less cooperative than their female counterparts. Mentors claimed that some male students tended to initially look down upon the female mentors. One female mentor stated: *Honestly, I found it difficult to tell the male student teacher what to do … there was nothing I could do to him when he disregarded my advice … however, when things got worse I had no choice but to take the student teacher to the administration …* (MENT-2/SC-A/R).

Most mentors noted that male student teachers devoted less time to their work than their female counterparts.

However, female student teachers revealed that they preferred working with male mentors, because they found them more socially and professionally accessible and readily helpful than female mentors. Some student teachers pointed out those female mentors were prone to mood swings, generally socially withdrawn, uncommunicative, and unwelcoming to student teachers in their classrooms. Female student teachers nevertheless acknowledged that it was culturally difficult for them to develop a close social relationship with their male mentors: *There is a freer flow of communication when the mentor and the student (teacher) are of the same gender … traditionally; it is always difficult for males and females to develop a close relationship. Usually, there is some distancing, which is bound to occur between the two …* (STR/TR-2/SC-E/U). One female student teacher feared that the public perception of a sexual relationship could develop if a student teacher got too close socially to her male mentor, *... getting too close will cause problems, making people to talk, ... suspecting a sexual relationship. Surely you cannot be completely free to say some things to your male mentor which you wouldn't mind disclosing to someone who is female* (ST/TR-1/SC-E/U).
5.3.11 Mentoring policy framework

All principals agreed that there was no national policy documentation governing the mentoring that was taking place at the schools, alluding to the existence of some college-based documents that sketched out a framework of expectations relating how the mentors and the students were to work together: There is no blueprint whatsoever produced by the colleges to help mentors know what mentoring encompasses and what mentoring involves ... most mentors just work with student teachers, without common understanding and purpose of mentoring (P/SC-A/R). They also stated that that there were no regulations defining how different players involved in the mentoring programme related to each other. Consequently, three patterns of college-school interaction around the supervision could be distinguished, such as that some teams of college lecturers would bypass the school administration and the mentors, going directly to the student teachers, assess them and then leave. Secondly, some lecturers would consult the school administration, while ignoring the mentors. A rare scenario was when the team of college lecturers consulted both the mentors and the school administration.

5.3.12 Characteristics of an ideal mentor

Student teachers indicated that if they were allowed to choose their mentors, they would generally prioritise those who could relate well with them socially: I would like to work with someone who is free, someone who does not shout and embarrass me in front of learners even if I make mistakes (ST/TR-2/SC-E/P-U). Some professional attributes were also sought: ... a good mentor is someone who is sociable, able to communicate with other people and does not despise others and should be able to teach well since I will be copying how she or he teaches ... (ST/TR-1/SC-E/P-U).

5.3.13 Peer support among student teachers

Interestingly, student teachers revealed that they sometimes supported each other through informally giving each other tips and advice, as well as sharing information on
professional issues: *I get most support from fellow students (teachers). They usually come to my class, opening commenting on my work … we are very free and open to each other (ST/TR-6/SC-G/P-U).* Another negligible instance of peer support was that student teachers shared stationery with each other.

### 5.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

This section will synthesise and interpret the findings from the three cases, comparing them to insights drawn from literature in order to answer the primary research question: *How can the existing mentoring system in Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher training model, be improved?* The significance of the findings from all the cases will be articulated below.

In summary, the views of mentors in the rural, urban and peri-urban schools seem to be very similar despite different geographical and social settings.

### 5.4.1 Mentor support for student teachers

The findings indicate that modeling was the main way in which mentors supported student teachers as they learnt to teach and this ties in with Mudavanhu and Zezekwa’s (2009:74) research study of mentoring in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. This is consistent with the views of scholars such as Maphosa *et al.* (2007:297), Pollard (2005:35) and Jubeh (1997:45), who consider modeling as playing an important role in the professional learning of student teachers, particularly during the early part of the field experience. Pollard (2005:35) and Jubeh (1997:45) agree that modeling can help student teachers become aware of basic routines, roles and key information about learners in the classroom. As Pollard (2005:35) puts it, student teachers always first *learn to see* before they can begin teaching, and this helps them construct and adjust their schema of teaching as they observe what is happening in the classroom. The foregoing echoes Lave and Wenger’s (2001:31; 1999:22) view who, in terms of their concept of legitimate peripheral participation contend that entrants into a professional
culture seek professional sponsorship of ‘old hands’ so that they can find their own footing in the new professional culture. It seems modeling could be the best way to enable student teachers to peripherally participate in the early days of the practicum, particularly because of their unpreparedness for teaching practice.

However, student teachers can only benefit from the model presented by their mentors if they observe in an active and analytical way (Jubeh, 1997:45). Billet (Philpott, 2006:291) reinforces the same point, arguing that enculturation into existing situated practices should not merely entail passively internalising existing situated practices, but is an active appropriation of the existing practices as their own, implying that there is reciprocal interaction and mutual influence between individual and socially shared knowledge. For this to happen, the student teachers must participate in the post-observation discussion in an intellectually active way. Yet, as the findings indicate, most student teachers did not ask any questions, even when the mentors asked them to, which may indicate that they were not observing in an intellectually active and analytical way. Based on this, it could be concluded that the student teachers took the mentors’ model as being beyond question. This is likely to be the case, with reference to the statement by Cavanagh and Prescott (2010:148) that pre-service teachers strongly desire the approval and acceptance of their mentors, hence it is understandable that they take an uncritical stance, readily copying and internalising the teaching practices in the school. If this is the case, then student teachers’ observation of their mentors’ lessons would be of limited pedagogical value to them as it merely served to fit them into the existing teaching culture (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2010:148).

Perhaps more worrisome was the mentors’ over-reliance on modeling, using it throughout the student teachers’ one-year professional experience. This predominance of the modeling mentoring function suggests that the mentoring undertaken in the schools was mainly based on the apprenticeship model (Maynard & Furlong, 1993:82). Modeling used in such a context takes place within master-apprentice relationships, privileging the mentors’ unquestionable epistemic and pedagogical authority, while the mentee is regarded as merely being there to master the skills, techniques and methods
of teaching, as demonstrated by the mentor. Also, used on its own, modeling restricts the student teachers to the technical/practical level of teaching, contradicting Schön's (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2010:149) counsel that the practicum should not be exclusively preoccupied with grasping the technical aspects of teaching or looking for the right answers.

When modeling is used in the context of the apprenticeship model, it could be seen as limiting student teachers’ exercise of critical and professional agency and therefore professional learning and growth. Le Cornu and Ewing (2008:1801) disapprovingly locate field experiences organised in this way within the traditional view of field experience, which was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, while in the same breath suggesting that the reflective practitioner and inquiry-as-stance perspectives as more current ways of organising the field experience. Based on this, over-reliance on modeling is out of keeping with contemporary ways of organising the field experience, as well as contemporary views of professional learning.

Modeling used in the context of the apprenticeship model goes against contemporary views of professional learning, as espoused by various researchers such as Dewey (Chitpin, 2011:230); Cavanagh and Prescott (2010:148); Cheng, Cheng and Tang (2010:91); Bullough, Young, Hall, Draper and Smith (2008:1848); Osterman and Kottkamp (2004:22); and Schön (1987:299), who see professionals as learning through reflection on experience and through critical engagement with practices and possibly modifying them. Likewise, teachers in the 21st century need to learn to exercise critical and reflective capacities so that they can continuously interrogate and modify their teaching practices to ensure that they are in keeping with the changing needs of learners (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2010:147; Goodwin, 2010:22); yet, a teacher used to passive learning through modeling practice cannot easily acquire such capacities.

Hoyle (Rots, Aelterman, Vlerick & Vermeulen, 2007:546) pejoratively describes professionals who content themselves with and are reluctant to go beyond prevailing teaching practices as restricted professionals, implying that they are not fully-fledged
professionals, lacking breadth of focus and perspective. Furlong similarly views them in a negative light as having *plateaued*, since they are stuck in and unable to see beyond the immediate technical aspects of their teaching practices. Shaw (Cain, 2009:58) similarly laments that teacher training should not be reduced to the on-the-job acquisition of skills.

In addition to modeling, the mentors, in concurrence with student teachers, noted that the former sometimes formally observed lessons delivered by student teachers, followed by post-lesson observation conferences or discussions. This correlates with Hobson, Ashby, Malderez and Tomlinson’s (2009:212) view that lesson observation is one of the key ways in which mentors can support student teachers. The form of observation conducted in the participating schools approximated Portner’s (2008:46) coaching cycle, which comprises three stages, namely pre-observation, observation and post-observation; except that in the participating schools, the cycle was incomplete, as the pre-observation conference was typically missing. Yet, Portner (2008:46), in agreement with Pitton (2006:78), sees the pre-observation conference as very important in giving the mentors an opportunity to shore up the mentees’ confidence through helping them think through, clarify and understand what they are about to do in the lessons. This was especially necessary in the context of the participating schools, given the student teachers’ lack of self-confidence.

However, even the observation and post-observation discussion stages of the coaching cycle were infrequently conducted, due to lack of time, since the school timetables did not provide time for mentoring. This forced mentors to resort to informal observation, which cursorily occurred in the course of ongoing classroom activities or during feedback sessions in the afternoon. This presented the mentors with the moral dilemma whether to attend to the student teachers or the learners. Johnston (2010:308) has also established, in a different context, that the non-discussion of lesson observations is a major problem between mentors and student teachers. Such limited time for feedback in the Zimbabwean primary schools studied, is particularly regrettable with reference to
Hudson (2004:144) and Clynes and Raftery’s (2008:405) emphasis on the critical role of feedback in the mentoring process.

The lack of provision for time for mentoring demonstrates that the mentoring programme was not officially recognised and not fully integrated into schools’ organisational routines and processes; little wonder then that the mentoring took a largely informal mode in response to the structural constraints in the schools. Zey (Woodd, 1997:336) in agreement with Van der Merwe (2011:22), identifies official recognition within the organisation and the provision of resources and demonstrated official commitment as among the defining characteristics of formal mentoring programmes. Lack of formal recognition of mentoring could have an adverse effect on mentors, based on Ehrich’s (Bush & Middlewood, 2005:165) views that the recognition of mentoring by an institution can give the mentors a sense of recognition and reward. A further problem with informal mentoring is that no-one can guarantee that mentoring would be going on, a view which seems to echo Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba’s (2007:303) findings that mentors in Zimbabwe acted as if there were no student teachers in their classrooms who needed to learn to teach.

Also, noteworthy is the fact that in the post-observation discussions, the student teachers always passively accepted their mentors’ suggestions. The mentors dominated the discussions, using their teaching experience as the sole point of reference of the discussions. Relatedly, mentors also admitted that they were reluctant to help student teachers critically engage practical teaching issues in the context of theory learnt at college. This is contrary to Portner’s (2008:55) injunction to mentors not to dictate to student teachers what to do during the post-observation conference, which is consistent with Villani’s (2009:14) view that the post-observation conference should be largely a data-sharing session, as opposed to one where the mentor evaluates student teacher’s performance. In the same regard, Hobson et al. (2009:212) and Portner (2008:55) share the view that the post-observation conference should give the mentor and the student teacher an opportunity to jointly explore the weaknesses and strengths of the lesson,
with the former being there to scaffold the latter as she or he critically formulates professional decisions on her or his teaching.

In contrast to the view of the foregoing scholars, this study established that the mentors at the participating schools did not encourage the student teachers to reflectively engage with their teaching practices during the post-observation conference; rather, they imposed their own views of teaching on the student teachers, dominating the post-observation conference. In this way, they restricted the student teachers' opportunity for professional growth, particularly in relation to enhancing their professional judgment. It seems as if the professional relationships between the mentors and the student teachers were organised hierarchically and vertically. Yet mentoring, which is informed by the reflective practitioner and inquiry-as-stance perspectives, thrives in the context of collegial and horizontal relationships (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008:1801).

Further illuminating the preceding issue, Tripps (Reeves, Forde, O'Brien, Smith & Tomlinson, 2002:66) identifies four types of professional judgments, namely practical, diagnostic, reflective and critical judgments. By not reflectively engaging own practice, the student teachers passed up on the opportunity to develop the four forms of professional judgment, yet the capacity for sound judgment is a currently cherished hallmark of a professional (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008:1802; Tripps, cited in Reeves et al., 2002:60).

The forms of support for student teachers in the participating schools tended to be exclusively focused on assisting student teachers in mastering the technical aspects of teaching, such as preparing professional records, practical moves involved in lesson delivery, and writing and laying out work on the chalkboard. In some cases, mentors claimed that they held pre-lesson delivery sessions with their student teachers, providing the mentors with an opportunity to guide them (the student teachers) on teaching strategies. Such mentoring functions were limited in terms of pedagogical worth, as they did not allow the student teachers to transform their own schema on teaching, and only enabled them to engage in single-loop learning (Osterman &
Kottkamp, 2004:22). Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005:679) hold a low view of such a form of mentoring that focuses on procedural and practical concerns, contrasting it to a more developed conception of mentoring, which they term *educative mentoring*. Zeichner (2006:334), in common with Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), also disapproves of a practicum that only contents itself with enabling student teachers to pick up an existing teaching culture, without critically engaging with it, implying that such a form of practicum is an impoverished form of field experience that does not fully exploit the potential of reflective practice that the practicum offers. The same point was made by Moore (2003:31).

