
THESIS / DISSERTATION SUBMISSION

**Title: Developing A Sustainable Framework For
Preservice Teachers Mentorship in the Foundation
Phase at a Higher Education Institution
in South Africa**

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Submission date (25 NOVEMBER 2024):

*Inspiring
excellence,
transforming
lives through
quality,
impact, and
care.*

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements regarding
the doctoral degree with specialization in
Childhood Development and Learning... in the
Department of **CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
in the faculty of **EDUCATION** at the
University of the Free State.

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DECLARATION

**I, JIYANE LINDIWE JUVINILE NOLUTSHA, declare that the thesis,
Developing a sustainable framework for preservice teachers' mentorship in the
foundation phase at a higher education institution in South Africa, submitted
for the qualification of Doctoral Degree at the University of the Free State is my
own independent work.**

**All the references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by
means of complete references.**

**I further declare that this work has not previously been submitted by me at
another university or faculty for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.**

SIGNED:



DATE: 17/09/2024

ABSTRACT

Title: “Developing a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase teaching practice students at a higher education institution in South Africa”

Author: Jiyane Lindiwe

This study aimed to design, implement, and evaluate a sustainable mentoring framework for pre-service teachers in the Foundation Phase within a South African higher education institution. Grounded in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, the study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative data from focus group interviews and observations with quantitative findings from questionnaires. The study explored the challenges and opportunities in mentoring Foundation Phase pre-service teachers, emphasizing the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Using purposive sampling, twenty pre-service teachers, five mentor teachers, and five mentor lecturers participated. Qualitative findings highlighted the essential role of mentoring in supporting pre-service teachers with classroom management, lesson planning, and adapting instructional strategies for young learners. Mentor teachers emphasized the need for clear communication, patience, and emotional support, while mentor lecturers underscored the importance of continuous professional development. Observations confirmed that effective scaffolding and modelling of interactive, child-centered pedagogies were key in developing pre-service teachers’ teaching competencies. Quantitative analysis revealed strong satisfaction among pre-service teachers regarding the support received, particularly in lesson planning and learner engagement strategies. Mentor teachers and lecturers expressed a high level of commitment and willingness to participate in mentor training programs. The mentoring framework, which focused on collaborative goal setting, ongoing feedback, and reflective practice, was well received. Its implementation improved mentor-mentee relationships, enhanced professional development, and increased pre-service teachers’ confidence in designing age-appropriate lessons. Overall, the framework contributed to improved mentoring relationships, professional growth, and the development of effective teaching practices, ensuring that pre-service teachers are well-equipped to support the learning needs of Foundation Phase students.

Keywords: Mentoring framework, Pre-service teachers, Higher education, Sustainable mentoring

DEDICATION

To Maphungane, Mbalo'muhle, and Dube, my dear husband Cypriel Sibusiso Mhlanga, whose unshakable belief, staunch support, and endless encouragement have been my constant source of strength. I am so grateful for your unwavering presence by my side.

To my beloved children, who are my greatest inspiration and joy. Your love, laughter, and boundless energy have been a constant reminder of why I strive for excellence. May this work serve as a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of lifelong learning.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	MEANING
B. Ed	Bachelor of Education
CPU	Continuous Professional Development
DET	Department of Education and Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications.
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education.
UFS	University of Free State
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to design, implement, and assess a mentoring program that is sustainable and may improve the teaching practices of preservice teachers in a South African higher education institution during the Foundation phase.

By concentrating on the topics to be discussed, this chapter serves as an introduction and background to the research. The study's goals and overall purpose are emphasized in this chapter. Additionally, the research questions emphasized.

The operational idea description and the preliminary literature review is emphasized as well. The study's research methods and ethical considerations are highlighted. Lastly, a synopsis of each chapter and the chapter's conclusion are given.

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, pre-service teacher education is a hot topic (Mentz et al., 2020). The following measures are taken in Finland to guarantee the production of well-prepared pre-service teachers into the teaching profession:

- Creating strict requirements for enrolment in programs that prepare teachers
- Make sure pre-service teachers have adequate subject-matter expertise before assigning them to the classroom.
- Make practice teaching programs explicitly address the instructional adjustments needed to meet university and career readiness standards.

Asserting responsibility for the caliber of mentors produced by the Faculty of Education (Mentz et al., 2020).

In South Africa, universities or teacher training institutions are responsible for preparing students for the Foundation phase of education. A four-year Bachelor of preparation (B.Ed.) degree is one of the foundation phase teacher preparation programs offered by institutions. Pre-service teachers visit schools as part of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) to watch and provide multiple lessons that have been agreed upon with mentor teachers, who also serve as mentors to the students. According to Ambrosetti, Knight, and Dekkers (2018), a pre-service teacher is a student pursuing an education degree but not yet certified to teach. Pre-service teachers are defined by the researcher as university students who are undergoing

training as part of this study. Since the early 1990s, South Africa's teacher training programs have experienced "frequent transformation and change" (Fraser, 2018). The prerequisites for teacher education qualifications were standardized by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Republic of South Africa (RSA), in 2015, following the merger of regional teacher training colleges and universities (Jansen, 2002).

The above is also supported by the study (Mentz et al., 2020) that looked at the expanded divergent possibilities due to information access and educational programs. Fraser, Wotring, Green, and Eady (2022) claim that the WIL period has an impact on pre-service teachers' readiness for the teaching profession. During the WIL period, university lecturers oversee mentoring and evaluating pre-service teachers in addition to the mentor teachers. Many students are forced to finish WIL in schools because of the present surge in the number of student teachers at universities (Fraser, 2018). According to Fraser (2018) and Fraser et al. (2022), the increased numbers of students requiring accommodations have an equal impact on mentor instructors at schools where pre-service teachers participate in teaching practice activities. WIL is described as "structured, supervised, integrated into the learning program, spread across the learning program, and it must be formally assessed" (DHET, RSA, 2015) in the Revised policy on the basic standards for teacher education credentials.

With very few possibilities for self-regulated learning or mentoring, pre-service teachers are now prepared for the workplace through the conventional benchmark of "monitoring and supervision" (Fraser, 2018).

The issue of teacher development has been identified as a significant barrier to the South African education system (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Most of this obstacle is related to the competences and abilities that teachers need to carry out their jobs. It has been established that the "most critical challenge for teacher education in South Africa" is the limited conceptual knowledge of many instructors (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Unbearably high learner dropout rates, persistent inequality, and poor teaching quality are the bane of the South African education system (SACE, 2018). A few of the issues surrounding the low caliber of teachers can be traced back to their pre-service education. It is clear from the above that there are issues with the competence and caliber of instructors generated by the South African educational

system. There is a claim that certain educators lack the ability to apply their academic knowledge to the demands of the modern classroom (Botha & Rens, 2018).

According to a South African study by Botha and Rens (2018), student mentors go through a reality check when they realize they are not prepared to deal with students in the classroom without losing their positive teaching attitude.

The study's findings indicate that teachers' ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships with their pupils is severely hampered by problems with classroom management, motivation, pedagogical application, and a lack of understanding of education (Botha & Rens, 2018).

According to Jita and Munje (2022), some student mentors are not prepared to teach because they do not possess the pedagogical subject knowledge that is required; this has a significant impact on the success of students. Similarly, Jiyane and Gravett (2019) discovered that student mentors had issues with classroom management and pedagogical expertise. These results suggest that student teachers are not prepared to face the realities of a classroom setting.

Pre-service teachers can be effectively groomed by in-service/mentor teachers in a real-world classroom setting when mentoring is an essential part of work-based placement. Mentz et al. (2020) contend that a crucial part of pre-service teacher education is teaching practice. There is a knowledge gap about pre-service teacher development through mentoring, as evidenced by the evaluated studies (Jita and Munje, 2022; Mentz et al., 2020; Jiyane and Gravett, 2019; Ndebele and Leff-Jack, 2022; Botha and Rens, 2018; Mphojane, 2019). The research under evaluation focused on final-year student teachers (Jiyane & Gravett, 2019), foundation phase teachers (Mafugu, 2022), and student teachers (Botha & Rens, 2018).

To increase the confidence of subject mentors and pre-service teachers alike, a doctoral study on the preparedness of pre-service teachers to teach third year level student teachers (Mkhasibe, 2018) found that the higher education institution must review the pre-service teachers' curriculum and include the partner schools in the redesign process. A PhD project led by Mphojane (2019) sought to create a structure for formal mentoring of new teachers that works well. The results indicated that a mandatory mentoring program outlining the protocols was required. The results additionally indicated that a mentorship program had to cater to the requirements of

mentees and incorporate details about laws, policies, and norms pertaining to teachers, along with recommendations for a teacher's clothes and appearance

In KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) carried out research on successful mentoring. The study's conclusions demonstrated that not all pre-service teachers received adequate mentoring throughout their teaching practice with the aim of preparing them for full professional development in the future. The research demonstrates that a lack of understanding of what mentoring involves leads to inadequate mentoring. Additionally emphasized is the value of mentorship in the development of preservice teachers. I have not come across any study that employs a mentoring framework, which offers a set of standards and principles to help with the learning process during the mentoring sessions between preservice teachers and mentor teachers during teaching practice.

In their study on effective mentoring, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) proposed that a mentoring framework or seminars be designed so that all mentor teachers know what is expected of them during teaching practice. The results of the previous study indicate that for mentoring to be successful, a mentoring framework is necessary. By designing, implementing, and putting into practice a mentoring framework targeted at the development of pre-service teachers at a South African university, this research seeks to close the gap regarding the needs of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in a rural context. Numerous studies have demonstrated that student teachers' teaching skills significantly improve because of their teaching experience (Mukeredzi, 2021 and Galamay-Cachola, 2018).

Internationally, an American study on English as a Foreign Language and pre-service teachers' pedagogical competency based on an instructional strategy was carried out by Sumani and Arifin (2018). The study's findings demonstrated the pre-service teachers' proficiency in group and individual instruction, classroom management, instructional flexibility, and assessment. But they were not questioned or given support. In a Kuwaiti study, Al-Hashem (2022) examined the effects of teacher preparation programs on aspiring educators. The outcome demonstrated that they were more self-aware and confident in their skills and knowledge because of the training. Regarding teacher practice programs, a Turkish study by Kacar and Baltaci

(2023) discovered that pre-service teacher programs significantly improved pre-service teachers' English proficiency.

The state oversees teacher education. Pre-service education loses its intended purpose if the state fails to fulfill this obligation (Adigun, 2021). For example, Nigerian institutions claim in Albakri et al. (2021) that their schools of education oversee their teacher education programs, which has led to the low caliber of graduate teachers being produced in the continent of Africa. According to the authors, there are controversial questions regarding the quality of training being offered by such faculties in light of the low number of teachers being produced (Albakri et al., 2021). The author (Albakri et al., 2021) is unsure if the lecturers, who carry out the program, are the problem or the curriculum itself. The authors also question if education faculties are appropriately in charge of teacher education programs to prepare and create highly qualified teachers (Albakri et al., 2021). The studies conducted in Malawi by Adigun (2021) and Nigeria by Albakri (2021) shed light on a few of the factors that contribute to the low caliber of instructors that are produced by certain universities. They draw attention to the fact that not all pre-service teachers choose to become teachers. Since the stringent standards for such jobs have prevented them from pursuing their ideal careers, they have chosen to become teachers.

1.2 Problem Statement

There appears to be an issue with the way mentor teachers conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice. When preservice teachers are mentored in their teaching practice, they are also faced with hurdles. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers demonstrate an inadequate understanding of the standards set for them during instructional practice. According to Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), mentoring is an excellent way to introduce preservice teachers to the teaching area, but only if a framework is devised and executed during mentoring sessions.

Teachers in the foundation phase are considered agents of social transformation since they are crucial to the process of constructing a nation (Menz & Associates, 2020). Finding qualified educators who have received the necessary training to address the changing demands and problems of the developing nation is a priority in South Africa (SACE, 2018). It follows that there is a need for pre-service teachers to be properly

mentored because there is a gap between theory and practice. Several studies have identified obstacles facing student teachers, including those pertaining to educational expertise, classroom and time management, as well as administrative chores (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) (2003) states that student teachers are tasked with a variety of novel responsibilities, such as mastering new curricula and managing classroom management, technology, customizing courses for students, organizing extracurricular activities, and maintaining accountability to the different education stakeholders. It is evident from the research mentioned above that mentorship is thus crucial.

The framework supported collaborative learning and was co-created by mentor teachers and preservice teachers. The framework is used to guide mentoring sessions. According to Mphojane (2019), mentoring sessions have the potential to improve preservice teachers holistically; however, this requires a mentoring program.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

The suggested study's original justification stemmed from the researcher's interaction and informal conversations with a few Foundation phase mentor teachers she met during teaching practice at partnering schools. During these conversations, foundation phase mentor teachers indicated that they were frustrated and faced uncertainty about how to conduct mentoring with foundation phase student teachers. In addition, the researcher encountered Foundation phase student teachers who attended teaching practice at the same partnering schools who voiced their frustrations about not knowing what to expect during teaching practice mentoring.