Limited or no effort was made to encourage or enable the student teachers to go beyond the existing teaching culture in the schools. In Fletcher’s (2000:3) view, such mentoring can easily lead to the *cloning* of the student teachers, becoming ossified professional replicas of their mentors, for better or worse. Buitink (2009:118) expresses similar misgivings about a school-based model of teachers, pointing out that student teachers could end up learning ‘*everyday pedagogy*’ of ‘*showing and telling*’, without reflectively engaging with the principles that underpin practice. Such student teachers would be acquiring what Stones (Buitink, 2009:118) calls *mediocre pedagogy*.

Student teachers expressed the wish that mentors would provide them with feedback out of learners’ earshot or notice, for fear that if the latter found out that the student teachers were learners, too, they would not respect them (the student teachers), which could cause them enormous difficulty with class control. However, as researchers’ observations of the school physical infrastructure demonstrated, most classrooms had no separate rooms in which the mentors and the student teachers could go to conduct post-lesson observation discussions. This seems to be a potentially significant obstacle for the mentoring programme, based on Martin’s (2011:145) observation that schools need to create structural conditions, creating time and find space where the teachers can hang out and engage in professional dialogue. Hicks, et al. (2005:10) make the same point, arguing that in most schools teachers typically work in situations where physical infrastructure constrains professional interaction and dialogue, deepening
feelings of isolation. Lortie (Fullan, 2007:132) similarly bemoans what he terms the *cellular organisation* of schools, which makes it difficult for teachers to engage in professional collaboration.

### 5.4.2 Benefits for mentors

Worryingly, the interviews with student teachers revealed that at some schools student teachers ended up taking full charge of the classes in the absence of mentors or that mentors unfairly shifted significant portions of their classroom workload onto the student teachers. This is consistent with the findings of Maphosa *et al.* (2007:300) in Zimbabwe, namely that classroom load-sharing was unfair to the student teachers, with 93% of student teachers complaining that mentors did not teach their share. Predictably, this puts student teachers under pressure of work. Chiromo (2007:61) similarly laments the tendency at some schools in Zimbabwe to consider student teachers as being there to help relieve the workload of qualified teachers.

The mentors also indicated that they had benefitted socially, as their student teachers provided them with companionship. This dovetails with the views of Villani (2009:19) and Hobson *et al.* (2009:209), who suggest that mentoring removes or reduces isolation among the teachers involved. The isolating conditions of the classroom do not augur well for professional development, as teachers cannot reflect in the absence of fellow professionals (Reeves *et al.*, 2002:71).

Mentors further indicated that they benefitted professionally through learning skills and some latest ideas and methods in education from student teachers, affording them (the mentors) an opportunity to refresh their teaching practices; hence student teachers could, in a limited way provide challenge and stimulus to an otherwise stagnant teaching culture of the mentors. This dovetails with the views of researchers such as Hobson *et al.* (2009:209), Villani (2009:18) and Hulung (2001:1), who have established that mentoring provides mentors with opportunities for professional growth as they (the
mentors) reflectively engage with their work practices through the critical stimulus provided by the student teachers.

In the same vein, Hawk (Hulung, 2001:2) contends that mentoring could specifically help teachers improve their classroom teaching. The presence of two professionals in the same class provides opportunities for reflection, as both parties could act as each other’s critical friends, enabling them to critically engage with their practices, attitudes and values (Tickle, cited in Coleman, 2006a:166). However, as the interviews with student teachers demonstrated, mentors at the participating schools were reluctant to openly acknowledge that they had learnt something from student teachers. This tendency possibly stemmed from the vertical social and epistemic relationships between mentors and student teachers, implying the lack of a collegial culture at the participating schools. Yet for mentoring (at least, that is informed by the reflective paradigm) to take root in a school, a culture of collegiality that centrally involves the embrace of the possibility of reciprocal learning is necessary.

Mentors at all the participating schools indicated that they did not receive any financial benefits for undertaking mentoring duties. In contrast to what applied at the participating schools, Hobson et al. (2009:211) contend that mentoring is likely to lead to positive outcomes, where mentors receive financial or some other kind of incentive. This view is also consistent with Eby’s (Ensher & Murphy, 2011:254) Investment model of mentoring, which proposes that both mentors and mentees always use a cost-benefit framework as a basis for determining the worth of their participation in the mentoring relationship and opt out or reduce effort and commitment when the costs outweigh the benefits; the reverse must also hold true. However, redeemingly, all the mentors noted that they derived non-financial benefits from participating in mentoring, such as the reduced classroom workload made possible through sharing the workload with student teachers. This is consistent with what has been established by Maphosa et al. (2007:300). Such benefits fit into the category of mentoring benefits that Eby, Durley, Evans and Ragins (2006:424) refer to as short-term instrumental benefits, which they consider to be crucially influential on mentors’ attitude towards their work.
However, Sinclair, Dowson and Thistle-Martin (2006:264) illuminatingly distinguish between drive and draw factors that form the motivational basis of mentors’ participation in mentoring student teachers. The former are intrinsic to the person and relative stable such as personal values, beliefs and goals. Such benefits seem to echo what Lortie (Fullan, 2007:132) terms psychic rewards. Conversely, draw factors are extrinsic to the person and are relatively short-term and unstable. These include financial, professional and social rewards. In the context of this framework, the mentors in Zimbabwe seemed to be mainly motivated by draw factors, hence their participation in mentoring could be seen as anchored on a shaky motivational basis and their participation could therefore be seen to be unsustainable.

Mentors further noted that working with the student teachers in the same class enabled them to get used to working with fellow professionals, something which most of their colleagues were reluctant to do. Consequently, mentoring could be seen as laying the basis for the possible emergence of a culture of opening up and sharing professional practices, thereby liminally encouraging the emergence of a school culture that is propitious for the development of professional collaboration and professional communities of practice (Villani, 2009:20). Such social structures in a school represent the essential ingredients of a learning school, an organisational configuration widely identified in literature as vital for 21st century schools. Also, an organisation founded on a collaborative professional culture can in turn provide a congenial context in which mentoring can take root, a view also shared by Cochran-Smith (Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008:1260), who describes mentoring as essentially involving social collaboration. The potential positive consequences of mentoring for professional growth have been summed up by Fullan (Villani, 2009:9) and Coleman (2006b:163), who see mentoring as potentially facilitating school improvement, as it can improve teaching practices, school culture, as well as the professional development of teachers.
5.4.3 Organisational support for mentoring programme

Schools do not formally provide time for mentors to engage in their work with student teachers and mentors have to create time for mentoring in very time-constrained circumstances. Also, mentoring duties are not formally rewarded and recognised as part of teachers’ job descriptions.

In spite of school administration trying to organise professional engagement forums, the value of these for student teachers and mentors is diminished by the reluctance of the mentors to relate issues to theory as well as critically engage assumptions underlying their practices, confining discussion at the practical/technical level.

Although student teachers could benefit from a wider professional network of other non-mentoring teachers who could possibly be as competent, mentors demur when student teachers attempt to consult beyond the mentors themselves. Lee and Feng (2007:252), Tang and Choi (2005:384), Hargreaves and Fullan (2000:52) and Hargreaves (2000:162) similarly point out that mentoring is likely to be successful in schools characterised by collegial and learning cultures, while McNally (Carter, 2001:251) in the same vein argues that the provision of a propitious professional environment that promotes the development of relationships should be given the highest priority.

5.4.4 Selection and placement of student teachers and mentors

All the participating mentors, student teachers and school principals stated that the school administration was largely responsible for the selection and placement of mentors and student teachers. Yet, Woodd (1997:340) notes that mentees want to be consulted in mentor choice, acknowledging that they (the student teachers) sometimes cannot be involved in the selection process owing to their lack of knowledge of the prospective mentors. Aways a et al. (2003:45) argue that mentoring is a personal relationship, hence all the parties should be given a say in deciding whom they work with. Only in rare circumstances were the participating student teachers and mentors
allowed limited choice, such as when the former chose the grade levels with which they wanted to work, while the latter were consulted on whether they wanted to take a student teachers in a particular year, especially when there was a surplus of mentors at their school. Contrary to such a mode of selecting and placing mentors, Lindgren (Hobson et al., 2009:212) and Awaya et al., (2003:46) highlight the need to allow mentors and mentees to choose their own mentoring partners, warning that forced mentoring relationships are not likely to work.

The participating mentors and student teachers also revealed that the criteria used to select mentors were in most cases not clearly spelt out, articulated and standardised, with different schools favouring different considerations. In this regard, Carver and Feiman-Nemser (Hoover, 2011:17) call for thoroughness in the selection of mentors. At some schools, considerations that were negatively related or irrelevant to the professional learning of student teachers were tacitly foregrounded. For instance, at some schools, members of the school administration were always prioritised when student teachers were allocated, to ensure that they would have time to perform their administrative duties while the student teachers took over their classes. More curiously at some schools, student teachers would always be allocated to lazy and ineffective teachers, so that the student teachers could help provide in the learning needs of the learners. Such practices are clearly contrary to the counsel that appropriate criteria must be used when selecting mentors. In the same vein, Ensher and Murphy (2011:254) suggest that it is better not to have a mentor than having a bad one, whose presence could inhibit rather than facilitate professional learning.

However, at some schools, the classroom effectiveness of prospective mentors was highly prioritised when mentors were selected, while some of the schools valued personality attributes. This is consistent with the criteria used at the New Teacher Programme in California, as noted by Carver and Feiman-Nemser (Hoover, 2011:17), which include professional competence, strong inter- and intra-personal development, as well as commitment to continuous professional development. However, Portner
(2008:5) cautions that effective classroom practitioners do not necessarily make effective mentors.

Worryingly, mentors from all the participating schools disclosed that no attempt had been made to match student teachers and mentors, not heeding the counsel of Hobson et al. (2009:212), who highlight the importance of appropriately pairing mentees and mentors, so that the mentoring partners could work together well, both professionally and personally. Bullough et al. (2008:1846), however, warn that successfully matching mentors and mentees is a challenge. Honey and Mumford (Woodd, 1997:337) compellingly suggest that significant differences in learning styles could hamper the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship. Based on this, it is no wonder that some of the participating principals reported that they sometimes encountered clashes between mentors and student teachers.

### 5.4.5 Social relationships between student teachers and mentors

Mentors and student teachers agreed that a good social relationship was essential for the smooth functioning of a mentoring relationship. This is in line with the views of Lave and Wenger (1991:24), who implicitly recognise the importance of sound social relationships in learning when they contend in their socio-cultural perspective, that learning can only occur through participating in authentic social relationships. Several scholars, such as Lima, Goodfellow and Sumsion, Dunne and Dune and Hargreaves (Johnston, 2010:310), separately note that teachers need to establish close relationships with colleagues for them to perform effectively. In the views of student teachers and mentors, good social relationships make for open communication and provide the mentoring parties with a basis for cooperation and mutual commitment, obliquely echoing Beck and Kosnick’s (Johnston, 2010:310) contention that emotional and positive relationships are a key success factor of a practicum.

Holding the same view, student teachers revealed that where the social relationship was not working well, there was often a breakdown of or no smooth communication
between the student teachers and their mentors and that the mentoring parties would sometimes work in an uncoordinated manner. In the student teachers' views, the situation would generally deteriorate even further if the social relationship disintegrated completely, as some mentors would then proactively seek to totally exclude the student teachers from participating in the teaching programme. This seems to be consistent with the views of Rookes, Duffy, Ganster and Pagon (Johnston, 2010:310), who separately suggest that dysfunctional social relationships in the workplace can cause distress and negatively affect work performance.

The student teachers also disclosed that there was limited or no social engagement between them and their mentors in and beyond the classroom. Hargreaves (Johnston, 2010:310) bemoans such patterns of social relationships, positing that the relationships that teachers establish with their work-mates significances shape their professional identity. Mentor and student teacher communities largely exist as separate entities. This was corroborated by the researcher's observation at most of the participating schools, where mentors and student teachers typically sat separately in the classroom, of meetings or in the tea-room during break-time. Typically, in the classroom, the two mentoring parties sat at tables located at opposite ends of the classroom. This limited the formal and informal mutual availability of the mentors and student teachers. Hargreaves (Day, 1999:79) similarly identifies a form of school culture known as balkanization, where collaboration is inhibited by group loyalties, limiting the emergence of school-wide collaboration. Contrastingly, Goodfellow and Sumsion (Johnston, 2010:309) contend that learning to teach ideally should take place in the context of relationships with others and that communities of practice are a hallmark of schools that promote learning. Reinforcing the foregoing views, Rosenholtz (Fullan, 2007:136) identifies teacher isolation as a key factor characterising schools that may be described as failures. Fullan (2007:139) sees social relationships as constituting the potential basis for the emergence of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
5.4.6 Student teachers’ preparedness for teaching practice

The participating mentors, student teachers and principals agreed that student teachers often reported for teaching practice without the technical and theoretical competencies necessary for functioning effectively as classroom teachers. These deficiencies specifically related to aspects such as the inability to figure out how theoretical ideas related to practical classroom situations, difficulty in preparing professional teaching records/documents, such as schemes and plans of work, as well as delivering lessons with confidence.

Some mentors bitterly blamed the colleges for failing to prepare the student teachers for teaching practice, placing schools and mentors under pressure by making them work with underprepared student teachers.

Veenman (Villani, 2009:7) seems to agree with Fuller (Boz, 2008:367), that beginner teachers (assumingly including student teachers) inevitably find teaching difficult at the entry point. Veenman (Villani, 2009:7) aptly terms such an experience as reality shock, while Fuller (Boz, 2008:367; Watzke, 2007:107) conceptualise these early difficulties faced by novice teachers in terms of developmentally staged concerns. The concerns the authors identify as occurring in the first two stages, seem to be those identified by participating teachers and student teachers, including concerns relating to self-efficacy and mastery of the mechanics of teaching. Student teachers and mentors also primarily attributed the lack of preparedness to teacher training colleges; mainly, their perceived failure to appropriately deliver the college-based courses in a way that would ensure integration with field experience. This is in line with the views of Teitel (2003:45), who also attributes student teachers’ failure to integrate campus-based courses and field experiences to the disconnected way in which the courses are delivered.
### 5.4.7 Student teachers’ contribution to professional dialogue

Most mentors did not expect their student teachers to openly and freely express their professional opinions in ways that appeared to challenge their (the mentors’) pedagogical authority. Similar problems faced by student teachers on field experience have also been identified in a different way by Scandura (Johnston, 2010:310); these include submissiveness and harassment. It seems as if the relationships between the mentors and student teachers were hierarchically and vertically organised and that in the context of such relationships, it could be difficult for a collegial culture to emerge and take root. Expressing a contrasting view regarding the above-mentioned tendencies of mentors, Feiman-Nemser (Hobson et al., 2009:212) observes that effective mentors typically allow their student teachers room for independent professional decision-making. Yet, some mentors pointed out that the extent to which the student teachers would be allowed to express their ideas, largely depended on the personality of the mentor, a point also noted by Asendorpf (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006:412) who argues that mentors with high proactivity, paired with student teachers who have lower levels of proactivity, are likely to play a more dominant and active role in the mentoring relationship than the student teachers. In the same vein, most mentors noted that they had hardly encountered student teachers who sought to openly challenge their pedagogical authority or suggest new ideas, with some of the mentors observing that, if anything, student teachers just followed their mentors’ practices or ideas. Lacey (Roberts & Graham, 2008:1402) unravels the social strategies used by student teachers to survive micro-politically charged social relationships when they are on field experience, illuminatingly pointing out that student teachers sometimes adopt a posture of passive self-maintenance, strategically complying with the wishes of key role players at the schools.

### 5.4.8 Relationship between schools and colleges

Mentors noted that there was no clearly defined relationship between teachers’ colleges and schools in relation to their respective roles in teacher education, complaining that
college lecturers generally adopted a painfully unilateral approach, typically ignoring them when they (the college lecturers) came to the schools on supervision visits. This is consistent with Chikunda’s (2008:143-144) view that there are no partnerships between teacher colleges and participating schools, as the attachment teaching practice (mentoring) excludes other players in teacher education in Zimbabwe. In the same respect, Goodlad (Mutemeri & Chetty, 2011:506) warns that any teacher education that is conducted without involving the schools is flawed, pointing out that university-school partnerships are critically important to teacher education. Zeichner (2010:90) disapproves of professional experience organised as described above, lamenting that it is based on a dichotomy between HEIs and schools, perpetuating what Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (Ward, Nolen & Horn, 2011:14) term the two worlds’ pitfall of teacher education, in terms of which the theoretical and practical components of the teacher education curriculum are unhelpfully delivered in a disconnected manner, making it difficult for student teachers to relate and integrate the two. Cochran-Smith (Cope & Stephen, 2001:913) criticises teacher education models that are based on the disjunction between theory and practice, describing them as being based on the Critical dissonance model.

Shedding further light on the relationships between schools and HEIs, Furlong (Wilson & l’Anson, 2006:355) identifies three types of partnership arrangements, namely separatist, HEI-led and collaborative partnerships. The relationship between teachers’ colleges and schools described above seems to be aligned towards the separatist partnership, in terms of which there is no clearly defined framework of engagement between the two players in teacher education.

The principals also pointed out that when college lecturers visited their schools to assess the student teachers, they tended to spend short periods of time only. Wailer, Gadzirayi and Mkondo (2002:59) have similarly established that college lecturers are more preoccupied with the number of student teachers they assess per day than with the quality of support they render to these student teachers, often arriving and leaving schools in a hurry. In this way, colleges seem to prioritise the assessor role over the support or tutor role, a point also made by Chikunda (2008:144). Daloz (Woodd,
1997:340) emphasises the need to balance support and challenge, suggesting that the preponderance of challenge over support in the participating schools detracts from the quality of schools as professional learning environments. The aforegoing echoes Martinez’s views (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008:1807) that the supervisory practices of university staff are usually perfunctory, seldom providing opportunities for critique.

The college lecturers’ supervisory practices seem to go against the currently predominant view in the scholarly community, in terms of which schools are seen as potentially better learning environments for student teachers than university or college campuses (Zeichner, 2010:90; Wilson & i’Anson, 2006:355). Proposing an alternative view of supervising field experience, Le Cornu and Ewing (2008:1803) argue that under the reflective paradigm, the supervision of practice is primarily oriented towards the facilitation of learning through reflection.

The principals also observed that most colleges did not supply schools with any documents spelling out their expectations for the student teachers in the context of the mentoring programme. This is in contrast to Colvin and Ashman’s (2010:122) emphasis on the importance of clarity and consensus on mentoring roles and their warning that the lack of these could negatively affect mentoring effectiveness. Hobson et al. (2009:211) warn that mentoring is unlikely to be effective where there is disjunction between the different stakeholders in the mentoring programme.

5.4.9 Mentor preparedness for mentoring duties

The participating mentors and principals agreed that the former had not received any training in mentoring, confirming Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba’s (2007:301) findings in the same context. However, some mentors argued that lack of training could not stop them from assisting student teachers, whom they consistently regarded as their vana (sons and daughters). To them, mentoring was a matter of moral/parental duty to help the student teachers develop into fully-fledged teachers. This seems to echo Kram’s (Eby et al., 2006:427) view that sometimes mentors participate in mentoring for intrinsic
satisfaction, deriving a sense of spiritual fulfilment from facilitating the development of young adults. The participating mentors also argued that they could still perform their mentoring duties effectively on the basis of their school teaching experience, demonstrating commitment to mentoring student teachers, despite their lack of training for it. This somewhat confirms Zey’s (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011:202) argument that mentors and mentees enter into a relationship to meet certain needs and are likely to remain committed to this relationship as long as they continue to benefit in some way. Hobson et al. (2009:212) and Villani (2009:15) caution against the mentors’ claim to effectiveness despite their apparent lack of skills, arguing that mentors need to be trained in mentoring and that untrained mentors are unlikely to utilise effective mentoring strategies. It is therefore no wonder why most student teachers in a study by Maphosa et al. (2007:302) rated their untrained mentors as ineffective, with most of them (the mentors) confessing to not knowing how to help the student teachers.

5.4.10 Age/Gender and effectiveness of mentoring relationship

The participating mentors generally felt that the personalities of the parties in a mentoring relationship, rather than gender, made a difference to the relationship. Pursuing the same line of argument, Asendorpf (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006:412) makes a compelling case for the significant role played by personality in mentoring relationships, contending that personality influences the choice of mentoring partner, how others in the relationship responds to him or her, and how the individual chooses to shape the relationship. The mentors’ views on the role of gender are, however, inconsistent with existing literature; with scholars such as Ensher and Murphy (2011:256) and Scandura and Williams (2001:343) highlighting the influence of gender on the quality and nature of mentoring relationships between males and females. However, the participating mentors unanimously noted that communication was easier in a same-gender than a cross-gender mentoring relationship, effectively admitting influence of gender on mentoring relationship and confirming Sosik and Godshalk’s (2005:40) view that similarity of identity between mentor and mentee facilitates the functioning of a mentoring relationship. The female mentors also revealed
that they found it easier to openly advise or guide student teachers who were younger than themselves. Relatedly, it also emerged that male student teachers who were older than their mentors ironically sought to adopt an overbearing approach towards them (the mentors).

Interestingly, some mentors, particularly, female ones, tended to adopt a parental stance towards the student teachers attached to them, habitually and consistently referring to them as vana vedu (our sons and daughters). This was the case even where the age gap between the mentors and the student teachers was too narrow to inspire an age-gap based in loco parentis sensibility in the mentors. This can be explained by Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield and Walsh-Samp’s (2008:184) observation that women tend to emphasise on interpersonal support and intimacy.

5.4.11 Mentoring policy framework

Findings suggest that the mentoring that is taking place at Zimbabwean primary schools is not informed and guided by any policy or regulatory framework. As a result mentors blindly carry out their duties, not knowing whether what they are doing was correct. The absence of clear policy is particularly worrying, with reference to the varying nature of the conception of mentoring roles which, according to Parsloe and Leedham (2009:19), changes across social and historical contexts. Scholars such as Hamel and Jaasko-Fisher (2011:434) also cautioned about the difficulty of attaining consensus regarding what mentoring practically exactly entails. In this regard scholars such as Colvin and Ashman (2010:122) highlight the critical importance of clarity and consensus of mentoring roles for mentoring to succeed.

5.4.12 Characteristics of an ideal mentor

Student teachers prioritised social and professional attributes as the defining characterised of their preferred mentor. In terms of social attributes, student teachers preferred a mentor with whom they could relate well interpersonally, which is consistent
with the views of Pitton (2006:11), who considers mentoring to be an essentially social relationship. Relatedly, scholars such as Lai (2010:445) and Sundli (2007:204) view strong social relationships as the basis of closer personal engagement in a mentoring relation.

Student teachers also indicated that their preferred mentors were supposed to be good communicators as well as effective teachers. Similarly highlighting the critical importance of linguistic proficiency and good communication skills, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:201) point out that such skills enable the mentor to articulate practical craft knowledge, since this is the primary way in which mentees learn from their mentors.

5.4.13 Peer support among student teachers

Findings indicated that student teachers sometimes turned to each other for professional support. Such mutual support among people of the same status echoes the concept of peer mentoring, which Le Cornu (2005:356) describes as a situation whereby pre-service teachers mentor one another. Although the findings indicate a luminal, if not nascent phenomenon, Le Cornu (2005:356) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2000:52) optimistically project peer mentoring as representing the contemporary mentoring ideal, as an ideal dispenses with hierarchy in the relationship between or among the mentoring parties. Making a case for mentoring relationships that are not based on hierarchy, Hargreaves and Fullan (2000:52) further note that teachers fare better in terms of professional learning and development when they learn in the context of a wider network of professional, collegial support. In the context of the foregoing, the peer support that takes place among student teachers may be optimistically seen as possibly representing an embryonic precursor to a fully developed culture of professional collaboration in the schools.
5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter analysed data and interpreted the findings by relating them to relevant literature, thereby deriving deeper insights into the significance of the findings. The analysis of data demonstrated considerable overlap and convergence in the views of mentors, student teachers and principals at the different participating schools in the different socio-geographical regions.

This chapter unravelled the following issues: Mentors mainly supported student teachers by means of modeling teaching through demonstration lessons; lesson observation, which was largely informal, owing to a lack of time; inspection of professional documents, as well as limited psycho-social help. This suggests that the key mentoring functions performed by mentors at the participating schools included being role models, protectors, evaluators, providers of feedback, observers and counsellors. However, regrettably, all the forms of support seemed to largely focus on the technical aspects of teaching, with mentors making limited effort to encourage student teachers to reflectively and critically engage with their practices.

This chapter also found that the participating mentors in Zimbabwe were untrained in mentoring and ineffective, despite their claims to being committed to mentoring the student teachers, as they considered it their “parental” duty. It also came to light that the mentors did not receive any financial reward for performing their mentoring duties, despite the fact that the mentoring lay beyond their job description. However, the mentors admitted to benefitting from mentoring through sharing their classroom load with student teachers, thereby significantly reducing their workload. However, some mentors took things too far in this regard, virtually abdicating their classroom responsibilities, thereby putting the student teachers under pressure of work.

In summary, it was established that the schools and the teachers’ training colleges did not work in partnership in relation to the provision of teacher education. These two key
players in teacher education worked independently, perpetuating the traditional separation between college-based and school-based aspects of teacher education.