Based on these encounters the researcher started investigating the literature available in this regard but soon realized that although there was literature available on this topic, there was a lack of literature that was conducted with an aim of addressing gaps in practice, structure, support, mentee learning, and developing a context-specific mentoring framework that will provide guidance to the Foundation phase mentor teachers and student teachers.

According to the claims, there is a need and a chance for a mentorship structure to be created. This project intends to fill the gap by designing, implementing, and evaluating a mentorship framework that is sustainable for Foundation phase pre-

service teachers and improves their teaching practices in a South African higher education institution.

1.4 The Study's Objective

The proposed study aims to design, implement, and assess a mentorship framework that is sustainable for pre-service teachers in the Foundation phase.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

Following from the primary objective of the research study are the following research objectives:

- To explore the mentoring framework of Foundation phase preservice teachers that is used in the selected Higher Education Institution.
- To determine the issues with the current mentoring framework in developing Foundation phase preservice teachers.
- To explore the specific challenges of Foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers on teaching practice.
- To explore the specific needs of Foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers on teaching practice.
- To explore how a newly developed mentoring framework can be effectively implemented to determine the factors that enable the response to be effective and sustainable in a selected higher education institution.
- To determine the impact of the mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

1.5 Main Research Question

The study was led by the following primary research question, which considers the demands of mentor teachers and student teachers throughout the Foundation phase during teaching practice:

How is a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed?

Sub-Research Questions

- What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution?
- How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice?
- What are the challenges experienced by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?
- What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions?
- How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed?
- What is the impact of the mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aims to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework specifically for Foundation phase preservice teachers during their teaching practice. While mentoring is not a new concept, its role in supporting individuals at pivotal transitions in their academic and professional journeys has gained significant importance (Rusznyak, 2021). Mentoring plays a crucial role in preparing graduate students for the workforce by contributing to their academic, professional, and personal growth (Deacon, 2020; Krause & Moore, 2022). In the context of Foundation phase preservice teachers, mentoring can enhance their development and extend their professional networks through interactions with alumni and industry practitioners (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2020). Engaging in such mentoring relationships is frequently cited as a key factor in preparing individuals for their careers and facilitating their early career success (Sellers et al., 2021).

This study will focus on mentor teachers and preservice teachers within the B. Ed Foundation phase program, emphasizing the expectations and roles of each during teaching practice. Effective mentoring in the Foundation phase requires mentor teachers to embody critical qualities, as identified by Gonser (2022), including the

ability to communicate hope and enthusiasm, provide instructional support, model continuous learning, and demonstrate commitment to the mentoring role.

Despite the established importance of mentoring, research has shown that both preservice and mentor teachers often struggle to understand the necessary mentoring structures and subject expertise for effective mentoring (Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022; Mphojane, 2019; Mkhasimbe, 2018). These challenges underscore the need for this study, which will investigate and identify the key mentoring techniques essential for the development of a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers.

1.7 Significance (Value) of the Study

The aim of the project is to further national and international discussions on mentoring strategies for preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the Foundation phase during their teaching practice. Numerous research studies (Mukeredzi, 2022; Ambrosetti, 2019) have been carried out to investigate why mentorship programs fail to adequately prepare preservice teachers for the workforce. According to Ambrosetti (2019), the key to productive mentoring sessions is having the right mentor. Nonetheless, the education system faces difficulties in locating the right mentor teacher who can close the knowledge gap between theory and practice.

This study contributes to:

- the improvement of the quality of mentoring sessions, and practices of the teaching practice program at HEIs.
- Ensuring that mentoring sessions are delivered through a sustainable mentoring framework.

By offering an evidence-based and context-specific mentorship paradigm that directly addresses the difficulties faced by Foundation Phase preservice teachers at South African higher education institutions, this study adds to the body of knowledge. This study will provide useful suggestions for enhancing mentorship programs at teacher training institutions by filling the knowledge gap on the sustainability of mentorship frameworks. This will guarantee that aspiring educators are prepared to successfully negotiate the realities of the classroom.

1.8 Definition of Operational Concepts

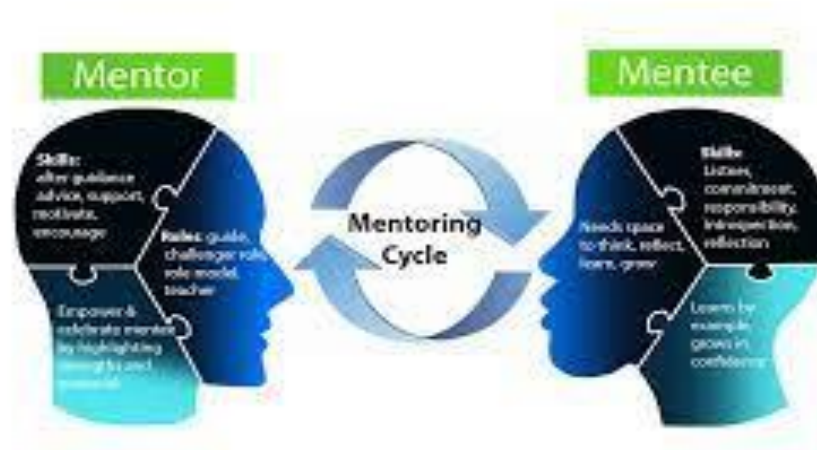


Figure 1.1: Illustration by Ronel Jordaan, Lorrie Maffey (2018)

This section explains the main ideas that were employed in the research. Given that a given term may mean different things to different individuals in different settings, the goal of doing this is to provide the reader with precise meanings as well as a clear understanding of the concepts. Because a clearer and deeper knowledge of concepts is provided before diving into the next chapters, misconceptions and misinterpretations of concepts have been explained in this way. The order in which the topics are explained emphasize the significance of correlation, connectivity, and interlinking. Mentor teachers, pre-service teachers, mentoring, mentoring program/framework, teaching practice, and Foundation phase are among the topics that have been clarified.

For clarity, understanding, and alignment with the study, the following topics are discussed.

1.8.1 Mentoring

The process of mentoring involves the mentor outlining for the mentee the professional values, abilities, and information that the mentee must possess to display competence in their work (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Thus, mentoring occurs when a more seasoned colleague takes on the task of molding and enhancing a less seasoned colleague's disposition and skill set regarding the tasks they are given. A mentor is an

in-service teacher who takes on the role of guiding and supporting a student teacher to help them achieve both professional and personal growth. Mentoring is a popular and extensively used professional development strategy, according to Pennanen et al. (2020). Liaqat et al. (2020), who claim that mentoring has recently been accepted in several organizations as an authorized procedure and an essential component of professionalization in a variety of academic fields, including the social sciences, education, law, and architecture, among others, support this point of view. Indigenous knowledge, as it pertains to this study, defines mentoring as an essential component of teaching practice that makes space for student teachers to receive successful mentorship from in-service teachers in a real classroom or school setting.

1.8.2 Mentor Teacher

Mentor teachers are educators with significant experience in the field who can motivate students to perform well, conduct lessons in an excellent manner without interfering, and alter their plans mid-lesson to capitalize on unanticipated opportunities to improve students' learning (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Mentor teachers can take on the role of team leader when creating lesson plans, selecting instructional materials, maintaining control, and providing planning guidance (Wexler, 2019). According to Mafugu's (2022) conceptualization, experienced teachers in this study are those who have been in the system for a long time and therefore know the ins and outs of teaching; they are skilled at upholding appropriate learner discipline, lesson planning, content knowledge, and its application. Indigenous knowledge defines mentor teachers as individuals who have been teaching for more than three years and have substantial and relevant job experience, based on the descriptions provided and for the objectives of this study. Because they are subject matter experts and possess a thorough understanding of the material, they also assist in the creation and revision of curriculum programs. Mentor instructors maintain order and serve as supervisors, motivators, leaders, and space keepers. The average school performance and the professional well-being of student teachers are mostly dependent on the professional and personal assistance provided by mentor teachers.

1.8.3 Mentees as Pre-Service Teachers

A college or university student pursuing a degree in education who works as a pre-service teacher is one who teaches under the direction of a certified teacher. Additionally, pre-service teachers and this word are used interchangeably. A student who completes coursework and training offered by higher education institutions before to beginning any kind of teaching is known as a pre-service teacher (Png, 2020). According to Hudson and Hudson (2021) and Mukeredzi and Manwa (2019), a pre-service teacher is a student who is enrolled in a school to build pedagogical knowledge and other traits and practices. Indigenous knowledge, as it pertains to this study, defines a student teacher as an individual who is not yet certified to teach but is still undergoing training. They are placed in a school and paired with a mentor teacher who will help them develop their pedagogical knowledge, classroom management skills, and teaching practices.

1.8.4 Mentoring Program/Framework

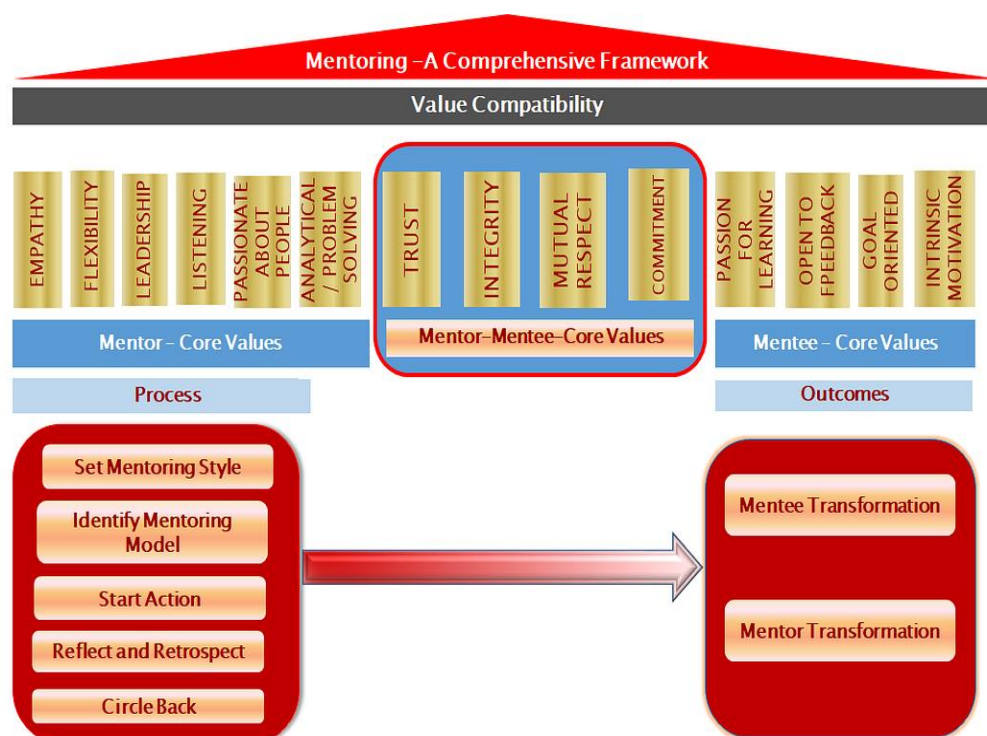


Figure 1.2: Illustration by Jim Rohn (2020)

A well-thought-out plan outlining the execution of mentoring in accordance with the established professional objectives is called a mentoring program. The program has the full backing of the entire institution and is an official professional activity. The organization establishes a framework and sets rules that specify how mentoring relationships should develop from start to finish as well as how they should be preserved and enhanced (Allen and Eby, 2021). The official organizational mentoring program frequently aims to solve certain organizational problems or needs, including student teacher development. A formal program often has defined short- and long-term goals, together with the necessary capital and human resources to help achieve the goals (Rodrigues, Matos, de Carvalho, Barbosa, Assaf, Nóbrega, and de Sousa, 2021). In addition to providing participants with support, an official mentorship program is monitored continuously to guarantee that the desired results are attained. The purpose of mentoring programs is to give employees more direction and advice than what their management chain can supply (Cardoso, 2021). Indigenous knowledge, as used in this study, refers to a mentoring program as a framework that schools utilize to determine how best to support student teachers so they can perform at their best.

1.8.5 Teaching Practice

According to Rusznyak (2020) Work Integrated Learning, teaching practice is a practical technique in which pre-service teachers work in the field to demonstrate the application of the theoretical knowledge they have learned in the classroom. A vital component of teacher preparation programs, according to Harrison, Meyer, Rawstorne, Razee, Chitkara, Mears, and Balasooriya (2022), is this activity. According to Deacon (2020), teaching practice is an opportunity for pre-service teachers to participate in a process of learning about the philosophies, techniques, abilities, and attitudes of professional instructors through observation and experimentation. Pre-service teacher education must include teaching experience, claim Lederman and Lederman (2019). In support of this, Baartman (2020) contended that this strategy gives pre-service teachers the chance to apply theory to practice acquiring the abilities and proficiencies needed to work as instructors. Indigenous knowledge, as used in this study, defines teaching practice as an experience that student instructors have with actual classroom and school procedures. It is the setting in which students are

given the chance to put pedagogy into practice, honing both their content knowledge and teaching abilities.

1.8.6 Foundation Phase

Early Childhood Development (ECD) or the Foundation Phase (FP) is the period of a child's learning and development from birth to approximately nine years of age. During this time, the child develops and flourishes on a variety of levels, including social, moral, emotional, mental, and spiritual (South Africa, Department of Education [DoE] 2001b). For teachers working with students in this age range, continuing professional development is essential to making the most of this crucial period in a child's development.

A child's brain grows to 90% of its adult weight by the age of five, according to the ECD South African White Paper 5 (DoE 2001b: 8), and it has reached 50% of its adult weight by the time the child is two years old. It is reasonable to speculate that a child's growing brain mass has a direct bearing on how well it functions. Because of this, Kunniyah-Ruttu (2020) asserts that the FP is essential for building a solid foundation for kids' future growth and education. Children are especially prepared to learn during this time (Govender and Hugo, 2018). Such opportunities for learning readiness must not be wasted, as one of the goals of education is not to impart knowledge from pre-selected course studies, but rather to foster a child's innate desire to learn through the application of diverse approaches, activities, content, and resources (Montessori 1966). Teachers' professional development often results in these qualities to deeply engage children, support the development of their creativity, and aid in understanding.

The mentor teachers investigated in this inquiry are qualified FP teachers employed in specific schools in the Mpumalanga (MP) Province of South Africa. The sample of preservice teachers investigated consists of students pursuing their Bachelor of Education in the Foundation phase. Early Childhood Education specialists in the Education faculty make up the sample mentor lecturers under investigation. By looking into them, it is possible to examine topics that are related to the larger discussions about mentoring of preservice teachers in the Foundation phase. It became necessary to concentrate local efforts in this regard since the phenomena of preservice teachers mentoring has gained international attention. Due to philosophical orientations,

presumptions, and sample size limitations, these samples do not fully represent all FP mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and mentor lecturers; however, they do represent mentor teachers, preservice teachers, and mentor lecturers who engage in mentoring in FP contexts.

By concentrating on the Foundation Phase environment, this study aims to highlight the potential and challenges in this field and emphasizes the need for specialized mentorship framework to assist future educators in their development throughout this crucial educational period.

1.9 Preliminary literature review

1.9.1 Introduction

A literature review can help determine whether a subject or problem is worthwhile to investigate further and can offer guidance on how to focus the researcher's efforts on a particular area of study (Creswell, 2017). A literature review, according to Creswell (2017), offers a framework for judging a study's relevance and serves as a benchmark for comparing study findings. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from the literature sources examined for this study will serve as a basis for the discussions that follow, with certain situations involving comparisons.

To make an informed decision about policy, practice, research direction, and resource allocation, a literature review is a process of obtaining up-to-date information (Wong, 2021). It comprises conducting a critical analysis and synthesis of earlier research to find out what has been written about a certain topic (Wong, 2021). The reader will understand from the review process's output the present level of knowledge regarding a particular topic as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the underlying research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, it offers a framework for judging the study's importance and a benchmark for contrasting the results with those of other studies (Creswell, 2017). To obtain a thorough understanding, an examination of recent texts, articles, and other sources was conducted.

Conceptualization

Greek mythology is where the term "mentoring" first appeared (Bynum, 2015). In the 3000-year-old Homer's *Odyssey*, a mentor is a figure who is portrayed as a wise and

devoted advisor tasked with caring for Odysseus's son Telemachus during the Trojan War. This mentorship archetype highlights the significance of positive relationships. Nonetheless, the mentoring process has evolved over time (Nju, 2023) from enlisting the help of an experienced individual to guide a younger person through their path to a more mutually beneficial connection between the mentor and the mentee.

The term "mentoring" describes difficult interactions between two persons when the novice party's development is the primary goal (Carrera, 2022). It entails sharing information, best practices, skills, and methods for obtaining data. A mentor is a person who supervises another person's education and upbringing and is currently thought to be able to help the mentee advance their career (Mafugu, 2022). Mentoring is defined as a form of assistance provided by one individual to another to accomplish a specific goal throughout time (Jita and Munje, 2022). Additionally, it is recognized as a method by which leaders establish fruitful connections to empower others via cooperative learning (Venktaramana et al., 2023). According to the definitions provided, mentorship is a relationship between two individuals in which the more experienced party is committed to assisting the less experienced party in developing their career. Mentoring is defined as a reciprocal interaction between mentor instructors and pre-service student teachers during teaching practice for the purposes of this study.

1.9.2 Mentoring and Its Purpose

This study contextualizes mentoring specifically for pre-service student teachers and mentor teachers, focusing on how mentoring affects their growth while they work as teachers. By offering personal and professional support, development, and well-being to a less experienced pre-service student teacher in preparation for the teaching profession in a school setting, mentoring is defined as a process or activity that fosters an ongoing interdependent relationship between the two parties (Voskamp et al., 2020). Without a collaborative inquiry between more seasoned in-service teachers and less seasoned pre-service teachers to explore cutting edge ideas for teaching practice, mentoring cannot occur (Walter & Verner, 2019).

Pre-service teachers' lived experiences are frequently influenced by their sense of self and the professional goals of in-service educators, who can share their insights with

less experienced future educators regarding the dynamic nature of education (Ekiz-Kiran et al., 2021). Pre-service student teachers' sense of self and their professional growth are not limited to their interactions with mentors and other staff members; rather, they are intricately linked to the school's educational ethos and the federal education mandate (Walter and Verner, 2019). Therefore, during their teaching practice, pre-service teachers should be able to go from self-identity to development within the framework of the larger environment. Without appropriate mentorship from seasoned in-service educators who have encountered every scenario encountered in the teaching profession, both inside and outside of the classroom, they will not be able to accomplish this.

1.9.3 Advantages of Mentoring

Formal mentoring programs are widely regarded as a viable strategy for pre-service student teachers as well as mentor teachers, based on the literature in South Africa (Hinojosa, 2022). The management of educational institutions, departments, and schools will benefit greatly from this discovery. Role participants should be aware that the system that enables pre-service student teachers to collaborate with seasoned mentor teachers will benefit not only the mentee but also the education department and the entire school community (Nel and Ramsaroop, 2020). When pre-service teachers are paired with more experienced mentor instructors, their confidence levels rise. According to (Gudyanga and Jita, 2019), mentors may experience personal fulfillment, companionship, professional stimulation, collaboration, drive to stay current in their industry, and networking opportunities. Hinojosa (2022) adds that mentors can learn from the novices' use of other technical tools they bring with them. They learn about modern instructional practices and acquire fresh perspectives. Mentoring programs are also advantageous to seasoned professors who advance their careers through the position. It nudges individuals to reevaluate their habits and convictions.

1.9.4 The Mentees and Mentor-Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities

In teacher education, mentoring is defined by Moosa and Rembach (2020) as complex social connections that mentor teachers and student teachers develop and negotiate

for a range of professional reasons and in reaction to the contextual factors they experience. Mentoring is also referred to as both a relationship and a process (Kaur, Singh and Omar, 2018) and as "an intense interpersonal relationship" (Prasangani, 2019). However, Hudson and Hudson (2018) provide a summary of mentoring by highlighting three components: relational, developmental, and contextual characteristics that when combined form a holistic mentoring relationship. The relational component focuses on the interactions between mentors and mentees. The developmental component is the personal and professional development of mentors and mentees as they work toward set goals. The contextual component's emphasis is on the cultural and situational aspects of the placement environment. These three elements influence a mentoring relationship's success, according to Venktaramana et al. (2023). She continues, saying that each of the three components has equal importance.

According to the literature, mentoring is helpful to both mentors and mentees, despite its complexity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Saidi, 2020). Increased practice reflection, professional development, contribution to the profession, and sharing the craft with future teachers are all advantages of mentoring pre-service teachers (Hudson and Hudson, 2018; Prasangani, 2019). The advantages for mentees include learning about specific professional abilities, exchanging professional experiences, receiving helpful criticism on their professional development, and establishing reflective habits (Kaur, Singh, and Omar, 2018).

Mentoring has historically been seen as a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor has more experience than the mentee, according to (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020; Navidinia et al., 2020; Omar and Kussin, 2017; WagiAlla, 2020; Yamirudeng and Osman, 2019). Nonetheless, current research indicates that mentoring is a relationship in which the mentee and the mentor both have something to learn and contribute (Albakri, Ismail, Hartono, and Tahir, 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). It is common to describe the roles of mentors and mentees in general terms. According to Sathappan and Gurusamy (2019), terms like guide, advisor, counsellor, teacher, sharer, supporter, and encouraging are often used to describe the role of a mentor. However, mentoring entails more responsibility. As to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), a mentor's role is to facilitate the mentee's growth by building a rapport. In addition,

mentors use their interpersonal skills to model conduct and pedagogy for teachers and to demonstrate empathy for the mentee (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

1.9.5 The Mentor Teacher's Role in the Pre-Service Teacher's Overall Development

The failure of in-service teachers to mentor pre-service teachers in a way that fosters their mentees' holistic development impedes their achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In this article, "holistic development" refers to mentoring that fosters mastery of the subject matter as well as the development of personal adaptability skills in a variety of contexts. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), the majority of in-service instructors lack the pedagogical topic understanding and interpersonal skills necessary to help their mentees endure the challenging situational setting. Some mentors do not develop into the pillars of strength that are constantly present to impart hope, optimism, and lessons for life when pre-service teachers are depressed, perplexed, and doubting themselves (Comparcini et al., 2020). According to Walter & Verner (2019), mentor teachers play a crucial role in mentees' personal and professional development, which extends beyond pedagogical and subject-matter expertise to encompass emotional and psychological benefits.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), mentor instructors who provide guidance and advice on pedagogic topics, such as planning, teaching skills, knowledge and organization of content and resources, and classroom management, will ensure that pre-service teachers have guaranteed emotional and psychological gains. According to Ekiz-Kiran et al. (2021), mentorship becomes unsatisfactory if the mentors do not model behaviour for their mentees and if there is a lack of empathy in the relationship. Mentors need to be aware of the impact they have on mentees. Three aspects of mentoring person-oriented, practice-oriented, and technique-oriented skills are shown by research by Liu, Chan, Hamilton, and Harris (2022). Mentor teachers typically overlook the personal aspect and prioritize practice- and technology-oriented methods that develop teaching abilities, interpersonal relationships, and job competitiveness (Liu, Chan, Hamilton, and Harris, 2022). The pre-service teachers are thereby left emotionally and psychologically exposed. As a result, mentors ought to think about employing mentoring strategies that emphasize their mentees' overall growth.

1.9.6 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: South African Studies

Despite the lack of institutional mentorship for pre-service teachers in South Africa, the significance of this practice has been brought to light by several recent research studies (Deacon, 2020). Schools currently rely on IQMS for the professional development of both novice and seasoned instructors. Support for inexperienced teachers is typically started by the district or the school governing body (SGB), according to Deacon (2020). Hinojosa (2022) highlights that in situations where schools use SGBs to give mentoring and induction, the SGBs raise money for these kinds of programs. Because they are still unable to get the necessities, other schools especially those in impoverished areas are unable to support their new instructors. In both African and foreign nations, pre-service teachers must receive formal mentoring; this will improve the quality of education in schools. Different countries employ different levels and techniques of mentoring. It is evident from this contrast of African and international nations that few have started formally offering mentorship. In most of the mentioned nations, formal mentorship is organized and managed at the district level. Based on the needs of the school and the areas in which the teachers need to grow, the SMTs and SGBs implement it at the school level at their discretion. It is evident from examining the mentoring practices of the nations that are emphasized that pre-service teacher mentorship takes many different forms and happens at different speeds. Additionally, there is a disparity amongst schools in the same regions of the nation. Most mentoring initiatives are unfunded and unplanned. Since there are no clear guidelines on how to go about it, mentors act on impulse, which means that pre-service teachers' particular needs are rarely met.

1.9.7 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: African Studies

Very few nations in Africa have started offering official mentorship (Mukeredzi, 2021). Some pre-service teachers are allocated to in-service training to advance professionally. Carvalho and Santos (2021) state that in nations like Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, and Namibia, pre-service teachers receive some kind of orientation and induction to the field. For instance, staff members from teacher training institutions monitor pre-service teachers' progress in their schools, or pre-service teachers are

expected to visit schools and receive assistance from inspectors and supervisors. Moreover, business experts support aspiring educators by planning and providing in-service education (Shanyengana, 2023).

As per Maundeni and Kahaka (2022), Botswana is devoid of a formal mentorship program to assist newly hired educators. Most of the classroom experience is spent in TP, and although mentoring is important to preservice teachers, there is no document that explains to class teachers what their expected obligations as mentor teachers are. However, the mentor's experiences with the preservice teachers have a long-lasting effect on their attitudes and views on the teaching profession (Ndhlovu, Nkhata, Chipindi, Kalinde, Kaluba, Malama, Mambwe, 2021). In Botswana, teachers serve a two-year probationary period. Rebecca and Musisi (2022) contend that this is a disorganized process since there is no oversight and decisions are made based on the needs of the school and the School Management Team's discretion.