All these findings have significant consequences for a successful mentoring relationship in the teaching training programme of prospective teachers. For this reason, the implications of each aspect were pointed out before trying to develop relevant and valuable recommendations.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the analysed data and explained the significance of the research findings. This chapter draws conclusions from the findings and articulates the implications thereof. The conclusions relate to the shortcomings of the current mentoring model and address the first secondary question: *What are the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for student teachers and mentors as it is applied in Zimbabwean primary schools at present?* Based on the conclusions and their implications, Chapter Six proposes recommendations on how the identified shortcomings of the current mentoring model could be overcome, thereby addressing the primary research question: *How can the existing mentoring system in Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher training model, be improved?* Perhaps most importantly, this chapter graphically articulates the recommendations, diagrammatically synthesising them to produce an alternative and improved model for initial primary teacher education in Zimbabwe. Finally, Chapters Six also examines the limitations of the research project, as well as suggest directions for further research.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In drawing conclusions from the research findings, the following secondary question was highlighted: *What are the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for student teachers and mentors as it is applied in Zimbabwean primary schools at present?* The interpretation of the findings in Chapter Five clearly points towards the conclusions and implications presented below.
6.2.1 Mentor support for student teachers

The mentoring undertaken at the participating schools seemed to be of a very limited and shallow mode, primarily utilising modeling and incomplete observation of student teacher lesson by mentors. Such forms of support in fact supported student teachers’ professional learning in a limited way only. Use of modeling and observation in which student teachers played an uncritical role mainly served to socialize them into existing teaching practices, however flawed they may be; hardly promoted professional growth.

Although the existing mentoring was largely underpinned by the Apprenticeship and Competence Models and helped student teachers master the technical/practical aspects of teaching, while facilitating their professional enculturation into the existing teaching culture, what was actually happening condemnably neglected to provide student teachers with the stimulation and pedagogical scaffolding that could empower them to reflectively and critically engage with their own and existing professional practices. This placed the mentoring within what Le Cornu and Ewing (2008:1801) term the traditional paradigm of organising field experience, which was prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, an outmoded paradigm long superseded by more contemporary perspectives, such as the reflective-enquiry-oriented paradigm (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008:1801).

Scholars in the reflective practice tradition consider reflective, critical engagement with one’s practices as a key precondition for deep professional learning, a view also shared by Mezirow (2000) in the transformative learning theory. This suggests that the present mentoring system cannot produce teachers who are fully fledged in the context of contemporary views of teacher professionalism, given its discouragement of student teachers from critically engaging with mentors and own teaching practices. The implication of the foregoing is that the mentoring taking place at Zimbabwean schools needs to be re-organised and re-oriented in order to bring it in line with the contemporary paradigm of organising field experience, namely the reflective-enquiry oriented paradigm, as proposed by Le Cornu and Ewing (2008:1801-1807).
Even in cases where mentors may have wanted to support student teachers, they found themselves much constrained, because of the lack of time to carry out the observations and run through the full course of the coaching cycle. However, such constraints cannot entirely be placed on the shoulders of the mentors. Rather, such problems seem to suggest that at the schools, mentoring was not taken seriously, neither was it recognised as part of the student teachers' professional training or part of the formal school programme. Many participating schools' organisational structures seemed to be totally unsupportive, as indicated by the non-provision for time for mentor training and actual formal mentoring activities in the classrooms.

This implies that the mentoring programme was being accommodated in an *ad hoc* fashion in the schools' formal processes and structures and that these structures were not effectively supporting the smooth functioning of the mentoring model. Additionally, the absence of organisational support implies that the burden of mentoring duties fell squarely on unsupported and untrained mentors.

6.2.2 Benefits for mentors

The tendency for mentors to shift their classroom workload onto student teachers detracts from the quality of the schools as professional learning environments. The practice suggests that the mentors do not regard the student teachers as learners, but as some kind of relief teachers. This is clearly detrimental to the professional growth of the teachers, as most of the time they do not have the time not only to do their work as student teachers, but more importantly to reflect on own and other teachers' teaching practices when they take full charge of classes. The above-mentioned tendency of some of the mentors also suggests that the mentors themselves are under too much pressure of work for them to execute their teaching task effectively, let alone engage in student teacher mentoring.

A key non-material or financial benefit for mentors was the companionship provided by the student teachers. This encouragingly suggests that the mentors could begin to
embrace working together with other professionals, a tendency that is in contrast to the traditional tendency of teaching being an isolated profession. The aforegoing therefore implies that mentoring can be used to bring about a shift in professional culture, from individualism to collaboration. Relatedly, it also came to light that some mentors derived potentially refreshing critical stimulus and challenge from the student teachers, liminally inspiring them to seek professional improvement. This implies that mentoring can also benefit the organisation, not only in terms of re-culturing itself, but also in terms of general performance improvement of its workers.

The mentors of the participating Zimbabwean primary schools were not financially or materially rewarded for undertaking mentoring duties, and these duties did not form part of any job description. In this regard, Eby’s (Hobson et al., 2009:254) Investment model of mentoring cautions that mentors traditionally enter a mentoring relationship in order to obtain financial and material benefits and that the availability of such benefits influences their level of commitment to the relationship. This implies that despite the participating mentors’ claims that they benefitted in other, non-financial, ways, an appropriate reward framework still needs to be worked out, as their continued commitment to mentoring in the absence of financial and other rewards cannot be guaranteed. Based on the above, the lack of a proper reward framework for mentors can be seen as an obstacle to the effective implementation of the mentoring model.

6.2.3 Organisational support for mentoring programme

From the findings, it seems that most participating schools’ programmes were not structurally ready to take on the training function, as demonstrated by the lack of integration between the mentoring programme and the broader organisational processes and routines in the schools. For example school timetables did not allocate time for mentoring, with mentors having no time to carry out post-observation discussions with student teachers; at times, mentors faced the moral dilemma of having to choose between committing time to support the student teachers’ professional learning, at the expense of pupil learning, or the other way round. Most of the time,
mentors focused on pupil learning, at the expense of the professional learning of the student teachers. This implies that the schools had not fully accepted their role in training teachers, largely seeing it as a secondary responsibility. Also, mentoring duties were not officially recognised as part of the job description of teachers and were therefore not integrated into any reward systems or promotional criteria for teachers. The implication of this is that many teachers did not actually want to be involved in mentoring and, if given the task, they did it under duress, without full commitment.

The professional engagement forums organized in some schools to support and complement mentoring efforts are futile in terms of their capacity to enhance the professional growth of the student teachers, since they mainly dwelled on the technical/practical level, eschewing engagement with the theoretical basis of their teaching practices. This implies that for such forums to be useful to the student teachers, they need to allow participants to engage teaching practices in light of theoretical knowledge so that theory can be reworked into practice, while practice could in turn be modified in the context of theory.

The reluctance of mentors to allow student teachers to consult other teachers suggests that those mentors did not cherish professional collaboration, something that further implied the existence of a deep-seated individualist culture in the school. This implies that the school professional who does not embrace professional collaboration could be an obstacle to the entrenchment of mentoring in the organization, since mentoring is based on professional collaboration as been discussed before.

6.2.4 Selection and placement of student teachers and mentors

The administrations of the participating schools were apparently largely responsible for making decisions regarding the selection and deployment of mentors and student teachers; however, they hardly discharged this duty in a way that promoted the effective implementation of the mentoring model. Examples of negative practices included: lack of clarity and consensus on criteria of mentor selection and deployment; not matching
mentor and mentees in terms of the compatibility of their personalities; and not allowing
student teachers and mentors to choose their mentoring partners. Such practices could
be seen as contributing to the malfunctioning of the mentoring model, since mentors’
selection and teachers’ deployment in the context of such negative practices could not
be expected to deliver positive mentoring outcomes. Also, denying the parties to the
mentoring relationship the choice of partner poses the risk of mismatches, which could
lead to personality clashes within the mentoring relationship.

6.2.5 Social relationships between student teachers and mentors

At most schools, there seemed to be little social engagement between mentors and
student teachers, as was evident in the separation of the two groups during informal
staff gatherings, such as tea-times. One can understand that student teachers did not
want to appear pushy, yet, at the same time, such a clear divide could not foster better
understanding in a professional relationship, as aspects such as trust, respect and
collaboration can only develop from getting to know the other partner(s) in the
relationship better in more informal social settings. Highlighting the importance of a
professional relationship, Ferrier-Kerr (2009:790) notes that it suggests mutual
commitment to helping each other learn.

Some mentors treated student teachers with rudeness, impatience and outright
contempt. In semi-formal gatherings where people are communicating and getting to
know one another, this kind of rude behaviour by some mentors could be prevented or
curbed by the intervention of more humane and competent mentors.

6.2.6 Student teachers’ preparedness for teaching practice

The inadequate preparedness of student teachers seemed to largely emanate from the
disconnect and lack of articulation between campus-based theoretical aspects and the
field-based practical components of the teacher education curriculum. For instance, the
inability to figure out how theoretical ideas could be translated into classroom learner
activities may be explained in terms of the delivery of the theoretical aspects in college lecture rooms without linking them to what was happening in the schools. The implication of this seems to be that student teachers were embarking on teaching practice prematurely and therefore could not really obtain full benefit from the experience.

Besides unsuitable modes of delivery, the inadequate preparedness of student teachers may also be put down to the quality of teaching recruits, who seemed to be of low academic caliber and low commitment. The findings suggest that most of the recruits might have taken up teaching as a default career option, having failed to enter other professions. This deplorable situation has negative implications for the quality and commitment of student teachers that enter the teacher training programme, who must in future teach the youth of Zimbabwe.

6.2.7 Student teachers’ contribution to professional dialogue

The student teachers’ reluctance to contribute to professional dialogue suggests that they were not in mutually trusting relationships with their mentors. A professional relationship between student teachers and their mentors can be established only if the latter behave deferentially towards the mentors. The student teachers often took a pragmatic stance, remaining quiet so as not to upset a possibly very fragile relationship of power, being largely dependent on their mentors (Roberts & Graham, 2008:1402). The implication of this could be that even when student teachers had a lot to contribute, the lack of a supportive professional relationship could make them feel bullied into submission, and therefore they remained quiet. This denies them the opportunity to exercise professional and critical agency, thereby undermining the formation of their professional identity.
6.2.8 **Relationship between schools and teacher education colleges**

The mentoring model at Zimbabwean primary schools was operating in the context of a *separatist* partnership between colleges and schools (Furlong, cited in Wilson and l'Anson, 2006:355), in terms of which the latter played a limited and subordinate role in teachers' professional training. The school-based mentoring model in Zimbabwean primary schools therefore seemed to be operating in terms of an imbalanced partnership arrangement, and there was no fit between mentoring and the broader partnership arrangement in teacher education, since mentoring in the contemporary sense implies collaboration (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008:1804). Under the separatist form of partnership, all the decisions were made at colleges, while schools largely served as locations at which student teachers could practise the theory that was supposed to have been learnt at college. The implication of this is that such a scheme of things perpetuates the campus-school dichotomy that has been a perennial dilemma of teacher education provision internationally and for which the solution of school-based teacher education was primarily proposed.

6.2.9 **Mentor preparedness for mentoring duties**

The mentors at the participating schools were not technically prepared to perform their mentoring duties, because they had not been trained in mentoring, despite literature that suggests that mentor training is a critical factor for the success of mentoring programmes (Maphosa *et al.*, 2007:297). However, the findings suggest that the mentors, though unskilled, had the enthusiasm and were morally motivated to carry out their mentoring duties.

6.2.10 **Age/gender and effectiveness of mentoring**

On the basis of the discussion, age and gender significantly influenced the functioning of mentoring relationships, with age and gender differences possibly making it difficult
for the mentors and mentees to identify with each other. This implies that age and
gender are important considerations when matching mentors and mentees.

6.2.11 Mentoring policy framework

The absence of a mentoring policy suggests that mentoring in Zimbabwe is not
governed by any standardized framework, with the possibility of there being as many
conceptions of the roles of mentoring as the schools themselves. This further implies
that the quality of mentoring in the schools cannot be monitored and accounted for,
since there cannot be agreed criteria for determining its quality in the context of the
multiple views of what mentoring practically implies.

6.2.12 Characteristics of an ideal mentor

The discussion suggests that the success of mentoring relationships primarily hinges on
the social relationship between the mentee and the mentor. This further implies that the
social/personality attributes as well as potential interpersonal compatibility between
prospective mentoring partners are key considerations when selecting and deploying
mentors and mentees.

Another hallmark of a mentor identified by the student teachers is linguistic/
communication proficiency that enables the former to effectively articulate and share
knowledge with mentees.

6.2.13 Peer support among student teachers

Based on the discussion, peer support among student teachers is a positive
development as it possibly implies the onset of a nascent culture of professional
collaboration. Also, peer support implies that a broader network of professional support
is available to the student teachers and they no longer have to depend on their mentors
only.
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions and implications, the following recommendations were drawn, seeking to address the shortcomings of the mentoring system and in so doing address the primary research question: How can the existing mentoring system in Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher training model, be improved?

6.3.1 Mentor support for student teachers

Mentor support for student teachers should go beyond the superficial technical and psycho-social level at which it is offered at present. The mentors must seek to intellectually and professionally scaffold and encourage student teachers to develop a habit of reflectively and critically engaging with their own and mentors’ professional practices. This suggests the need for mentors to themselves be formally trained in the skill of reflecting on their own mentoring style, as well as being able to, together with the student teachers, analyse lesson presentation and reflect on the good and poor aspects thereof.