Ghana has not implemented a clear mentoring program for pre-service teachers, as have most developing nations (Buckler, 2020). Stutchbury, Buckler, Kasule, Cullen, and Kaije (2021); Matiba (2023). in agreement that Ghana does not have a formalized or structured mentorship program for novice or inexperienced teachers. They continue by stating that in certain other developing nations, like Ghana, the process of introducing pre-service teachers consists mostly of trying out various approaches and picking up lessons from failures until an answer is found. Effective mentorship programs are therefore necessary to support pre-service teachers and raise teacher retention rates in the field.

1.9.8 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: International Studies

Formal mentoring programs have not been widely implemented, especially in developing nations, even though mentoring is crucial for helping pre-service teachers make it through their first year of teaching (Bjorklund et al., 2020). This also includes South Africa. However, in industrialized nations, other than the US. Recognizing the value of formal mentoring of pre-service teachers, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom, Australia, and other nations like Switzerland, France, New Zealand, Japan, and China have established well-funded, well-supervised mentorship programs that support all pre-service teachers for a minimum of three years.

Pre-service teachers in New Zealand receive their first year of instruction as an extension of their first training. This is what Kenrick (2019) refers to as the collegiate education. The New Zealand Teachers Council (2020) states that at least two years of classroom experience are required before a teacher can be eligible to be registered. Pre-service teachers receive instructional resources and guidance during their first two years of teaching, and are also observed by academics with expertise.

In Australia, most schools volunteer to mentor newly hired teachers. Education authorities have their own set of guidelines and protocols for acclimating recently qualified educators to the field. Unfortunately, due to major differences in the goals of application and new teacher support, these policies are not being appropriately implemented across Australia (Kurti, 2023). In Australia, especially in rural and isolated locations, school principals have the authority to design and operate institution-based mentorship programs, and websites related to these programs are the primary source of support for aspiring teachers (James, Hudson, and Lascik, 2022). There is a clear need for recently qualified teachers to be placed in remote and metropolitan regions.

Research carried out in Kosovo by Nopriyeni et al. (2019) showed the need of providing a mentorship strategy, especially to help prospective teachers improve their pedagogical skills. The least common mentoring element utilized by mentors was system requirements mentoring, per (Albakri et al., 2021; Munijita, 2021; Vrtič et al., 2021). This implies that many final-year pre-service teachers may not have been aware of the objectives, curricula, or policies related to elementary education before beginning their careers. Studies highlight the issues and challenges surrounding mentor feedback in the teaching practicum now. (Beck & Butz, 2021; Byars-Winston et al., 2019)

1.9.9 Theoretical Framework

Social learning theories of Vygotsky serve as the foundation for this study. The expert other must eventually accompany the novice on the journey until assistance is no longer needed and the novice can complete tasks as best they can on their own, according to Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory. Collaborative learning, or social learning, refers to methods applied by individuals who want to solve a shared issue. It emphasizes social learning, or learning from one another, which takes place

in a group environment (Geddes, 2016). Theories of social learning explain how people learn, including novice teachers.

1.9.10 Vygotsky Social Learning Theory

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) developed the Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which defined learning as a social process that is essential to the growth of cognition. According to Vygotsky, everything is decided upon twice: first, through social contact, and secondly, it is assimilated into the mental structure of the individual. SCT (Vygotsky, 1986) holds that people acquire increasingly complex cognitive capacities through language and communication. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that education is a social program supported by some people who possess greater knowledge and expertise. Mafugu (2022) claims that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept and Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist viewpoint may both be used to explain the relationship between mentors and their mentees.

Zone of Proximal Development

According to Gudyanga (2020), mentoring is based on Vygotsky's (1978) idea of learning by construction, wherein a highly qualified instructor (mentor) supports the expert-level learning of a mentee (mentee) through scaffolding. According to Mafugu (2022), Vygotsky's social interactions change the way that learning occurs because of the way that experiences from day-to-day life influence the knowledge that is gradually acquired through interactions with mentors. Mentors and mentees should collaborate to help the mentees with planning, teaching, and observing. According to Vygotskian theory, knowledge production originates from social interaction between experienced and beginner individuals rather than solely from the mind (Gudyanga, 2020). The mentor teachers at the participating schools are seen in this study as the more experienced individuals who teach preservice teachers.

Scaffolding

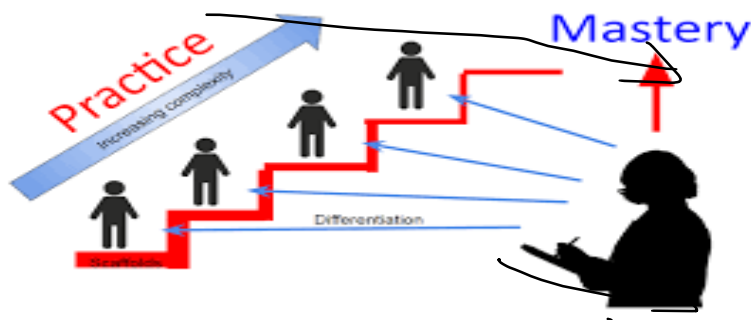


Figure 1.3: Illustration of mentees in practice and mentor breaking down skills (Manderson, 2018)

Preservice student instructors face a challenging task in connecting pre-service education theory to real-world classroom activities. Scaffolding is necessary because this is an upsetting and complicated process. Sharma (2020) defines scaffolding as the process by which educators go above and beyond to ensure that students' progress academically because of the subjects they are taught and the resources they are provided to learn them. Preservice student teachers need to be guided in crossing the line by someone with more experience and the ability to socialize them into the work environment because they are inexperienced and need help adjusting to a new environment. This is especially true when they don't fully understand the rules or the new situation. According to Pattisson (2020), scaffolding is a makeshift framework used figuratively during building projects since it offers temporary assistance for students' educational needs.

In the context of education, scaffolding is assistance that is customized to the needs of the students (Sharma, 2020). Accordingly, scaffolding is a method where students obtain assistance from a qualified teacher who then progressively removes that assistance, just as scaffolding is removed after the project is finished. In this study, the preservice student teacher is anticipated to be mentored by a more experienced and skilled teacher until the mentee can manage independently without the mentor teacher's help.

The social constructivism theory of Vygotsky is used to analyze data, especially regarding socially created knowledge. The zone of proximal development offers the

researcher a chance to assess the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' degree of mentoring proficiency. The goal of the project is to create a sustainable mentoring framework using the knowledge of mentor teachers and preservice teachers' mentoring skills level. The primary research question, "What are the key components and strategies needed to develop a sustainable mentoring framework that effectively supports teaching practice of preservice teachers in a higher education institution?" is addressed by the mentor teachers and the preservice teachers' level of mentoring skills. The researcher can identify the elements and tactics required for creating a mentoring framework once they are aware of the mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' level of mentoring proficiency.

Preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers can push their mentoring abilities to the limit and learn from the researcher's advice and assistance. Throughout the research process, feedback and reflection are made possible by the zone of proximal development. This makes it easier for the researcher to comprehend the advancements made by preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers and point out areas that still want assistance. The instrument utilized to support the learning process and scaffold their learning within the zone of proximal development is the mentoring framework that has been designed.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Introduction

This section offers a comprehensive summary of the research methodology employed in this investigation. The constructivist paradigm, which contends that knowledge is socially created, is used in this study. The researcher used the mixed method approach. Given that the goal of the study is to create and execute a mentorship framework, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data offers the greatest chance to address research issues by integrating two sets of advantages and correcting for the shortcomings of each approach (Creswell and Clarke, 2018). We'll use the explanatory sequential design. The intervention was selected as the research type because it allowed for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform.

Numerical statistics yielded quantifiable and comprehensible facts through the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; and Creswell & Clarke, 2018)

The intended research methods for this study are introduced in this part. These methods include sample strategies, data collection, data processing, and data verification techniques.

1.10.2 Research Paradigm

Assumptions made at the outset of the study must align with the approach, techniques for collecting data, and analysis used (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). According to Coates (2021), a paradigm is a worldview, or a framework for understanding and interpreting the complexity of the outside world. Guba (2018) and Lincoln (2018) define a paradigm as a set of attitudes and convictions about the world and how it ought to be comprehended and investigated. Philosophical presumptions concerning the nature of truth or reality regarding a phenomenon (ontology), the attitude or stance of the researchers in comprehending that truth or reality (epistemology), and the values that the researchers may attach to the entire study process (axiology) all inform a paradigm. These include positivism, pragmatism, critical realism, participative, and post-positivism (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I have opted to use the pragmatic paradigm for this study. This sociological study easily fits into the pragmatism paradigm because its goal is to create a mentoring framework for pre-service teachers while they are in the classroom.

The paradigm of pragmatism encourages researchers to gather data that supports the rational creation of the reality in which study participants are situated (Wilkinson & Staley, 2019). The pragmatic paradigm, according to Dawadi (2020), is based on the notion that reality is the outcome of interactions between people and the outside world. It is based on the idea that as people interact with their natural surroundings, they are actively creating new information. To attain effective outcomes, this paradigm promotes experimentation, flexibility, and change based on the observed results. It disproves the idea that knowledge can only be produced through a single process and that several approaches must be taken to it.

I chose this study paradigm because it allows me to collect detailed data on the day-to-day interactions that preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers

have when they utilized mentoring as a teaching approach in the classroom. I gave practical effectiveness priority while creating a mentoring framework based on the pragmatic paradigm, considering the following pragmatist principles as stated by Sharma, Devi, and Kumari (2018):

Flexibility and adaptation: as the researcher I allowed flexibility when designing the mentoring framework by recognizing that mentees, mentor teacher and mentor lecturers have unique needs and learning styles. This allowed adaptation of the mentorship framework as the mentees, mentor teachers as well as mentor lecturers' progress.

Action-orientation approach: The researcher encourages tangible actions and application of knowledge. Mentees, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers emphasize practical application of skills in their daily encounters to ensure that mentorship has a tangible impact.

Learn from experience: The researcher can leverage past experiences within the mentorship by allowing the mentor teachers and mentor lecturers to share practical insights and lessons learned.

Iterative development: The mentorship is viewed as an iterative process. The framework may be improved and modified by the researcher in response to the changing requirements of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and mentees.

By incorporating these principles, the researcher has the opportunity of creating a mentoring framework that aligns with the pragmatist paradigm, emphasizing practicality, adaptability and a focus on achieving tangible outcomes in real world.

1.10.3 Research Approach

According to Tashakori, Johnson, and Teddlie (2021), the study's mixed methodology suggests that it enables the researcher to expand their investigation to a suitable depth and scope. For this reason, a mixed-methods strategy, which balances the shortcomings of each method, has the best chance of addressing research issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are integrated and combined into a single study using mixed methods research. To learn more about a phenomenon and find answers to research questions, it comprises obtaining and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Maree, 2020).

Combining the two approaches yields a more comprehensive picture and permits a wider range of opposing or complementary points of view. These are valuable perspectives because they not only encourage further thought and deepen our comprehension of a phenomenon, but they also pave the way for more research in the future (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Additionally, the results of mixed-methods research offer a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as well as additional insights into its various components, which can help create meaningful theories (Creswell & Clarke, 2018).

Stated differently, the goal of qualitative research is to understand, analyze, and provide an explanation for specific phenomena by means of the experiences and/or perspectives of the participants, especially in relation to areas of educational theory and practice. As stated by Creswell & Clarke (2018) and Maree (2020), mixed method research aims to compare the outcomes of one methodology with the other, increase the breadth of the information acquired, and boost the validity of the study findings.

The development of a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers throughout their teaching practice was the focus of this study's research. The study explained the events that occurred inside the participants' native context—a rural higher education institution—using the qualitative approach. To better comprehend and capture the significance that participants attach to the phenomenon under research, the behaviour and experiences of the participants were recorded as the occurrences took place. The utilization of quantitative technique expanded the scope of the investigation by helping the researcher collect data from several sources regarding different aspects of a phenomena.

1.10.4 Design of the Study

According to Van Wyk & Taole (2021), the research design is the road map that directs a researcher in choosing how to conduct their study strategy. As such, it was an exact description of how a researcher did their work. To make sure that the study's conclusions adequately answer the research questions, research designs are plans for connecting the data to be gathered, the data to be analysed, and the research questions. (2020, Babbie). The type of research topic under investigation, the target

audience for the study, and the specific objectives of the research project all influence the research design, in my opinion.

Sequential design with exploration is the design used. A constructivist technique is used in a three-phase study known as an exploratory sequential design. In the first step, a researcher conducted a thorough investigation of the issue; in the second part, the variable and statistical trend are identified and measured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to this design, testing and collection of quantitative data come after the analysis and gathering of qualitative data (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Dawadi, 2020). The first step in this strategy is the gathering and examination of qualitative data. Finally, a researcher quantitatively evaluates the variable they have identified and interprets the quantitative data in terms of how it generalizes and extends the qualitative findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). These steps build on the qualitative findings and lead to the development of quantitative measures or instruments (Maree, 2020).

The exploratory sequential design is helpful when the researcher and the research topic are more qualitatively oriented and when the researcher is interested in the transferability or generalizability of the phenomena (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Researchers claim that this architecture enables the construction of a new instrument at any point during the study process (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The proposed study's objective is to create, put into practice, and evaluate a mentoring program for pre-service teachers that will improve their teaching practices in a South African higher education institution. Using a staged strategy, the study will utilize the exploratory sequential design. The gathering and analysis of qualitative data comes first in this design, followed by that of quantitative data.

This is how the study was carried out:

Phase of Qualitative Analysis: Structured interviews with purposively selected participants would be used to gather data. The analysis of qualitative data was done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis.

Phase of Quantitative Analysis: Using the prepared questionnaire, the variable found in the phase of qualitative analysis was assessed quantitatively. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends and

linkages. The mentorship framework in this study is developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it is objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings.

Research Type

An intervention study is used in this investigation. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are being used to gather data on the HEI's mentorship program. Interventions can be investigated using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). This study, which is an instrumental intervention study, use triangulated mixed methods to concentrate on gaining a comprehensive picture of how much mentoring is done during teaching practice by preservice teachers and mentor teachers. The intervention type was selected because it allows for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform. To investigate the causal relationship between mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers, a questionnaire derived from the qualitative findings is created by the researcher. Additionally, it offers a chance to comprehend how the mentoring framework affects the participants.

In this study the intervention is employed by introducing the newly developed mentoring framework which is developed through the participants needs which is identified through the interviews. The mentoring framework is implemented during mentoring sessions that take place between mentees and mentor teachers and between mentor lecturers and mentees. A questionnaire is developed and given to the participants, so that the researcher can gauge the impact of the mentoring framework. Numerical statistics yield measurable and comprehensible data using quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

1.10.5 Study Site

The environmental context in which the study is conducted, and the data is gathered is known as the research setting (Yin, 2018; Maree, 2020). The research environment

was chosen to be HEI in South Africa and a few public schools that collaborated with HEI on instructional initiatives.

1.10.6 Participant Selection

The process of choosing participants from a whole population is known as a sampling technique, which is what this study aims to investigate (Maree, 2020). Purposive sampling must be used to pick the participants for the teaching practice program due to the nature of the research project. Purposive sampling is a suitable technique for qualitative research because it enables the researcher to select individuals who are both easily accessible and possess pertinent data. Lewin (2019) states that purposeful sampling comprises selecting people, groups, or institutions (like schools) who possess a wealth of knowledge that may be utilized to solve the research questions.

Participants are chosen carefully and thoughtfully, with the process taking place in the HEI. Purposive sampling is used in order to include the mentor instructors as participants. Twenty preservice teachers, or third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree, five mentor lecturers in the field of early childhood development, and five mentor teachers in the Foundation phase are included in the sample. Students pursuing a Bachelor of Education in Foundation phase, currently in their third year of study, comprise the twenty preservice teachers.

To find the right subjects, the researcher sent an email outlining the goal of the study and extending an invitation to those who are interested in taking part to third-year B.Ed. Foundation phase students. Because they take part in several mentoring sessions with preservice teachers, the mentor teachers are chosen because they possess the greatest amount of information. Consequently, it was anticipated that they have amassed significant knowledge that might be converted into relevant data. Because they follow course and module outlines, the mentor lecturers are included. Due in large part to their curriculum methods emphasizing subject integration, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. The informal encounters that resulted in observations that these five mentor lecturers would provide the most valuable data are what make them the most

knowledgeable. They showed that they owned a great deal of mentoring information that they were willing to share.

Year three preservice teachers at the research site are allocated to mentor lecturers and mentor teachers, who are responsible for evaluating them, therefore quantitative data from them is gathered. The study questions that aim to gauge the effectiveness of the mentorship framework that has been put in place is addressed with quantitative data. The respondents are selected by stratified sampling. Using stratified sampling, a sampling approach, the population is divided into subgroups or strata according to attributes that are pertinent to the study. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Maree, 2020). Therefore, preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers who are participating in teaching practice at the higher institution are welcome to participate in the inquiry of this study. The participants are categorized into strata according to attributes including the mentees' experience level with mentor professors, the mentor lecturers' mentoring skills, and the mentees' status as third-year students pursuing the B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Using stratified sampling, five mentor lecturers—out of a possible ten mentor lecturers—are assigned to third-year preservice teachers, who are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Out of the fifteen partner schools where preservice teachers participate in teaching practice, five mentor teachers are involved.

1.10.7 Instruments for Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected using measuring tools and descriptive information-gathering techniques that are typical of exploratory research. After authorization has been given, information will be gathered for data collecting. Additionally, it entails choosing the data recording method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative Data Collection

The project utilizes qualitative data collection methods such as document analysis, structured interviews, and mentoring session observations. The mentor instructors and mentor lecturers provide feedback to the participants as part of their observations

in practice. The Theoretical Framework—Vygotsky's social constructivist theory—which established the framework for this research project and attempted to address the research issue, serve as the basis for the selection of questions for the semi-structured interviews. To address the research sub-questions and achieve the study's objectives, a carefully crafted set of interview questions are used to determine the extent to which constructivist mentoring tactics are implemented. These questions highlight important strategies for mentoring preservice teachers during their teaching practice, and their substance is based on a thorough review of the research. As a result, the information identified in the reviewed literature serve as the basis for the questions measuring the degree of mentoring expertise and knowledge.

1.10.8 Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview follows a semi-structured format. Data gathering is the main reason for using interviews in research, and in this instance, doing semi-structured interviews requires a lot of resources. The participants are interviewed one-on-one and in focus groups. Interviews with mentor teachers and mentees take place through focus groups. Mentor lecturers are interviewed one-on-one. We use a mix of semi-structured interviews, which allow for extensive responses and questioning on many elements of mentoring, and open-ended interview questions, which allow for the investigation of issues from the participants' viewpoints. I am able to ask pre-planned follow-up questions throughout the semi-structured interviews; many of these questions are based on the responses from each participant.

Every comment made by a participant is carefully examined. Semi-structured interviews, according to Creswell & Clarke (2018), make it possible to collect unstructured, first-hand information by watching people at a research location. He continues by saying that close attention to visual details is necessary for observation. My goal is to gain a deeper comprehension of the mentor teacher's viewpoint regarding their duty. Interviewing is a technique for learning more about people's experiences and the significance they place on them, claim Creswell & Creswell (2018). Therefore, in addition to being friendly and non-threatening, the interview questions are made to answer the goal of my research (Yin, 2018). Focus groups are used to interview the mentees and mentor teachers for this study, and mentor lecturers are interviewed individually.

1.10.9 Observations

To watch what and how mentors and mentees conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice, observation was selected as the study's methodology. Direct observation will take place in the schools' classrooms and at any time the participants get together, like during teaching practice mentorship sessions. The researcher reviews existing research documents, minutes of participant meetings, materials created for the participants, and documents about mentoring. Using an exploratory approach, the second stage of the study entails creating a new tool called the mentorship framework with the intention of expanding on the understandings obtained from the qualitative results. Participants interact with this new tool during mentoring sessions to assess its efficacy. To answer the study questions centered on the effects of the created framework, quantitative data collection is necessary. The study attempts to expand on the qualitative findings and give a more thorough understanding of the mentoring framework's possible ramifications by collecting quantitative data. This enables insights into how the mentoring framework effects different outcomes. Finding out how well participants apply the developed framework and expanding on the qualitative findings are the goals of employing observations.

1.10.10 Document Analysis

Documentary evidence is one of the methods or strategies for data production that will be used in this investigation. Documentary evidence is essential to give further data for triangulation because research cannot be only dependent on the statements of research participants. This method is important since it offers data that would have been hard to come by otherwise. Records of events, actions, and procedures made by people or organizations are referred to as documentary evidence (Maree, 2020). Many documents govern instruction and are necessary for implementing policies in higher education institutions (Cohen, 2021). Journals, a teaching practice study guide, mentee portfolios, a mentoring brochure, the Department of Higher Education, and training standards on teaching practice are used as documentary evidence in this study. The ensuing materials serve as manuals for instructive activities: Cohen's

(2021) guide to teaching practice, Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), was released in 2015 by the Department Of Higher Education in South Africa. I concentrated on document analysis for data analysis because I want to see if the mentor's written reflections can reveal anything about how she views her function as a mentor and the manner in which mentoring sessions are run.

Quantitative data collection

The respondents, who are preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers, filled out closed-ended questionnaires to provide quantitative data. The questionnaire is said to be the greatest instrument since it can gather data quickly and with little bias, preserving the validity and reliability of the research tool (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The forthcoming chapters will contain more information on the mentorship structure that this study creates. The respondent must supply personal information without revealing their identify in the mentorship framework's first component, known as "Section A." Statements intended to provoke replies is included in the second portion, titled "Section B," to gauge preservice teachers' level of familiarity with mentoring and teaching techniques. Statements that determine the degree to which a respondent would have developed pro-mentoring attitudes are found in the third section, referred to as "Section C." A thorough proofreading is done on the mentorship structure that is created for this investigation. A pretest on the mentoring framework is required of a carefully chosen candidate. A member of the academic staff at the school administered this pre-test to get clarification on certain phrasing, spelling, and grammar issues as well as to solicit suggestions for potential instrument enhancements and corrections. All the mentorship framework's sections have closed-ended questions with predefined answers for respondents to select from. The closed-ended questions are scaled, but the values on each response scale is not disclosed.

1.10.11 Data Trustworthiness

Measures of trustworthiness

In research, reliability is defined as the accuracy with which the results match the data that was gathered, as well as the integrity and application of the selected methodologies (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Statistics Solutions, 2020). The (UFS)Research Ethics Code of Conduct's ethical guidelines will serve as the foundation for these techniques (UFS, 2019). The ways that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies offer assessments of trustworthiness varies.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), trustworthiness in qualitative research is characterized by factors such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- **Credibility**

Credibility, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018), is the degree of confidence that is put in the accuracy of research findings to guarantee that the conclusions represent legitimate data that is correctly deduced from the data that was first collected from the study area. This study concentrated on a few of the issues brought up in the literature that indicated areas of knowledge that required further investigation. In this study, appropriate questions were formulated with the help of the evaluated literature to elicit appropriate answers.

- **Transferability**

How successfully the results of qualitative research may be used in different contexts is referred to as transferability (Maree, 2020). To ensure that the study findings are elaborated and corroborated in a way that makes the combined results applicable in other contexts, an exploratory sequential design was selected. This allows for a thorough analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data from each participant. The methodology described by Korstjens and Moser (2018) is applied in this study to facilitate potential users' perception of the value of the findings by offering contextual

information during the observation and interpretation of social meaning during qualitative research.

- **Dependability**

Dependability is the ability of results to remain consistent across time (Mandal, 2018). Achieving this consistency can be facilitated by ensuring that a research technique is logical, thoroughly recorded, and suitably audited (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Therefore, a thorough description of the full research project will be created and securely maintained throughout the inquiry to guarantee the validity of this study. The stability of these results is ensured by ensuring that all interpretations and suggestions of the study are founded on the real data obtained from the study field. On electronic devices, passwords are used to protect the original data. Together with the electronic data that has been backed up, any print-formatted data is also be kept on e-storage devices.

- **Confirmability**

The degree to which a research study's findings may be independently corroborated by other researchers is known as confirmability. The researcher in this study impartially evaluates the entire investigation to ensure that the conclusions and interpretations are backed up by data. Documenting the research process and the results are necessary to reduce and eliminate individual biases, preferences, and predispositions that could negatively affect how a researcher assesses the descriptive data obtained from participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). It also calls for the researcher to approach the investigation with objectivity and neutrality. As a result, the qualitative component of the study is employ the process of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation.

- **Validity and Dependability of Data from Quantitative Research**

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are measured to determine the research's trustworthiness or rigor, which effectively refers to the degree to which researchers strive to improve the quality of their study (Smit, 2021; Leech, 2021). According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell & Creswell (2018), validity is the degree

to which a reality is precisely assessed, and reliability is the accuracy of measuring that directly influences a measure's consistency levels. It was crucial to make sure that every statement in Sections B and C addressed the appropriate material on mentoring to guarantee that the framework used in this study appropriately assessed the knowledge levels of mentoring among preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the Foundation phase, as well as the prevalence of pre-mentoring attitudes. Content validity was guaranteed by the meticulous selection of the assertions (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Carefully crafting quantifiable statements that can be added up to create a summation that measures the realities ensure construct validity, which is the capacity to draw conclusions about numerical data collected in this study relating to the knowledge of preservice teachers and mentor teachers and the prevalence of pro-mentoring attitudes. By giving the mentorship framework to a group of carefully chosen people, the researcher employed test-retest-reliability testing to make sure the framework utilized in the study will be accurate.

1.10.12 Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data analysis

Deductive and inductive reasoning will be employed to conduct a thematic analysis of the gathered data using the methodology developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). A researcher employs a framework of procedures known as data analysis to elucidate facts, identify patterns, and offer information on the data generated to obtain answers to the study questions (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). According to Braun and Clarke (2023), thematic analysis is a sort of qualitative analysis that is used to analyze classifications and provide themes, or patterns, that are related to the data. While inductive analysis selects codes and categories based on the data, deductive analysis uses a theoretical or conceptual framework to structure the study in the examination of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2023). The process of coding is used in theme analysis to identify distinct, meaningful patterns.