However, the mentoring functions associated with reflection, quality professional engagement and feedback are typically time-consuming. It is therefore recommended that schools make adjustments in terms of making time available for mentoring activities, such as allowing mentors release time in the afternoon to work with their student teachers. In this regard, schools may consider adjusting their timetables so as to allow mentors and student teachers to go through the full coaching cycles so that the latter can get meaningful feedback while the former derive professional stimulus that may inspire them to change and improve their practices. However, the foregoing recommendations can succeed only in an overarching professional culture characterised by collaboration and collegiality where mentors and teachers comfortably and spontaneously share and mutually interrogate their professional experiences and practices.
6.3.2 Benefits for mentors

Efforts should be made to maximise the non-financial benefits; allowing mentors release time to perform their duties; reducing mentors’ teaching responsibilities, as well as recognising participation in mentoring as part of promotion criteria. This would lessen the pressure of work on the mentors, allowing them to engage in mentoring student teachers more effectively as they would have time more time to observe and discuss lesson observations with student teachers, resulting in the latter deriving more value from their practicum.

Schools hosting student teachers must also recognize the potential wider organisational benefits of participating in student teacher mentoring by integrating mentoring in to their formal structures and processes. Mentoring provides an occasion for schools to re-culture themselves positively in terms of embracing professional collaboration; an organisational cultural orientation that augurs positively for organisational effectiveness.

In order to bring about more sustainable commitment, it is recommended that a clearly defined reward structure for mentors that is officially recognised and integrated into the employee grading system be put in place so that mentors may benefit financially from taking up mentoring duties.

It is also recommended that colleges, in partnership with government, offer formal training sessions to teachers (who need to apply) in mentoring. These sessions should include theoretical as well as practical aspects and teachers should receive a certificate on the completion of training. Once qualified, these teachers should offer formal training sessions to other teachers on an annual basis before the student teachers are allocated to schools.

Additionally, such trained mentors will serve as nodal points of school-based programmes to capacitate mentors with skills in the context of on-going practice, through facilitating practice-based co-reflection on challenges met while mentoring
student teachers on a daily basis. This is consistent with Wang and Odell's (2006:528) *theory-and-practice model* of mentor preparation, which entails allowing the mentors to construct, test out and modify their knowledge and skills in the context of authentic professional practice, complemented by support from campus-based teacher educators.

Furthermore, an official document spelling out the purpose of mentoring and the procedures that need to be followed should be made available at every school.

**6.3.3 Organisational support for the mentoring programme**

Regarding the lack of organisational support for the mentoring programme, it is recommended that schools allocate specific time slots per day or, if possible, at least once per week, per student teacher. Apart from the mentor being physically present in the class to observe while the student teacher is teaching, discussions could also take place after school. This suggests that mentors will have to be exempted from some school duties, particularly in the afternoon, so that they could work with the student teachers.

In an organisation where the organisational support and a cultural ethos of informal and lifelong learning encourage mentors, mentoring is likely to take root easily, expanded and enriched in terms of its taking on more forms and involving more people. Thus, mentoring may take reciprocal and peer forms, introducing the mentors and student teachers into multiple networks of mentoring. The schools that host student teachers therefore need to re-culture positively in a way that embraces professional collaboration, since the success of mentoring hinges on the prevailing cultural ethos in the school.

Professional engagement forums must strive to create a vibrant context in which theory and practice can dialectically interact, rather than dwelling on practical and technical issues. In this regard, they could take the form of college-based or school microteaching sessions, bringing together student teachers and mentors, as well as some college
lecturers. This would encourage the cross-fertilisation of theory and practice, thereby helping close the gap between theory and practice.

6.3.4 Selection and placement of student teachers and mentors

Many student teachers should be allowed to choose their mentoring partners; this could be facilitated by the student teachers’ early contact with prospective mentors on micro-teaching visits to schools. Such a practice could, however, lead to problems, so it is recommended that a clear set of criteria be available for scrutiny by all stakeholders. Within these boundaries, both mentors and mentees could indicate preferences, such as same-gender matches, and so forth. In order to limit potential personality clashes or biases and expose mentees to a wider scope of expertise, it is further recommended that a mentee stays with a specific mentor for set periods of time only.

6.3.5 Professional/social relationships between mentors and student teachers

As human relationships develop in social settings, it is recommended that, apart from formal one-to-one mentoring situations, a variety of less formal social opportunities be planned. For instance, on arrival, student teachers may receive a formal welcome during which the rules, responsibilities and so forth are planned and introduced, followed by an informal tea-break where mentors may mingle with student teachers on a less formal level. Furthermore, during these initial meetings, student teachers could be invited to participate in the planning of the programmes or be encouraged to take a lead in some discussions.

6.3.6 Student teachers’ preparedness for teaching practice

College-based modules must be delivered in a way that ensures that they are integrated with the student teachers’ field experiences. Thus, microteaching must be a major component of college-based training, providing the major interactive space between the college-based theoretical and school-based practical aspects of the course. In this
regard, student teachers will need to spend the last six months of their college-based work visiting schools on microteaching at least once a week. Teams comprising lecturers from various departments could accompany student teachers on microteaching visits to schools. In specific terms, such a college-based pre-teaching programme could be structured as described below.

As it seems as if student teachers go out on teaching practice before they are ready to gain maximum benefits from the experience, and because any mentoring programme is closely linked to the teacher training programme, it is recommended that the entire structure of the training programme be re-visited. A practical way to overcome the poor preparedness of student teachers could be to send them for two weeks of observation only, with different teachers. During this observation period (the beginning of the second semester in year one), they could be provided with a structured observation checklist to complete, focusing on good practices in the classroom, practices at school and class that support learning (such as discipline), ending with a personal reflection on what they learned from the experience. At this stage, they may not teach at the school at all.

After the observation period, student teachers could go on extended microteaching visits to schools (one day per week for six months could be set aside for this), in groups of not more than six student teachers during which they do some teaching while being video-taped themselves. Discussions could take place in the schools in groups, with a mentor and a college-based lecturer present.

Micro-teaching will provide the student teachers with the opportunity to relate their understanding of theoretical issues covered at college to field-based experience through co-reflecting with lecturers, peers and specially trained school-based mentors, and fellow student teachers in post-observation sessions during micro-teaching visits (Zhang & Cheng, 2011:343). In this way, micro-teaching would enable student teachers to co-construct professional practical knowledge out of the dialectical interplay between theoretical ideas and practice.
In the same vein, college-based modules could be delivered, using video-tapes of micro-teaching sessions as a point reference in college classes, giving lecturers and student teachers from different departments an opportunity to co-reflect on such video-recordings in college classes. In this way, theoretical insights from different components of the teacher education course could be brought to bear on the practical issues arising from the micro-teaching sessions. Theoretical insights and practical experience could therefore mutually illuminate each other and, in so doing, possibly eliminate the traditional disjunction between the campus-based and field-based components of the teacher education course.

Towards the end of the first year, student teachers could be placed at schools for three weeks; during this time, nine lesson must be taught, with two in each teaching subject, on which the mentor must compile a progress report.

6.3.7 Student teachers’ contribution to professional dialogue

The reluctance by mentors to allow student teachers to exercise professional and critical agency indicates lack of a professional culture of collaboration and collegiality. Hence, the schools hosting the student teachers should fundamentally re-culture and reconstitute themselves into learning schools, where teachers are routinely comfortable with learning from their counterparts. Also, it may be helpful to allow prospective mentors and student teachers to choose their mentoring partners so that they could developed social and personal affinity between themselves, as such a good relationship could be the basis for establishing collegiality that makes for open communication and mutual constructive critique between the parties in such a mentoring relationship.

6.3.8 Relationship between schools and teacher education colleges

It has been noted above that teachers’ colleges and schools in Zimbabwe operate within the separatist partnership model of teacher education (Furlong, cited in Wilson &
I’Anson, 2006:355). This partnership arrangement is incompatible with mentoring. Hence, it is proposed that the colleges and schools rework their relationship into a more suitable partnership arrangement. HEI-led partnerships may be appropriate in the short term, while gradually moving towards a fully-fledged collaborative partnership in the long term. Moving immediately to a full collaborative partnership seems difficult, as it would demand the fundamental re-configuration and re-culturing of the schools so that they will embrace a culture of professional collaboration, something which can only happen gradually. Adopting a HEI-led partnership model would carve out a third space (Zeichner, 2010:90) within which schools and colleges could meaningfully collaborate on the provision of teacher education in Zimbabwe, thereby doing away with the disconnection between college and school-based components of the teacher education course. Maphosa et al. (2007:305), writing about mentoring in Zimbabwean primary schools, similarly calls for a closer working relationship between colleges and schools.

Shifting to a HEI-led partnership implies giving schools significant and clearly-defined responsibilities in teacher education. It is recommended that some schools be identified and developed in a way that reflects the best possible conditions for field-based professional learning for student teachers. This process could begin on an experimental basis in a few schools, and then the set could be gradually expanded in the course of time. Such specially designated schools would be modeled after the Professional Development Schools in the USA, with some specially trained mentors and professional learning facilitators. The mentors and professional learning facilitators would be officially recognised for remuneration purposes and would be afforded special status, although they would largely remain classroom teachers. Such school-based teacher educators would primarily serve as a liaison points in the HEI-school relationship, to ensure mutual articulation between what happens in colleges and the schools. In this regard, micro-teaching sessions would constitute the primary interactive spaces within which mentors, teams of college lecturers and student teachers work together.
6.3.9 Mentor preparedness for mentoring duties

In light of the critical importance of mentors to the success of a mentoring programme, there is need to formally train carefully selected effective teachers in mentoring skills so that they could effectively carry out their mentoring duties. Such a programme could be run on a collaborative basis by colleges and schools, with the former also playing an accreditation and certifying role. Providing the mentors with certificates on completion of the training programme could motivate them since the certificates represent a seal of recognition of the trained mentors` professional competence. The initial cohort of trained mentors could also play an extended role as training and learning facilitators in their schools, where they would not only perform mentoring duties, but also run school-based training programmes for their untrained counterparts as well as overseeing the mentoring that is taking place in schools. In the discussion of the proposed school-based teacher education model, such mentors are termed School-based Learning Facilitators (SLF). The SLF could also play an additional role, serving as liaison personnel between schools and colleges on mentoring and other professional development issues.

6.3.10 Age/gender and effectiveness of mentoring

When deploying mentors and mentees, factors such as age and gender must be made key considerations, as differences between mentees and mentors along these dimensions may undermine the smooth functioning of the mentoring relationship. This suggests the need to make sure that mentees and mentors of the same gender and who are close in age must be selected to work together.

6.3.11 Mentoring policy framework

It is suggested that the Zimbabwean education authorities come up with a national mentoring policy so that mentoring taking place in schools can occur within a standardised framework of guidelines and regulations. It is difficult to monitor and
account for the quality of mentoring that takes place in different schools, since different schools and teacher education colleges are likely to hold different views on mentoring when there is no national policy on mentoring.

### 6.3.12 Characteristics of an ideal mentor

Potential interpersonal compatibility between prospective mentoring partners should be a key consideration when selecting and deploying mentors and mentees. This calls for allowing the mentoring parties to get to know each other before the matching could be done. In this context, it is suggested that student teachers and their prospective mentors meet in the context of the formers’ visits to schools on microteaching, creating a primary interactive site for the mentoring parties to get to know each other and possibly develop preliminary relationships that could be the basis of future mentoring relationships.

Also in light of the importance of interpersonal compatibility, it may be necessary to allow the prospective mentoring partners to select each other, instead of the schools doing it for them.

Taking into cognisance that social relationships can break down, it is important to allow student teachers to change mentors in the course of their practicum, if the school authorities are convinced that the social relationship has broken down irretrievably.

### 6.3.13 Peer support among student teachers

Peer support among student teachers must be encouraged, as it provides student teachers with a wider network of professional support, with the implication that they will not have to depend on the mentors only. Also, peer support could represent an opportunity for the schools to re-orient themselves away from professional individualism to professional collaboration. Such a move could represent a positive step towards reconstituting schools as professional learning communities.
In overview, recommendations tabled in this section are mostly on a micro- and personal level. However, to succeed in improving the whole education system in Zimbabwe, the authorities should also invest in an improved, modern curriculum for teacher education. In this regard, the following revised model for teacher education is proposed.

6.4 DIAGRAMMATIC SYNTHESIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND MODEL SPECIFICATION

The above recommendations were diagrammatically synthesised, leading to formulation of an alternative improved model for primary teacher training in Zimbabwe as illustrated and explained below:

6.4.1 An improved school-based model for initial primary teacher training in Zimbabwe

Figure 6.1: An improved school-based model for initial primary teacher training in Zimbabwe

A new model for initial primary teacher training in Zimbabwe is proposed. Below is a diagram of the proposed model.
ENTRY AND RECRUITMENT

Academic and professional screening
- Five Ordinary Level passes, including English and Mathematics.
- Communication proficiency.
- Tests and interviews to ascertain appropriate attitudes and commitment.
- Criminal screening.
- Preference given to those with previous teaching experience as unqualified teachers.