This procedure entails the following steps: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating the first codes, searching the codes for themes, evaluating the themes, characterizing and identifying the themes, and generating the final report. It is

necessary to read and reread the data that was gathered from the participants' reflections to become comfortable with it. The first step in constructing the codes is to identify recurring patterns in the data set and arrange the patterns according to the study themes. The data is thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that only relevant information is used. The researcher, first clearly identifies and categorize any emergent themes from the data before searching for patterns in the codes. These themes are next be rigorously researched and studied to obtain relevant information. The themes are identified and given names by the theoretical frameworks (Vygotsky's) to validate the emerging categories.

Ultimately, the investigator constructs themes that provide relevant information to address the study inquiries. These develop into the primary subjects that form the structure for the research findings' presentation and interpretation.

Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics is used for the quantitative data analysis. Methods for computing, characterizing, and summarizing collected research data in a logical, understandable, and effective way are known as descriptive statistics (Maree, 2020). In the paper, descriptive statistics are shown graphically in the figures or quantitatively in the text and/or tables. Large numbers of observations are reduced into indices by the research using percentages and other methods, which is then explained and utilized to characterize the data that was gathered using particular factors. IBM SPSS version 28.0, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program, is used to compute the results of the second analysis of the quantitative data that will be gathered using the inferential test of relationships.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

To discuss topics including permission to enter, participant rights, informed consent, privacy, and pro vulnerability. injury, obtaining confidentiality, upholding professionalism, and the susceptibility of participants. The creation of legitimate and trustworthy research studies requires careful consideration of ethical issues. The researcher adheres to the following ethical guidelines (Korstjens & Moser, 2018):

- **Confidentiality**

The respondents' privacy is appropriately safeguarded. Respondents are advised not to submit any private information, including their name or address. Confidentiality is maintained since reporting won't reveal any private information about study participants.

- **Seeking Consent**

Participants in the study are not coerced or induced into taking part. Prior to the data being gathered, written consent is required.

- **Reporting the Findings**

The study's results are presented honestly, without editing or manipulation.

1.12 Chapter Summary

The research problem that this study was intended to address is highlighted throughout the chapter along with an introduction to the subject of study. Along with the goal of the research study and the research methodology used in the investigation, the problem statement was also explored. The research study's relevance and the procedures for gathering data were also covered in this chapter. A description of the ethical principles that guides the study come next.

1.13 Organisation of Chapters

The study's outline and background information on the setting is included in Chapter 1. The second chapter discusses the literature that is reviewed from various studies that have been done on the phenomena. It includes an analysis of previous research, including its methodology and conclusions. Finally, a reflection on how this study close the gap created by earlier research is provided. The study's theoretical framework, social constructivism, is covered in Chapter 3. The former is covered in relation to Vygotsky's (1978) theory. The research methods that are used are described in depth in Chapter Four. The primary focus is on the choices that are made on the research methodologies that must be employed in order to generate data within the parameters of the research questions posed by this study. A detailed explanation of how these techniques were implemented to fit the research is also provided. Every choice has an obvious rationale. Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the data collected through observations and documented evidence, together with the information that is gained

through semi-structured interviews. Chapter 6 includes a summary of the study's creation of a sustainable mentoring framework, suggestions, and findings.

1.14 Timeline

The proposed timeline follows.

Research Activity	Timeline
Defend proposal	September 2023
Chapter 1 –Introduction and Orientation	September 2023
Ethics Application	September 2023
Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	March 2024
Data Collection	July 2024
Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework	May 2024
Chapter 4 – Methodology	August 2024
Transcribe data	September 2024
Chapter 5 – Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation	October 2024
Chapter 6 – Conclusions, Evaluation, and Recommendations	November 2024
Technical / Language editing	November 2024
Final draft	November 2024

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study was presented in the preceding chapter along with an overview of the topic being studied. It described the goals, parameters, questions to be answered, and intended technique of the study. In addition, the discussion of the relevant literature for the study is the focus of this chapter.

Following will be an analysis of the theories of learning and development, the roles and responsibilities of mentor teachers and preservice teachers (mentees), and mentoring programs in resolving preservice teachers' issues. It draws on contemporary literature and various sources such as scholarly journal articles, academic texts, theses, and dissertations (both published and unpublished), as well as online databases and search engines. This chapter aims to acquire a thorough grasp of the concept of mentoring.

The literature review plays a crucial role in determining the worthiness of researching a topic and in refining the focus of an investigation. It helps in evaluating the significance of a study and serves as a benchmark for comparing findings with existing research (Wong, 2021). By analysing prior studies, researchers gain insights into current knowledge, strengths, and limitations in a particular field (Newman & Gough, 2020). This review process informs discussions and findings for this study and may involve comparisons with other research outcomes. Literature reviews involve synthesizing existing literature to inform decisions regarding policy, practice, research direction, and resource allocation (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). They give a summary of the status of knowledge today, outlining theoretical stances and difficulties encountered (Terrell, 2022; Squires, 2019; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; and Law, Hales and Busenbark, 2020). Building upon the foundation laid by the literature review, this study delves into the nuanced realm of mentoring, a dynamic process integral to personal and professional development. Conceptualizing mentoring involves more than just defining it; it requires understanding its multifaceted nature, exploring its various forms, and dissecting its underlying mechanisms. By conceptualizing

mentoring, we aim to not only explain its role in fostering growth and learning but also to provide insights that can inform effective mentoring practices in diverse contexts.

2.2. Conceptualizing mentoring

The concept of mentoring traces its roots back to Greek mythology, as noted by Bynum (2015). In Homer's *Odyssey*, written around 3000 years ago, the character Mentor is portrayed as a wise and faithful guide assigned to care for Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, during the Trojan War (Bynum, 2015). This ancient archetype underscores the importance of nurturing relationships in mentoring. However, over the years, the mentoring process has evolved, as highlighted by Nju (2023), shifting from a traditional model where an experienced individual guides a younger counterpart on their journey to a more reciprocal relationship between mentor and mentee.

The concept of mentoring involves the interaction between two individuals aimed at fostering the development of the less experienced party (Carrera, 2022). It encompasses the sharing of knowledge, exemplary behaviour, expertise, and strategies for acquiring information. A mentor is someone who guides and supports the other person, often facilitating career advancements for the mentee (Mafugu, 2022). Mentoring is defined as a type of long-term support given to accomplish particular objectives (Jita and Munje, 2022). It is also considered a process by which leaders build significant relationships to enable others via cooperative learning (Venktaramana et al., 2023). All these definitions highlight the fact that mentoring is an experienced person assisting a less experienced person in developing their career.

In the educational setting, mentoring involves fostering a relationship between an experienced and trusted individual and a less experienced one, aimed at supporting the development of the novice's abilities (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). This relationship relies heavily on connectedness during conversations, with the mentor guiding and managing the mentee's growth and skill development (Ambrosetti, Dekkers, and Knight, 2017). Typically, in schools, mentoring occurs between a seasoned teacher and a newcomer, with a focus on collectively advancing toward career goals and objectives. Often informal, these interactions complement existing organizational frameworks, such as the Individual Quality Management System (IQMS) and support educators' professional development as well as classroom management (Mantshiu &

Odeku, 2020). Mentoring is essential for keeping educators in the profession, increasing classroom management, and eventually raising student achievement. According to Hudson and Hudson (2018), mentoring helps mentees navigate extracurricular and co-curricular activities, comprehend organizational dynamics, and carry out their teaching duties. Increased productivity and academic success are clear results of mentoring. While the importance of informality in mentoring interactions is highlighted above, it's crucial to delve into the potential challenges and limitations within a school setting. The incompatibility of mentors and mentees can pose a barrier to the efficacy of the mentoring relationship. It is possible for certain pairings to fail owing to mismatched personalities, communication styles, or ambitions. Thus, to guarantee compatibility, schools must be very careful when matching mentors and mentees. Another issue that role ambiguity presents is that mentors and mentees may find it difficult to grasp one other's roles in the mentoring process in the absence of explicit rules or expectations. This ambiguity can lead to frustration, confusion, and ultimately, a lack of progress. These factors could have distinct impacts on the effectiveness of mentoring programs.

In addition, Saidi (2020) shares the conventional viewpoint on mentoring, viewing it more as a one-way procedure than as a partnership that is jointly agreed upon. The idea of a 'one-way process' is further supported by Ambrosetti et al. (2017), who contend that one-on-one, person-to-person mentoring is the most successful approach and highlight the significance of customization and individualization in the mentoring process. In a similar vein, Hakwendenda and Njobvu (2019) define mentoring as a dyadic relationship in which a more experienced or talented person serves as a role model for a less experienced person, offering guidance, support, advocacy, counsel, and friendship in an effort to promote both professional and personal growth.

Dominguez and Kochan (2020) contest the idea that formal duties should be the only criteria used to define mentoring, arguing that relationships and the roles they play should be the main factors considered. They support the idea that mentoring is an interactive connection between a mentor and mentee that is defined by a sequence of planned social encounters. In a similar vein, in order to promote learning, Levinson (1978) highlights the significance of striking a balance between challenges and

support in the mentor-mentee relationship. A mentor takes on several responsibilities in this interactive dynamic, including advisor, friend, teacher, and counsellor.

Nghaamwa (2017), argues that “implementing an effective formal mentoring program benefits inexperienced teachers by addressing their lack of preparation and reducing resignation rates”. Nghaamwa argues that human beings inherently desire connection, making programs like mentoring essential as they foster interaction and contribute to job satisfaction. Furthermore, ensuring that mentees receive sufficient supervision and assistance guarantees the retention of highly qualified, proficient, informed, and professional educators in the field. Mentoring helps new teachers become part of the school community and build good human interactions in the classroom (Nghaamwa, 2017).

Drawing from my personal experience as a teaching practice coordinator at a higher education institution and a former teacher at Legora Primary School in Mamelodi, Gauteng, I note that mentoring holds significant importance in providing support and guidance to mentees. However, I acknowledge that the effectiveness of mentoring can differ based on whether it follows a formal or informal structure, which in turn can influence the anticipated results.

The literature study emphasizes the value of mentoring to advance professional development for both mentors and mentees (Dominguez and Kochan, 2020). Nonetheless, the implementation of mentorship models in South African schools has been erratic (Gravett & Kroon, 2023). There is still a disconnect between policy intentions and actual implementation, even with the government's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025 (Department of Education, 2011) placing a strong emphasis on mentoring. While the framework advocates for mentoring throughout all stages of teacher education, a comprehensive rollout has yet to be realized (Department of Education, 2011). This highlights the pressing need for studies such as this one to address and fill this identified gap in the implementation and effectiveness of mentoring programs within teacher education.

2.3 Mentoring and its Purpose

This study explores how mentoring is contextualized, with a particular emphasis on how it affects mentor teachers and pre-service student teachers at different stages of their careers. A less-experienced pre-service student teacher and an experienced in-service teacher (mentor) can develop a long-lasting, mutually beneficial connection through the dynamic process or activity known as mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). To prepare for the teaching profession in a school context, this connection seeks to foster development, support well-being, and offer individualized and professional assistance (Voskamp et al., 2020).

According to Walter and Verner (2019), the foundation of successful mentoring is the joint investigation of cutting-edge teaching strategies by seasoned in-service educators and less experienced pre-service educators. While in-service teachers can use their personal experiences to share insights about the dynamic nature of teaching, pre-service teachers' life experiences are greatly impacted by their sense of self and the professional goals of in-service teachers (Ekiz-Kiran et al., 2021).

Moreover, the development of pre-service student teachers' personal identities and professional identities is closely linked to the school's educational philosophy, national educational priorities, and their interactions with staff and students (Walter & Verner, 2019). As a result, throughout their teaching practice, pre-service teachers have to manage the shift from self-identity to professional development within the larger educational framework (Newman & Gough, 2020). Effective mentorship from seasoned in-service educators is necessary to facilitate this transition since they have extensive expertise with all aspects of teaching, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Effective mentoring becomes crucial for assisting pre-service teachers in navigating their transition into the teaching profession because it acknowledges the interconnectedness of professional development, personal self-identity, and larger educational contexts. Consequently, funding extensive mentorship programs could raise the standard of teacher preparation generally and support ongoing advancements in education.

2.4 Mentoring preservice teachers in South Africa.

In South Africa, the availability of skilled and capable teachers remains a persistent issue (Rusznayak and Bertram, 2021). The authors also state that, among the processes used in South African educational institutions to improve teachers' competency and quality, mentorship stands out as the most significant (Rusznayak, and Bertram, 2021). The cultivation of preservice student teachers through effective mentoring, either by South African universities or by seasoned educators within schools, is advocated. Regrettably, this ideal scenario is not universally realized across educational institutions (Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

As part of their professional development path, mentees become excellent teachers as they advance in their careers from preservice student teachers. The need for all educators to participate in mentoring within their particular schools is one of the duties listed for instructors in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018). Furthermore, as compulsory elements of ongoing professional development programs, instructors must provide pastoral care and mentorship in accordance with the Department of Education's 2011 Integrated Quality Management System. These projects are incorporated into programs for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which give teachers chances to advance and better themselves. The details of the alterations in the education sector are expounded upon in the paragraph.

South Africa faces the challenge of redressing past educational inequalities resulting from the former educational system, in which a significant proportion of teachers were trained in inadequate teacher training institutions (Mafugu, 2022). The exposure of all preservice student teachers to experienced educators modelling conceptually rich, inquiry-based teaching approaches is still limited, even with recent extensive reforms in the education system (Mantshiu and Odeku, 2020). Unless they have received mentorship within professional development frameworks, educators frequently reproduce the teaching approaches that they were subjected to themselves, perpetuating obsolete practices (Gravett & Kroon, 2023).

The claims make it clear that mentoring is essential to solving the enduring problems in South African education, particularly in ensuring the availability of skilled and capable teachers. While there are mandates and initiatives in place to promote

mentorship and professional development among educators, there remains a need for comprehensive and universally realized mentoring programs. By prioritizing effective mentorship, especially in exposing pre-service student teachers to innovative teaching approaches, South Africa can work towards overcoming historical educational disparities and fostering a generation of proficient educators equipped to meet the demands of a dynamic education landscape.

2.4.1 Conducting Effective Mentoring

Within educational contexts, formalized mentoring programs are rare; instead, informal and unstructured mentoring activities predominate, albeit unevenly (Saidi, 2020). The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (henceforth, MRTEQ) (2022) stipulate that schools must provide preservice student teachers with opportunities for placement. Typically, they do this by accepting Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students in ten-week cycles each year, frequently working with university tutors. Additionally, trends from the past few years point to the rise of internships and learnerships in educational contexts (Nowell, 2022).

Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training have said that they want to support joint efforts by establishing "teaching laboratories" (Department of Education, 2011). The Department of Education (2011) suggests that these programs aim to establish Teaching Schools and Professional Practice Schools as specific locations for student placements during their practical components of education. Preservice student teachers are expected to engage in a variety of experiential learning activities in various contexts, such as attending topic technique courses, participating in microteaching sessions, and observing excellent teaching practices (Department of Education, 2011).

One noteworthy aspect of the text is its emphasis on the development of mentors inside Teaching Schools. These individuals would be qualified to teach technique courses that are specific to their fields. It is also intended for teachers in Professional Practice Schools to function as mentors to new teachers, providing them with specialized assistance and direction. The importance of mentors in educational

settings is emphasized by the South African Department of Education, however these goals are not always put into effect (Gravett and Ramsaroop, 2019).

Open-ended interviews were conducted with ten pre-service teachers in a study by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) titled "Effective mentoring: Understanding factors affecting the holistic development of preservice teachers during teaching practice" to learn more about the pre-service teachers' experiences with mentoring during their teaching practice. Participants in the study included fourth-year Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education pre-service teachers, with an emphasis on schools in less affluent South Africa.

According to Ntshangase and Nkosi's (2022) results, most pre-service teachers had serious worries about not receiving sufficient mentorship from mentor professors and in-service mentors after being assigned to schools. From the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers who were interviewed, a common theme emerged that showed how little awareness there is of the everyday struggles faced by in-service teachers in less privileged schools, especially in townships or rural areas where basic amenities like data projectors, smart boards, and computer rooms are not easily accessible (Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022). The research by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) provides insightful information about mentoring pre-service teachers in difficult settings, but to fully comprehend and use the study's findings, certain important areas can be carefully examined.

The research is based purely on subjective data derived from in-depth interviews. This method leads to biases influenced by personal viewpoints and may result in varied response consistency. Furthermore, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) posited that the lack of quantitative metrics or observational evidence to substantiate the statements of participants could be seen as a research gap when utilizing this approach. As a result, this current study aims to fill this methodological gap by including quantitative analyses and observational data to support the findings and conclusions drawn from the participants' statements. By incorporating these additional methodological measures, the present study seeks to strengthen the research findings and enhance the credibility of the research outcomes.

According to Mphojane's (2019) study, "A framework for effective formal mentoring of novice teachers," which involved 30 participants—six mentor teachers and 24 pre-service teachers—interview results revealed that South African public-school teachers lack formal mentoring. Based on the lack of official tasks to support pre-service teachers in adjusting to their new duties and responsibilities, the study found that there is no formal mentoring program in place and that mentorship develops on its own. South Africa is not alone in experiencing a dearth of formal mentorship; in many other nations, mentorship programs are either non-existent or poorly organized (Mphojane, 2019). According to Mphojane (2019), the lack of structured mentorship initiatives for preservice student teachers results in their lack of readiness for the demands of their new positions. The research by Mphojane (2019), it should be highlighted, reveals a significant lack of teacher preparation, especially regarding the lack of formal mentorship programs in South African public schools. The study's exclusive emphasis on interviews may give a narrow perspective, thereby ignoring the wide spectrum of mentoring experiences, even though the formal mentoring part needs to be thoroughly examined. In order to successfully address this restriction, a mixed methods approach should be employed since it provides a more thorough assessment of the necessity of a well-defined mentorship framework.

Henning and Gravett (2012) carried out a study on behalf of the Gauteng Department of Education, conducting 38 interviews with relevant stakeholders such as district officials, teachers, Heads of Departments (HODs), and school principals. Their study emphasizes how unrealistic it is to expect colleges to fully prepare instructors for careers in teaching. Rather, they support schools as the necessary setting for real, substantive immersion in the complexities and demands of teaching in the South African educational context (Henning & Gravett, 2012). The results of the study suggest that educators may not receive adequate preparation from colleges for the difficulties they will face in actual classroom environments. Even though university instruction has its limitations, I contend that this viewpoint shouldn't lessen the importance of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations offered.

It is crucial to find a harmonious balance between theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience, rather than completely disregarding one in favour of the other.

The study highlights the necessity for practical learning experiences, prompting a reassessment of the role of universities and how they can enhance collaboration with schools to create a more comprehensive teacher education program. By integrating more practical experiences alongside academic instruction, a more well-rounded approach to teacher training can be achieved, ensuring that upcoming educators can effectively apply their knowledge and skills in the various professional environments they will encounter.

In a research paper titled "Becoming Professionally Qualified: The School-based Mentoring experiences of Part-time PGCE students," Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram (2015) interviewed twenty students who had just finished their part-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The participants in the study reported three different kinds of mentoring encounters.

First, subject-specific mentoring that is, mentoring involving comments on the way in which courses are taught was discovered. Furthermore, criticism on general teaching strategies and classroom management techniques was included in general pedagogical mentorship. Finally, mentors who just worked on finishing the paperwork that the student's enrolled institution requested were said to be practicing compliance mentoring (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram, 2015).

Different participants received different levels of mentoring; some were guided in one area exclusively, while others received all three types of coaching. This suggests that in order to guarantee that mentors are prepared to offer pre-service teachers appropriate support, extensive mentor training is required (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram, 2015). Grossman and Davies (2012), on the other hand, argue against a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring, highlighting the significance of customizing mentoring experiences to each mentee's unique requirements, history, and educational situation. I contend that, albeit being insightful, the sample size of 20 pupils is insufficient given the scope of the educational system in KwaZulu, Natal, or the larger South African setting. As a result, one could wonder if the results are representative. To obtain a wider range of insights, it could be advantageous for future study to include a larger and more diverse sample.

When the results of the previously mentioned research are combined, they all highlight how important it is to have thorough, well-organized mentorship programs in order to

support the pre-service teachers' growth in South Africa. According to the experts behind these studies, mentoring is a dynamic process that helps more inexperienced pre-service teachers and seasoned mentor teachers build a lasting and mutually beneficial connection. They both agree that mentoring plays a critical role in supporting pre-service teachers' personal and professional development and emphasizing how important it is to provide them with the tools and resources they need to successfully negotiate the challenges of the teaching profession. Thus, there is a unified voice advocating for the execution of strong mentoring programs to improve pre-service teachers' preparedness and readiness for their upcoming positions in South Africa's educational system. To better prepare pre-service teachers for their future roles in influencing South Africa's educational system, I support the swift establishment of strong mentorship programs.

2.4.2 Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) assert that it is critical for a mentor and mentee to build a solid rapport. Goodwill and trust should be the cornerstones of this partnership. It is required of mentors to exhibit dedication, effectiveness, accountability, and passion in their work. The diverse range of the mentor-mentee relationship is highlighted by the usage of terms like mentor, coach, supervisor, counsellor, role model, nurturer, advisor, critic, and supporter (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). This opinion is in line with Gravett and Kroon's (2023) admission that intense comprehension, dedication, aptitude, and effort are necessary for successful mentoring. According to the authors, mentors are in charge of organizing and running mentorship programs and leading activities that advance pedagogical comprehension (Gravett & Kroon, 2023). Additionally, they stress the value of developing a rapport based on mutual respect and trust in order to encourage group reflection on instructional strategies (Gravett & Kroon, 2023).

Rusznayak and Bertram (2021) identify specific qualities that they deem essential for effective mentors. These include strong interpersonal skills, attentive listening, non-judgmental handling of differences of opinion, preference for open-ended questioning, and maintaining flexibility while keeping the focus on the mentee's development (Rusznayak & Bertram, 2021). Rusznayak and Bertram's (2021) study provides significant contributions to the understanding of effective mentorship by identifying key

characteristics of successful mentors. However, delving into the development of mentoring relationships over time and how the importance of these qualities may shift at various stages could offer a deeper insight into effective mentorship. Additionally, the study may have overlooked the intricacies of interpersonal skills, as nuances in communication styles, such as active listening and empathy, play a crucial role in fostering a successful mentoring connection.

The study "Master teacher experiences of mentoring teachers" by Pather (2010) examined the experiences of master teachers in their role as mentors by interviewing three teachers from KwaDukuza area (iLembe District). The findings revealed that master teacher mentors embraced qualities like critical dialogue, collaboration, and collegiality in their relationships with mentees. Pather (2010)

According to Hudson and Hudson (2018), the mentor serves as a supervisor who is in charge of performance evaluation and progress. This suggests that the mentor-mentee relationship may change based on how the mentor fulfils this position. Nonetheless, Gravett and Kroon (2023) contend that mentees' learning and development may be hampered by mentors' narrow variety of techniques. Hudson and Hudson's (2018) research provide insightful information about the structural function of mentors by highlighting the importance of their supervisory and evaluative duties. Their exploration of how the mentor-mentee relationship can transform based on these responsibilities introduces an interesting dynamic, highlighting the fluidity of these roles within professional settings. However, the study may benefit from a broader perspective that considers the diverse forms of mentorship beyond managerial oversight, including the more nuanced aspects of guidance and support that can influence a mentee's journey.

Gravett and Kroon's (2023) research delves into the constraints of mentorship that occur when mentors rely on a restricted range of mentoring techniques. They highlight the significance of flexibility and having a varied skill set to effectively guide individuals. While their discoveries reveal a crucial aspect of mentoring that can hinder mentees' development, there is an opportunity for additional investigation into the root causes of mentors' limited approaches. These causes might encompass insufficient training, personal inclinations, time limitations, and constrained resources. I suggest that additional research should be undertaken, similar to the current study on mentoring

programs. This research could offer practical solutions aimed at expanding mentors' toolkit of strategies to enhance mentee engagement and improve learning outcomes.

Contrary to this, Ponte and Twomey (2014) propose that acknowledging and addressing the potential conflicts inherent in the assessor or evaluator role can lead to resolution (Ponte & Twomey, 2014). A two-year mentorship program for students participating in a two-year site-based university teacher preparation program was undertaken by mentors, who were experienced teachers, according to the study "Veteran teachers mentoring in training: negotiating issues of power, vulnerability and professional development." According to them, the mentor's function involves both assessment and evaluation, and areas of conflict can often act as catalysts for growth for all parties involved (Ponte & Twomey, 2014). Ponte and Twomey (2014) provide an example of a collaborative approach to resolving tensions in the evaluation process by describing a scenario where the final assessment was based on a combination of self-assessment, peer assessment, mentor evaluation, principal evaluation, and field supervisor assessment. However, the inherent connection between assessment, evaluation, and mentoring is well-founded, the claim could be reinforced by incorporating empirical evidence or case studies demonstrating how this dynamic plays out in practice, and how mentors can harness conflicts constructively. Additionally, the statement could be made more robust by including a discussion on the role of communication skills, and the psychological safety of the parties involved in creating an environment where conflicts can translate into growth.

Considering the above findings, it is evident that effective mentorship requires a balance between supervision and support, with mentors fostering collaborative and reflective relationships with mentees. Collaborative assessment approaches that involve multiple stakeholders can help mitigate conflicts and promote growth for both mentors and mentees (Ponte & Twomey, 2014).

These studies underscore the significance of mentorship in the development of teachers, emphasizing the necessity for mentors to take a multipronged approach involving reflective practice, critical discourse, and collaboration. The results also highlight how important it is to resolve issues in the mentoring process by using inclusive and collaborative assessment techniques. I recognize that by providing encouraging and productive mentorship settings, educators can promote pre-service

and inexperienced teachers' professional development, which will ultimately lead to better teaching practices and student results.

2.5 Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor Teachers During Mentoring

Mentors can have a variety of roles, depending on the mentor and the school setting. As mentors usually appreciate professional independence, this diversity can be helpful even though some mentors may concentrate on particular facets of classroom management or teaching methods. Yet, it could also cause conflict in the relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Hudson & Hudson, 2018)

Mentoring must be planned and meet specific requirements in order to be really effective (Saidi, 2020). This requires that the mentor's position be clearly understood. In order to close the skills gap and strengthen the teaching abilities of new teachers, experienced educators are essential. However, rather than just their cumulative experience over time, mentors' abilities and knowledge are more important to the success of mentoring (Saidi, 2020).