YEAR ONE (College-based tuition)

Academic subjects 1 & 2
- Selected from eleven subjects taught in primary school.
- Studied concurrently.
- Subjects should be in the same discipline.
- Subjects to be the teacher’s teaching specialities, either at Infant* or Junior* levels.

Theories of Education
- Philosophy of Education
- Sociology of Education
- Psychology of Education
- Educational administration
- Curriculum Studies

Professional Studies
- Classroom communication
- Classroom management
- Scheming and planning
- Record keeping
- Teaching approaches/methods
- Professional conduct
- Chalkboard skills

CURRICULUM DEPTH STUDY AND MICRO-TEACHING
- Micro-teaching in specially designated schools, one session per week in the last six months of YEAR ONE.
- Teams of college lecturers drawn from the different areas take student teachers on micro-teaching visits.
- Post-lesson observation conferences with lecturers, group of student teachers and trained mentors in attendance.
- Video-taping of micro-teaching sessions to be used as basis for college-based class discussions.
- Student teachers and mentors identify and lay foundation of relationships with prospective mentoring partners.
- Identifying and analyzing possible problems to be pursued through group-based action research projects in the context of micro-teaching and video-based class discussions.

YEAR TWO (Professional experience)
- In specially designated schools, progressively structurally re-configured and re-cultured so that they provide the best possible environment for professional learning, e.g. timetable providing slots for mentor release time and meeting, modification of school physical infrastructure so that it allows informal professional interaction.
- Attached to trained mentors who work with a school-based professional learning facilitator (SPL), whose major role is that of liaison with teachers’ colleges and leading the team of mentors who operate as professional learning community (PLC). Hence student teachers actually join the PLC on coming into the school.
- Clearly-spell out mentoring functions, closely aligned with the National Teaching Standards Framework (at present non-existent, but the author shall recommend its formulation).
- Mentoring duties closely integrated in the teacher grading system for the purpose of remuneration and promotion.
- Student teachers collect data for the group-based Action research project, with close involvement of SPLs and mentors. The research problem should emerge out of the discussions of classroom-based problems in the context of the PLC.
- Student teachers combine a portfolio based on their activities in the PLC this counts significantly towards passing the Action research project.
- Teams of lecturers visit a school once a term to assess student teachers together with the SPL and the mentor.
- School Administration compiles termly reports on student teachers’ progress, based on the portfolio and lesson observations.

YEAR THREE (CAMPUS-BASED RESIDENTIAL TUITION)

Academic subjects 1 & 2
- As in Year one but at a higher level.

Theories of Education
- As in Year one but at a higher level.

Professional Studies
- Mainly micro-teaching visits to schools once per week and intensive college class-based analysis of video-taped micro-teaching sessions.

CURRICULUM DEPTH STUDY AND ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT
- Intensive group supervisory session by college lecturers in an Action research project for submission by individual students.
Assessment: Theoretical examinations, Action research project, portfolio, teaching practice reports (both college and school-based) Initial registration and CPTD-based licensure requirements at six-year intervals.
6.4.2 Discussion and rationale for aspects of the proposed model

The features of the proposed mentoring model are explained, discussed and justified below, contextualised in and drawing on a contemporary theoretical/philosophical and pragmatic rationale relating to professional learning. The model is informed by an eclectic theoretical framework, weaving together insights from the following theorists: Lave and Wenger’s situated learning theory, particularly their concept of Communities of Practice; Vygotskyan ZPD; theorists of the Reflective practitioner tradition (most notably Schön); Engeström’s Activity System theory; and Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s Inquiry-as-stance perspective. The ideas of these theorists, together with the empirical findings, inspired the features of the proposed model. In essence, the model is based on a perspective of teacher learning that sees it as occurring in a community of practitioners in authentic contexts of professional practice. As Boughey (2011:45) contends, theory is not applied to practice, but is reworked in the context of practice through engagement and reflection.

- Entry and recruitment

The success of any training model largely depends on the pre-selection of candidates. The model is based on multiple levels of screening of those seeking to enter the teaching profession, seeking to come up with tighter selection procedures for teacher training. Akyeampong and Lewin (2002:340) report that Ghana similarly readjusted selection mechanisms into teaching as a way of addressing deteriorating teacher quality. At the most basic level of screening, recruits will be selected on the basis of standard academic criteria recommended by the Ministry of Education under whose administrative jurisdiction teacher education falls. This will encompass five Ordinary level passes, including English and Mathematics. Everything being equal, holders of this level of school education will possess the intellectual and communicative competencies that should enable them to complete the teacher education qualification.
However, as mentors in the study painfully realised, most student teachers cannot demonstrate these competencies, despite them exiting school with the required academic criteria. In this regard, Lewin (2004:6), in a multisite study of five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, lamented the low academic pedigree of college entrants, whom she or he found to be particularly deficient in the mastery of the medium of instruction, namely English. Lewin (2004:6), in line with the proposed model, suggests that the possible inclusion of bridging courses to improve language proficiency to the required level, including a compulsory subject, such as *Professional Language Ability*, will also add value to the teacher education model.

The next level of screening is a battery of proficiency tests testing the recruits’ intellectual and communicative competencies. There are various tests available in this regard, including psychometric tests, and colleges should agree to use the same test, while the government should set entrance standards.

Unlike the present model of teacher education in Zimbabwe, the proposed model goes beyond academic and proficiency tests to establish whether the aspiring teachers possess the appropriate attitudes that will enable them to work with learners, other professionals and the surrounding community. In this way, the proposed model duly takes into cognisance that teaching takes more than the technical competencies.

As part of the entry requirements, the model proposes to establish the recruits’ level of commitment to teaching through interviewing them. Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Potgieter (2012:182), in a South African study, established that students enroll for teacher education as a default career option of the last resort. In this regard, those with prior teaching experience as unqualified teachers were given preference, since they would have already demonstrated interest and commitment to teaching, not treating it as a default career option, as established was the case for many student teachers.

Most of the recommendations above will address the concerns about the quality of candidates who wish to enter the teaching profession.
- **College-based tuition (Year one)**

In the first year, student teachers attend college-based lectures in courses related to teaching. In keeping with most teacher education curricula, the model proposes a balanced mix of a college-based coursework, covering subject knowledge, pedagogic knowledge and theories on teaching and learning and teaching practice, offered in a consecutive-integrated model, as suggested by Ssentamu-Namirubu (2008:65). In terms of the proposed model, student teachers will choose two academic major subjects out of the total of eleven that are taught in primary schools. These subjects will constitute the student teachers’ teaching specialties, increasing their mastery of both subject and pedagogical knowledge. This is in contrast to the current system, which does not afford primary school teachers the opportunity to acquire a deep mastery of both subject and pedagogical knowledge. Scholars such as Shulman (1987) have similarly considered good teaching as being primarily tied in with the mastery of the knowledge base.

The proposed model also recognises that exposing student teachers to the theoretical foundations of education is an ever-present feature of most teacher education programmes internationally. This component comes in the form of the traditional disciplines of education, such as Philosophy of Education, Psychology of Education, Sociology of Education, Educational Administration, as well as Curriculum studies. Further, the proposed model also suggests the inclusion of a methods course, which seeks to acquaint student teachers with ways of delivering subject content to pupils.

In the proposed model, the above aspects of the teacher education course will not be taught in isolation, but integrated within the context of an aspect called Curriculum Depth Study and Micro-teaching. This will provide a college-based space within which insights from all the aspects of the teacher education curriculum converge and cross-feed. Micro-teaching will take place within the last six months of college-based tuition, with groups of student teachers and teams of lecturers undertaking visits to specially designated schools (some kind of laboratory schools, modeled after the Professional
Development Schools in the United States of America) at least one day per week. In the reflective paradigm of organising teaching experience, within which the proposed model is primarily anchored, micro-teaching skills are not important in themselves as evidence of technical skills, but are valued insofar as they indicate the student teachers’ provisional and developing thinking about teaching behaviour.

Thus, micro-teaching sessions will provide both the stimulus and content for collective reflection among student teachers, school-based professional learning facilitators, mentors and college lecturers, and all of these groups should take part in the discussions after lessons. School-based learning facilitators and mentors will be required to deliver lessons, while college-based lecturers and student teachers observe. Such lessons will not seek to focus on and develop single and isolated skills. Student teachers will be required to prepare personal observation guides, capturing broad aspects of teaching, such as classroom management, discipline and feedback during lessons. This guide will help the student teachers focus on salient aspects of teaching when they observe mentors and learning facilitators’ lessons. In addition, student teachers will also be expected to keep a reflective journal capturing what will be happening in the lessons as well as their reflective thoughts. The reflective journals will be used in the college-based tutorial discussions and seminars that always follow micro-teaching sessions. Thereafter, student teachers will also be expected to deliver lessons under the observation of college lecturers, mentors and school-based learning facilitators, as well as their fellow student teachers.

As briefly suggested above, the micro-teaching sessions could also be video-taped to be discussed during college-based tutorials and seminars. In the discussions, the college-based lecturers could encourage student teachers to bring insights from all the theoretical aspects of the curriculum to bear on the issues that come up in the context of the discussions of micro-teaching sessions. Additionally, during micro-teaching visits, student teachers will come into informal contact with prospective mentors, giving them an opportunity to get to know each other as a basis for choosing mentoring partners in
year two. These practices may support improved relationships between mentors and mentees and remove some of the uncertainties of mentees.

Furthermore, in the context of micro-teaching, student teachers can also identify and provisionally analyse pedagogical problems, which they can pursue through group-based action research projects. These projects will be worked on throughout year two (professional experience) and submitted at the end of the third year. Student teachers can pick out authentic teaching challenges in the schools when they go on micro-teaching visits and seek to solve these through action research that they conduct in groups, creating an additional space for professional collaboration.

Towards the end of year one, student teachers will be required to plan at least four lessons under the guidance of their lecturers. The lessons will be delivered in schools near the college. College lecturers will observe these lessons with a view to assessing student teachers’ readiness for professional experience. The above will strongly address concerns about student teachers not being properly prepared for the practicum.

Additionally, in year two, the college will organise training sessions for mentors, some of whom would have been identified during micro-teaching visits to schools. The rest of the mentoring trainees will be selected by schools, taking into their teaching effectiveness as well their dispositional suitability. Such training would be compulsory for all prospective mentors and a certificate will be awarded. However, the certificate would be valid for three years only, necessitating mentors to come back for training after every three years. This is meant to encourage them to engage in career-long learning. In this way, the quality of mentors will be improved, with the added bonus that certification may be seen as a symbol of recognition for good teaching practices.

- **Professional Experience (Year two)**

In the context of the proposed model, this phase is deliberately called the *professional experience*, to indicate the shift from the traditional to the reflective-inquiry-oriented
paradigm of organising professional experience, in which the proposed model is situated. The term teaching practice seems anachronistic to use in the proposed model, as it belongs to the clearly outmoded traditional paradigm and suggests the theory-practice dichotomy, in terms of which schools are taken as mere locations for applying theory. Contrastingly, in the reflective-inquiry-oriented paradigm, there is at least a philosophical commitment to integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum by creating third spaces, to use Zeichner’s (2010:90) elegant phrase, which are essentially interactive spaces in which the theoretical and practical aspects of teacher education curriculum could be integrated. Within such spaces, various players in teacher education, namely student teachers, mentors, school-based professional learning facilitators and college lecturers, meet to engage in reflective dialogue and co-inquiry into what it means to teach. In line with contemporary views of professional learning, the model allows professionals to rework and co-construct professional knowledge locally. This is what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999:250) term knowledge-of-practice, as opposed to knowledge-for-practice, which is imposed for trial application on schools by the HEIs.

Student teachers will be placed in Specially Designated Schools (SDS) for a year-long professional experience in the second year. These schools (closely taking after the Professional Development schools proposed by the Holmes Group in the United States of America), will be progressively structurally re-configured and re-cultured to ensure that they provide the best possible environment for the professional learning of student teachers on field experience. Some defining characteristics of the SDS will include timetables that provide slots for mentor release time and meetings, modification of school socio-physical infrastructure so that it allow for informal professional interaction among the teachers, as well as setting up social-professional infrastructure such as learning circles, which is a professional engagement forum in which mentors, student teachers and the school-based professional learning facilitators meet once a week for knowledge sharing and reflection.
Student teachers will be attached to formally trained school-based mentors, largely selected by the student teachers themselves. It will be encouraged that student teachers be placed in groups so that they may also work in groups, in line with the socio-cultural learning theory, which contends that learning does not occur in isolation, but in the context of authentic participatory engagement with others. In this vein, there is also the possibility of placing student teachers in pairs so that they could readily give each other critical feedback without having to depend on their mentor.

The role of mentors will be central to the operation of the proposed model, as they are responsible for the professional learning of student teachers for the duration of the field experience. The mentor’s role will not be confined to the classroom, as she or he will share own perspectives on teaching with the student teachers in and outside the classroom and at the frequent seminars presented at the college. In the classroom, the mentor will share her or his practical knowledge and perspectives with the student teacher.

Also, the mentor will generally adopt a less directive style, since the mentor-mentee relationship will be organised along the horizontal, non-hierarchical, collegial model, both in epistemic and social terms. This will encourage the mentoring parties to share perspectives on teaching more readily and freely than in the traditional paradigm, where the relationships are vertical, based on a subordinate-superordinate model. In similar vein, the mentor will take on a new range of functions, such as being a critical friend, equal partner, facilitator of learning, collaborator, supporter and colleague, marking a fundamental departure from more directive functions such as being a role model, evaluator, assessor, instructor and advisor. However, the mentors are required to ensure that the mentoring functions they exercise cover both of Kram’s (1985) domains, namely career-related and psycho-social functions.

One of the mentors will be appointed to be a school-based learning facilitator (SLF) in every school participating in mentoring. The major role of the SLF will be to serve as a connecting point between the college and the school on issues related to training. In this
regard, the SLF will be responsible for joint planning, with college lecturers, of micro-teaching sessions as well as coordinating mentoring activities within the school. To ensure that mentors’ skills are always up to the challenges of mentoring, the SLF will also communicate and continually engage with the college on skills gaps among the mentors, so that opportunities for continuing professional development can be organised for them. The SLF, with a team of selected mentors, also will participate in some of the school-based and college-based tutorial discussions that always follow micro-teaching sessions.

The role of college-based supervisors will also change in the proposed model, from being critics or judges (as was established in the findings), to being facilitators of learning of the student teachers in the context of school-based post-micro-teaching discussions or in the college classroom, as they and groups of student teachers co-reflect on video-taped micro-teaching sessions. In the context of these sessions, student teachers will, in groups, explore authentic pedagogical problems, based on their micro-teaching experiences, as part of their ongoing group-based action research projects.

During field experience, student teachers will, also in groups, reflect and collect data on their action research problems identified in year one. The problems they will be investigating will reflect the daily authentic challenges of teaching in the school; hence these would be genuine problems which could also be discussed with mentors and the SFL in the weekly school-based learning circle meetings. As they engage with their research problems on field experience, the student teachers will be documenting their thinking and the actions they have taken to solve the problems. Such material will be compiled into individual portfolios, to be submitted alongside the action research project report. The portfolio will enable colleges to account for the quality of each student teacher’s intellectual and intellectual contribution to the solutions of the problem. The arrangements discussed above will support the development of a professional community of practice.
• College-based tuition (Year three)

In the third year, student teachers will return to college and continue with the theoretical courses started in year one, but at a deeper level. More emphasis will be placed on further developing the student teachers’ reflective thinking skills through working with colleagues more intensively on the action research project, bringing insights from other aspects of the curriculum to bear on the problem being investigated. Micro-teaching visits to schools will be continued at least once per week, and these will be carried out in conjunction with school or college-based class discussions of the video-taped microteaching sessions. In the third year, the aforegoing aspect will replace the methods courses.

These discussions could also further refine and deepen student teachers’ thinking on their action research, enhancing their analytic insights as they write up their project report.

Finally, student teachers will take theoretical examinations, which will require them to synthesise insights from all the areas of the teacher education curriculum. These will be mainly essay-based questions, requiring them to demonstrate reflective and critical capacities in relation to pedagogical problems, drawing on insights from all areas of the teacher education curriculum, including field experience. In addition, student teachers will also submit write-ups of their action research projects, both in groups and individual portfolios. Furthermore, the student teachers will deliver a lesson to a panel of college lecturers which, together with the field experience progress reports compiled by mentors and peers, will significantly count towards whether or not the student passes the field experience.

The diploma in education will qualify the teacher only to be initially registered as a teacher, after which she or he will have to undertake a mandatory two-year paid induction, taking a full class, but operating within mentoring-based support structures in the school. On completion of the induction, the teacher can take steps towards
acquiring a full teacher’s license, which will need to be renewed every six years, on the basis of documented participation in CPTD so as to reward and encourage lifelong learning.

6.5 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this research study are as follows:

- Resources and work commitments did not allow the researcher to spend a long time in the schools collecting data; a more nuanced and fine-grained picture of the participants’ mentoring experiences could arguably have emerged if he had done so.
- The researcher did not include the views of officials from the Department of Education.
- The researcher did not solicit the views of colleagues in the teacher education field before making the final recommendations.
- The wheels of change are slow and the new model will have to be phased in together with the establishment of structures to address problems about adequately recruiting and preparing mentors.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study unraveled the workings of the mentoring model and proposed how it could be amelioratively modified. However, the study also raised some critical issues that could be pursued through further research, as articulated below.

- Further research could be conducted into the possibility of drawing up a model of teacher education that integrates ITE (Initial Teacher Education) and CTPD (Continuing Teacher Professional Development) in the context of mentoring.
- A similarly designed study into the mentoring taking place at secondary schools in Zimbabwe could be carried out.
6.7 CONCLUSION

This Chapter drew conclusions from the interpretation of the findings, seeking to address the question: *What are the shortcomings of the existing mentoring system for student teachers and mentors, as it is applied in Zimbabwean primary schools at present?* Having identified and spelt out the shortcomings, as captured in the findings, this chapter came up with the implications of the findings, formulating recommendations articulating how each aspect could be differently addressed at school, college and government level, thereby addressing the primary research question: *How can the existing mentoring system in Zimbabwean primary schools, as part of the teacher education model, be improved?*

Finally, the recommendations were synthesised, leading to the formulation of an improved model for primary teacher training in Zimbabwe that includes elements that strictly impact on mentoring practices. It seems therefore reasonable to conclude that this research achieved its objective of articulating how the mentoring system as it is currently being implemented in Zimbabwe, could be improved. However, change, especially personal change and commitment, takes time as man is usually reluctant to leave comfort zones and be exposed to new challenges.

Considering all the concerns and arguments discussed in this study, it would be prudent for all stakeholders in Zimbabwean education circles to seriously consider and embrace the proposed changes and recommendations in order to improve education, as an improved education system will also support development on many other fronts.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hayes, D. The Impact of Tutor-Mentoring on Student Primary Teachers’ Achievements: A case study. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 1, 5-21.


Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the Connections between Campus Courses and Field Experiences in College and University-based Teacher Education. Journal of teacher education, 61 (1-2), 89-100.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

LETTERS OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS
Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Application for permission to conduct research in schools

My name is Ishmael Jeko, a lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations at Midlands State University enrolled as a doctoral student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in South Africa. I am conducting research on the mentoring of initial teacher trainees on school-based practicum under the supervision of Dr. A. J. Greyling of the Faculty of Education, NMMU. I therefore kindly ask for your permission to collect data for the purposes of the above study from nine primary schools in the Midlands province. In this regard, please find below detailed information on the proposed study.

Aims of the Research

The research aims to:

- To suggest an improved mentoring model for effective learning of initial teacher trainees on primary school-based practicum in Zimbabwe.

Significance of the Research Project

The research is significant in two ways:

1. It will enable policy-makers and administrators in teacher education and schools to make informed decisions about the minimal elements which should be introduced to make the mentoring model work more effectively.
2. It will enable policy-makers and administrators in teacher education and schools to make informed decisions about what can be done to block or minimize the operation of constraining factors in the mentoring system to make it work more effectively.

**Benefits of the Research to Schools**

1. Results of the study will be disseminated to the following: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, teacher training colleges, and primary schools.
2. The results will inform efforts to modify and improve the current mentoring model.

**Research Plan and Method**

Data will be collected through focus group discussions, interviews (formal semi-structured and informal unstructured) and participant observation (During this period the researcher will assume the role of a relief/support teacher). The data will be mainly collected from mentors and trainee teachers in nine primary schools in Masvingo province of Zimbabwe. The data gathering process will take place over a period of at least three months, with the researcher spending at least ten working days at each school. The researcher undertakes to ensure that the conduct of this research does not disturb the smooth flow of teaching –learning activities in the schools.

All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither will the school nor individual participants be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The role of the school is voluntary and the School Principal may decide to withdraw the school's participation at any time.

**School Involvement**

Once I have received your consent to approach school heads, mentors and trainee teachers to participate in the study, I will

- arrange a time with the selected schools for data collection to take place
- obtain informed consent from participants

Should you require further information on the proposed study, please feel free to contact the undersigned on contact details given below. Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours faithfully,

Ishmael Jeko  (Cell: 0773568319  e-mail: jekoi@msu.ac.zw or jigono@yahoo.com)
16/11/2010

Contact person: ISHMAEL JEKO (Cell: +263773568319)

Dear Prospective participant

You are being asked to participate in a research study. I will provide you with the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected of you (participant). These guidelines would include the risks, benefits, and your rights as a study participant. Please feel free to ask the researcher to clarify anything that is not clear to you.

To participate, it will be required of you to provide written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions. Please find it attached to this document.

You have the right to query concerns regarding the study at any time. Immediately report any new problems during the study, to the researcher. Telephone numbers of the researcher are provided. Please feel free to call these numbers.

Furthermore, it is important that you are aware of the fact that the ethical integrity of the study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the university. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that has the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of participants in research are protected and that studies are conducted in an ethical manner. Studies cannot be conducted without REC-H’s approval. Queries with regard to your rights as a research subject can be directed to the Research Ethics Committee (Human), Department of Research Capacity Development, PO Box 77000, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 6031.

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in any research. If you choose not to participate you will not be affected in any way. If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time, during the study without penalty or loss of benefits. However, if you do withdraw from the study, you should return for a final discussion in order to terminate the research in an orderly manner.

If for any reason the researcher believes that it is not in your best interest to continue in this study your participation may be discontinued. The study may be terminated at any time by the researcher, the sponsor or the Research Ethics Committee (Human) at NMMU.

Your identity will at all times remain confidential however, he results of the research study may be presented at scientific conferences or in specialist publications.

Yours sincerely

Ishmael Jeko
RESEARCHER
APPENDIX 2

LETTERS GRANTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS
2 September 2010

ATTENTION: TO WHOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT PHD RESEARCH

The Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture hereby grants Mr Jeko Ishmael, a Lecturer at Midlands State University, to conduct research on “Monitoring of initial teacher trainees on the school based practicum,” in Zimbabwean schools.

E Marunda (PhD)

(Principal Director – Department of Education, Coordination and Development)

ACTING SECRETARY FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE
APPENDIX 3

ERTIC ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER
14 March 2011

Mr I Jeko / Dr L Greyling
Education Faculty
NMMU.

Dear Mr Jeko / Dr Greyling

TOWARDS AN IMPROVED MENTORING MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING OF INITIAL TEACHER TRAINEES ON PRACTICUM IN ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the March meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee of Education (ERTIC).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H11-Edu-ERE-008.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Ms J Elliott-Gentry

Secretary: ERTIC
APPENDIX 4

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MENTORS
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE: MENTORS

Project: Towards an improved mentoring model for effective learning of student teachers on practicum in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Time:

Date:

Venue:

Moderator/Facilitator:

Participants’ data

Number of participants:

Gender composition: Male Female:

Introductory remarks

Good morning/afternoon. How is your work? Thanks for coming for this discussion. As we said in the informed consent form, we intend to come up with ways of making your mentoring of trainee teachers more effective and enjoyable. You are among the few mentors whom we believe can help us with information we need to achieve purpose of this study. Once more, I would like to assure you that the data from this discussion will not be used for any purposes beyond this research. Also, we will not disclose your names when we report the findings. In place of your names, aliases will be used. Having said this, I would like again to ask for your time for the next one hour as we discuss the experience of being mentored.

Prompt

If someone asked you to give brief account of your mentoring experiences in this school, what issues would you include?

Thank you for your time and effort used for giving us this valuable information.
APPENDIX 5

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENT TEACHERS
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE: STUDENT TEACHERS

Project: Towards an improved mentoring model for effective learning of student teachers on practicum in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Time:

Date:

Venue:

Moderator/Facilitator:

Participants’ data

Number of participants:

Gender composition: Male Female:

Introductory remarks

Good morning/afternoon. How is your work? Thanks for coming for this discussion. As we said in the informed consent form, we intend to come up with ways of improving your learning experiences while you are on teaching practice. You are among the few trainee teachers who we believe can help us with information we need to achieve purpose of this study. Once more, I would like to assure you that the data from this discussion will not be used for any purposes beyond this research. Also, we will not disclose your names when we report the findings. In place of your names, aliases will be used. Having said this, I would like again to ask for your time for the next one hour as we discuss the experience of being mentored.

Prompt

Being mentored! What issues come to your mind when I say this phrase, given your experiences of learning how to teach in this school?

Thank you for your time and effort used for giving me this valuable information.
INTERVIEW GUIDE: STUDENT TEACHERS. (Individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews)

Project: Towards an improved mentoring model for effective learning of trainee teachers on practicum in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Location

Interviewer:

Interviewee: (To use an alias)

Interviewee data:

Pre-training working experience:

Grade taught: Months on teaching practice:

Gender (student teacher): Gender of mentor:

Questions

1. Tell me about the extent of your preparedness for teaching practice when you came to this school.
2. Briefly describe your experiences on your first day in this school.
3. How were you allocated mentors in this school?
4. What factors were considered when mentors were allocated?
5. Describe the kind of person you would want to be your mentor.
6. What do you think are the major duties of a mentor?
7. Tell me aspects of learning to teach in which you need most support.
8. What suggestions can you give on how your mentor can improve on the way he or she supports you.
9. Describe the forms of support, if any, you get from other members of staff in the school.
10. What can you say about the quality of support you have received as a trainee teacher in your present school?
11. What can you say about your experiences working under male or female mentors?
12. What major problems have you encountered in learning to teach in this school?

Thank you for your time and effort used for giving me this valuable information.
INTERVIEW GUIDE: MENTORS (Individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews)

Project: Towards an improved mentoring model for effective learning of student teachers on practicum in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee data

Position(s) of responsibility:

Grade taught: Highest Professional qualification:

Gender of mentor: Gender of mentee:

Teaching experience: Mentoring experience:

Questions

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
2. For many years have you been a mentor?
3. How are mentees allocated in your school?
4. Given an opportunity to choose, what kind of mentee would you want to work with?
5. Let us picture a scenario in which I am a mentor in this school. What would my day be like?
6. What do you think are your major duties as a mentor?
7. Having such experience in mentoring, in which aspects of learning to teach do you think trainee teachers need most help.
8. How can you describe your experience of mentoring male or female trainee teachers?
9. Describe the best school environment you would like to work in as a mentor.
10. What do you think are the most important things needed for mentoring to be effective?

Thank you for your time and effort used for giving me this valuable information.
OBSERVATIONAL GUIDE

Case school:.............................................................................................................

Aspect being observed:..............................................................................................

Setting/Context:...........................................................................................................

Observer:....................................................................................................................

Time:...........................................................................................................................

Date:...........................................................................................................................

Duration of observation:..............................................................................................

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<tr>
<th>Observational notes</th>
<th>Reflective notes</th>
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</table>

- Verbal and physical behavior and interaction of mentors and mentees in and outside the classroom.
- Mentors and mentees’ organization of social/personal space in and outside the classroom.
- Mentor and mentees’ daily routines in the school.
- Interaction of mentees in the school.
- Interaction of mentors in the school.

Other
APPENDIX 9

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT TEACHERS
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (Tick or fill in where appropriate)

1. What is your highest level of secondary education? Ordinary level □
   Advanced level □ Other □ (Specify……………………………………….)
2. Do you have any post-secondary school qualification? If YES, specify.
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
3. Have ever taught school as an untrained teacher before enrolling for the teacher training course? If YES, please answer a and b.
   a. At what level did you teach?………………………………………………………………………
   b. For how many years did you teach at that level?
      ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
4. In what grade are you currently practising teaching? Pre-grade 1 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □
5. What gender are you? Female □ Male □
6. For how long have you been on teaching practice? (In months) Less than 3 □ 3-6 □ 6-9 □ Over 10 □
7. For how many months have you been practicing teaching in the present grade? (In months) Less than □ 3-6 □ 6-9 □ Over 10 □
8. What is the gender of your mentor? Female □ Male □
9. My mentor is: Younger than me □ Don’t know □ Older than me □
10. Indicate the location of your current school.
    Urban □ Peri-Urban □ Rural □ Farm □ Mine □ Suburban □
    Other (Specify………………………………………)

THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING MENTORED

11. Please rate your perceived readiness for teaching practice on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 represents the lowest level while 5 represents the highest level of readiness.
    1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □
12. Indicate the level of your perceived preparedness for teaching practice on each of the items in the table below (Tick in the appropriate box). 1 represents the lowest level while 5 represents the highest level of preparedness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>Classroom management</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Planning and scheming</td>
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<td>Ideas on how to teach</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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NB: Please feel free to use additional paper if necessary.

13. Briefly describe your experiences on the first day in your present school, providing information on the following issues:

a. Who received you?..................................................................................................................................
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b. What issues or aspects were you informed about on your first day at the present school?
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   c. Explain the mood of your reception?
d. Indicate aspects you felt good about regarding your reception at the school. Start with those you think are most important.

... 

e. Indicate aspects that you would have liked to be different. Explain why?

... 

14. Have you been to any other schools before? If YES, how does the present experience compare to the previous one?
15. How are the mentors allocated at your school? (Tick in the appropriate box)

- Student teachers are allowed to choose mentors and grades
- Students are allowed to choose grades and mentors assigned
- Any other modes of allocation

(Specify)........................................................................................................................................
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16. If you could, explain factors that are considered in the allocation of mentors.

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17. Indicate aspects you would want to be considered in the allocation of mentors. Start with those aspects you consider to be most important.

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18. If you are asked to select a mentor for yourself describe the kind of person you would choose.

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19. a. Have you ever wished changing your mentor? Yes ☐ No ☐

   b. Give reasons for your answer to the previous question.

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NB: To follow up on your responses to questions 8 and 9 above,

20. If you prefer one gender above the other, explain your reasons for that.

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21. How do you think age difference between mentor and mentee can influence the mentoring relationship?

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21. The support I receive from my mentor is: Adequate □ Don’t know □ Inadequate □

22. What forms of support do you receive from your mentor?
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23. Do you ever meet your mentor for discussion and consultation? (If so, answer questions a to d)

a. When do such meetings take place?
After school □ during lesson periods □ during lunch periods □ Over the weekend □ No such meetings □ other □ (specify…………………………………………………)

b. These meetings are: Formal □ Informal □

c. How long are the meetings?
Less than 30 mins □ 30-60 mins □ More than 60 mins □

d. Tick a statement that best describes the pattern of communication in your meetings with the mentor. Only the mentor does the speaking □
Only the trainee teacher does the speaking □
Both the mentor and the trainee teacher speak, but the mentor speaks more □
Both the mentor and the trainee teacher, but the trainee teacher speaks more frequently □
Other □ (Specify…………………………………………………………..)

24. Describe how your mentor uses such meetings to help you learn to teach.
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25. How helpful do you think the meetings were or are to you as a trainee teacher?

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26. Indicate aspects of learning how to teach in which you need support. Start with those areas in which you think the need is greatest.

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27. Indicate how such needed support was given or could be requested.

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28. Have you ever received any forms of support from other members of staff in your school other than your mentor? If YES, describe the source and nature of such support.

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29. Give suggestions on how your mentor can improve on the way he or she supports you.

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25. Please tick in the appropriate box to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement about the school where you are doing your practical teaching.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers often visit each other `s classes to observe and discuss their professional practices.</td>
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<td>Teachers always work in isolation in their classrooms.</td>
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<td>Teachers conduct team teaching in order to solve problems together.</td>
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<td>Teachers get uneasy whenever the head or deputy or teacher-in-charge visits them for assessment or supervision.</td>
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<td>Mentors allow trainee teachers to observe, discuss and question their (mentors) own teaching practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors allow trainee teachers to suggest and try out new ways of doing things in the classroom.</td>
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MENTORS

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION *(Tick or fill in where appropriate)*

1. What is your highest professional qualification? Certificate in Education □
   Diploma in Education□ Bachelor of Education□ Master of Education □
   Other □ (Specify------------------------------------------------------------------)

2. Indicate the location of your school.
   Urban □ Peri-Urban □ Rural □ Farm □ Mine □ Suburban □
   Other (Specify------------------------------------------------------------------)

3. What is your gender? Female□ Male□

4. How many years of teaching experience do you have? Less than 5 □ 5-10 □
   11-15 □ 16-20 □ 21-25 □ 26-30 □ 31-35 □ Over 35 □

5. What grade are you teaching at present? Pre-grade 1 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □
   5 □ 6 □ 7 □

6. For how many years have you been teaching in the present grade? Less than 3 □
   3-6 □ 6-9 □ Over 10 □

7. For how many years have you been mentor? Less than 5 □ 5-10 □
   11-15 □ 16-20 □ 21-25 □ 26-30 □ 31-35 □ Over 35 □

8. For how many years have you been a mentor in the present grade?
   Less than 5 □ 5-10 □ 11-15 □ More than 15 □

9. What gender is your mentee? Female □ Male □

10. What administrative post(s) do you currently hold in the school?
    Head □ Deputy Head □ Teacher-in-charge □ Other □
    (Specify------------------------------------------------------------------)}
B. MENTORING EXPERIENCE

11. Who selects mentors at your school?

12. Indicate factors that are considered when mentors are selected at your school. Start with factors you think are most important.

13. a. Have you ever attended any training course in mentoring? Yes ☐ No ☐ (If yes, answer questions b and d, if no, go to question 14)

b. How many courses did you attend?

c. What major aspects did the course(s) cover?

d. What other aspects would you wish to be included in a mentoring course?
14. If you did not attend any training courses in mentoring, what aspects would you want included in a mentoring course. Start with what you consider to be the most important aspects.

15. List your main duties as a mentor in the order of perceived importance

16. How did you come to know your duties as a mentor? (Tick in one or more boxes)
   - Through a national circular or document
   - Through a college based circular or document
   - Through a school based document or orientation
   - I worked it out on my own from my teaching experience
   - Other (Specify ……………………………………………………………….)

17. What are the most common aspects of learning that your mentee needs help with?

18. Describe the form(s) of support you give your mentee?

19. What challenges do you experience at school when in a mentoring role?
20. Describe the forms of support that are available to you as a mentor.

21. Describe the ideal school environment you as mentor would like to work in:

22. What form of mentor-mentee combinations are you in, or have you been in during the last two years? *(Tick in one or more boxes)*

   Male-male □  Female-male □  Male-female □  Female-female □

23. Describe both positive and negative mentoring experiences in the indicated mentoring combinations.
24. a. How do you rate yourself as a mentor?
   Very effective [ ] Effective [ ] Uncertain [ ] Hardly effective [ ] Not effective [ ]

   b. Give reasons why you rate your performance as a mentor at such a level?

      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________

25. What do you consider as necessary/needed to improve your mentoring performance?

      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________

26. What factor(s) do you consider to be contributing to a positive relationship between mentors and mentees?

      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
27. What factor(s) do you consider to negatively influence a mentoring relationship?

28. Please tick in the appropriate box to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement about your school.

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 11

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
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A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (Tick or fill in where appropriate)

1. What is your highest professional qualification? Certificate in Education □
   Diploma in Education □ Bachelor in Education □ Master in Education □
   Other □ (Specify---------------------------------------------------------------)

2. Indicate the location of your school.
   Urban □ Peri-Urban □ Rural □ Farm □ Mine □ Suburban □
   Other □ Specify---------------------------------------------------------------)

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have? -----------------------------

4. For how many years have you been headmaster of a primary school? ----------

5. Are you a teaching headmaster? No □ Yes □ If YES, answer questions 6 and 7.

6. What grades are you teaching?.................................................................

7. For how many years have you been teaching in the present grade?
   Less than 3 years □ 3-6 □ 6-9 □ Over 10 years □

8. Do you have a mentee in your class at present? If YES, answer question 9 and 10)

9. What gender is your mentee? .................................................................

10. For how many years have you been in a mentoring role?..........................

B. MENTORING EXPERIENCE

11. How are mentors at your school identified and selected?
    ...........................................................................................................
    ...........................................................................................................
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    ...........................................................................................................
12. State the qualities your school looks for when selecting teachers to become mentors. Start with those you consider to be most important.

13. What criteria are used in pairing mentors and mentees?

14. a. Do mentors at your school have any training in mentoring? Yes □ No □

   b. If yes, how many of them received the required training? .........................

   c. Regarding the nature of the training:

      Did the course lead to a formal qualification? Yes □ No □

      Was the course a workshop □, seminar □ or other ?(state) ....................

      How long was the duration of the course? .........................

      What were the main aspects covered in the course?

..........................................................
15. List the mentor’s duties at your school in order of importance according to your view

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16. How are mentoring duties made known and at your school?
   - In a college-based document □
   - In a school-based document □
   - Each mentor works this out on his or her own □
   - In a national mentoring policy document □
   - In the Education department circulars □
   - Other □ (Specify ……………………………………………………………………………..)

17. a. How do you rate mentors’ awareness of their duties and obligations at your school?
   - Adequate □
   - Uncertain □
   - Poor □

   b. Please give reasons for your answer to question 17 a.

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18. Briefly describe the overall effectiveness of mentors at your school.
19. What recommendations can you offer regarding supporting mentors to perform their mentoring duties more effectively?

20. How do you consider your role as school principal in mentoring at your school?

21. Describe the measures, if any, you have taken to facilitate mentoring at your school.
22. a. How do you rate the availability of time for mentoring at your school?
   Adequate ☐  Uncertain ☐  Not Adequate ☐  Poor ☐
   b. Please justify your answer to question 22 a

23. List the resources you consider as needed for successful mentoring to take place.

23. a. Are there any incentives given to mentors at your school?  Yes ☐  No ☐
   (If yes, please answer question b).
   b. Describe the nature of these incentives.
24. Please tick in the appropriate box to indicate your **agreement or disagreement** with each statement about your school.

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