It is imperative to acknowledge that not all educators possess the requisite abilities and expertise to effectively mentor preservice student teachers, just as not all instructors can effectively address the problems faced by them (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). The claim made by Ambrosetti et al. (2017) may be true, but in order to help the reader better grasp the requirements for successful mentorship, a more thorough explanation of the particular abilities and knowledge that mentors must possess would be beneficial. Consequently, mentors ought to be carefully chosen, properly trained, and given enough time to collaborate closely with their mentees (Attard Tonna, 2019). Furthermore, mentors ought to work to foster a supportive environment that supports efficient teaching and learning in addition to assisting preservice student teachers in honing their teaching abilities (Attard Tonna, 2019). However, the author could enhance its critique by considering potential challenges and limitations. For instance, it might examine the institutional resources required for such an investment in mentorship, the feasibility of dedicating sufficient time for mentoring in a fast-paced educational context, and the practicalities of implementing a comprehensive mentor training program. Examining these topics in greater detail may help to clarify the nuances of preservice student teacher mentorship.

Good mentors are essential in helping their mentees realize their potential and realize it, all the while stressing the value of constant contact. As per the findings of Fu, Tang, Xue, Li, and Shan (2019), an efficient mentor demonstrates attributes like enthusiasm, empathy, selflessness, candour, generosity, perceptiveness, and proficient time management. Furthermore, a great mentor is someone who helps mentees solve problems on their own instead of giving them prepackaged solutions.

According to Stronge (2018), mentor teachers generally view their primary responsibilities as giving instructional and emotional support, helping with paperwork and planning, sharing information about procedures and governance, and providing problem-solving assistance. According to Attard Tonna (2019), effective mentors are compassionate and eager to help new instructors by introducing them to the institution's standards and principles on all fronts.

Effective mentoring essentially entails building a caring and supporting relationship that enables mentees to advance both personally and professionally, in addition to providing information and skills.

2.5.1 Personal Support for Mentees

Preservice student teachers need mentors' one-on-one assistance to get over the transitional difficulties they face in their first years of teaching (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). These difficulties frequently result in depressive symptoms, elevated stress levels, and self-doubt about one's ability (Hudson and Hudson, 2018). Preservice student teachers need mentoring programs to help them form their identities as educators (Hudson and Hudson, 2018).

Teachers who have taken part in mentoring programs report higher levels of aptitude, motivation, attentiveness, and support because of their mentoring experiences, according to Hakwendenda and Njobvu (2019). In addition to providing emotional support, mentoring helps employees develop positive working connections. The strength and durability of the mentor-mentee relationship, as well as the mentee's retention in the teaching profession, are strongly influenced by the level of emotional support that mentors provide (Mphojane, 2019).

Early events, especially those that occur in the early years of a teacher's profession, have a long-lasting effect on the behaviours and attitudes of teachers (Hakwendenda and Njobvu, 2019). These encounters influence the way in which new teachers adjust to their surroundings and line of work, underscoring the significance of good mentorship in promoting teachers' long-term career success and retention (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2020).

2.5.1.1 Social Support for Mentees

Through the provision of structured chances for new teachers to interact with seasoned colleagues, mentoring programs are essential in promoting teamwork and offering social support (Gravett and Kroon, 2023). These partnerships facilitate the exchange of feedback and ideas, making new teachers feel like valued members of a team that embraces diverse perspectives (Nowell, 2022). Moreover, social support within the school environment extends beyond teacher-teacher interactions to involve various stakeholders such as district officials, parents, and the community, contributing to the establishment of a cooperative educational setting (Nowell, 2022).

The school culture also significantly influences the social support received by novice teachers. Through interactions with veteran colleagues, novices gain insights into the traditions and norms of the school, which helps them acclimate to their new roles and responsibilities (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). However, correct mentor-mentee matching is crucial for effective professional support. Mentors play a pivotal role in helping mentees develop effective classroom practices and engage in professional reflective dialogue (Nowell, 2022).

Nevertheless, challenges may arise in the social dynamics between preservice student teachers and mentor teachers. However, others contend that preservice student teachers' skills and expertise might enhance the school's standing and status (Rusznyak and Bertram, 2021), others highlight the potential for conflicts or envy among mentor teachers and preservice student teachers (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). These dynamics underline the importance of fostering positive relationships and providing appropriate support to ensure the success and retention of preservice student teachers in the teaching profession.

2.5.1.2 Professional Support

To close the gap between teacher preparation and the actual teaching environment in schools, mentorship programs offer professional support that is the first step in a continuous process of post-initial learning (Stronge, 2018). This assistance promotes a positive and professional work environment by empowering mentees as well as the larger staff community (Attard Tonna, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017).

According to Stronge (2018), effective mentoring necessitates that mentors could recognize when to offer assistance and when to let mentees find their own way. Mentors must modify their mentoring strategy to fit each mentee's specific needs because mentees differ from one another in terms of personality, abilities, and knowledge (Saidi, 2020). They have to understand the unique circumstances surrounding mentoring and be aware that not every mentee will benefit from a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Before taking on their mentoring positions, Ambrosetti et al. (2017) recommend that all teacher mentors have access to a standardized model of mentoring knowledge. This will guarantee uniformity in mentoring procedures among educational institutions and facilitate the development of superior mentoring initiatives across the country. Schools can increase the efficacy and impact of their mentoring programs by providing mentors with the knowledge and skills they need. This will ultimately help new teachers as well as the larger educational community (Ambrosetti et al., 2017).

Research suggests that the mentor's role is complex, involving multiple roles within different conceptual frameworks (Stronge, 2018). But there is a dearth of study, especially in the field of education, on mentoring from the mentor's perspective (Stronge, 2018).

A thorough framework for the function of the mentor is proposed by Cochran Smith and Paris (1995). It involves introducing newcomers to regulations, processes, and expectations in schools and higher education as well as offering coaching, assistance, and feedback. Sensitivity, no judgmentalism, and supportiveness define these interactions.

Taken from Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010), Figure 2.1, outlines six interpersonal functions or roles that mentors typically perform. These functions likely encompass

aspects such as guidance, support, feedback provision, modelling, and fostering professional growth and development in mentees.

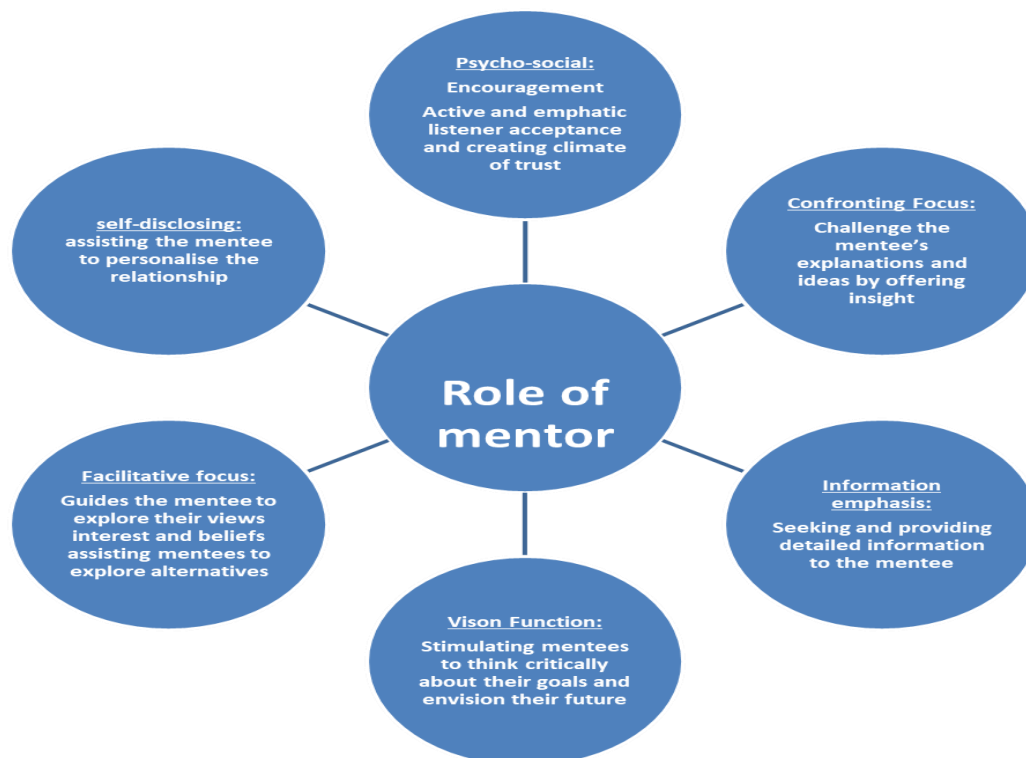


Figure 2.1: Six interpersonal functions and roles of the mentor adapted from Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010, p. 48)

The passages emphasize the value of mentorship programs in providing new teachers with professional development. The vital link between initial teacher preparation and the real-world difficulties faced in the classroom is provided by mentoring. It encourages a cooperative and encouraging work atmosphere in schools and gives mentees more authority. To be effective, mentors must be able to adjust their support to the particular needs of each mentee, taking into account the differences in their backgrounds and experiences. Standardized mentoring knowledge models can help ensure quality and consistency within mentoring programs and prepare mentors to effectively support preservice student teachers. Ultimately, the development and success of mentees is greatly aided by the personal, professional, and social support provided by mentoring programs; this ultimately benefits the educational community (Stronge, 2018; CochranSmith and Paris, 1995; Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Saidi, 2020; Attard Tonna, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017).

2.6 Roles and Responsibilities of the Preservice Teachers During Mentoring

Mentees are essential to the mentoring process and need to have certain qualities for it to be effective. One of their duties is to pinpoint their areas of improvement and advise their mentors on them. Mentors must take the initiative to make themselves available and show that they are eager to pick up knowledge from their mentors. Effective mentorship requires respect and dedication from both individuals, even though the relationship may not be official (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Mphojane, (2019) emphasizes that mentors should allow mentees to explore and experience things independently, guiding as needed to help mentees achieve their goals. Mentees should actively engage in the mentoring program, providing input and actively participating in its activities. Ambrosetti et al. (2017) stresses the significance of valuing the knowledge and abilities that inexperienced teachers bring to the field and their work environment and stress the necessity for mentees to be flexible and prepared to question preconceived notions and attitudes. According to Gravett and Kroon (2023), mentoring programs ought to focus on fostering mentees' capacity for self-reflection so they may recognize and resolve issues in the classroom on their own. Mentors need to show that they are dedicated, have a positive outlook, and are eager to learn from and work with other professionals. All individuals involved must possess ambition, responsibility, humility, and strong communication skills in order for mentoring to be effective.

Effective mentees, according to Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), take ownership of their own development, recognize that mentors are there to challenge and encourage rather than to provide answers, prepare for meetings in advance, are receptive to suggestions, put recommendations into practice, identify when the mentoring partnership has reached its goals, and recognize when the relationship is no longer beneficial.

Despite the critical role mentees play in the success of mentoring relationships, scholarly inquiry into this area is not as extensive as one might expect. The existing literature predominantly focuses on the responsibilities and impact of mentors, often overlooking the active participation of mentees. However, it is crucial for mentees to engage with intentionality and commitment to facilitate their development and derive

the greatest value from the mentorship experience. Engaging as a mentee involves setting goals, seeking feedback, applying learned knowledge, and driving the relationship forward. The dearth of research specifically targeting the mentee's perspective and strategies for effective engagement presents a gap in understanding how mentees can optimize their role within these relationships. Further exploratory studies could illuminate the nuances of effective mentee behaviours and how they contribute to the mentoring outcome.

2.7 The Status of Preservice Teachers' Mentoring in Industrialized and African Nations

The subsequent sentences delve into the methodologies employed for mentoring novice educators across various African and developed nations. While mentoring has been an established practice in education for some time, it continues to be a vital aspect of supporting newly appointed teachers. These individuals, often referred to as novice teachers, receive encouragement and assistance from experienced colleagues, indicating the enduring tradition of mentorship within the teaching profession.

2.7.1 Mentoring Preservice Teachers: African Studies

Very few nations in Africa have started offering official mentorship (Mukeredzi, 2021). Some pre-service teachers are allocated to in-service training to advance professionally. Carvalho and Santos (2021) state that in nations like Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, and Namibia, pre-service teachers receive some kind of orientation and induction to the field. For instance, staff members from teacher training institutions monitor pre-service teachers' progress in their schools, or inspectors and supervisors are expected to visit schools and assist pre-service teachers. Moreover, business experts support aspiring educators by planning and providing in-service education (Shanyengana, 2023).

According to (Maundeni and Kahaka, 2022), Botswana lacks a structured mentoring program to support new teachers. Even though mentoring is essential to preservice teachers during TP, which occupies most of the classroom experience, there is no document that teaches class teachers on their expected obligations as mentor

teachers. However, the mentorship experiences have a long-lasting effect on the attitudes and perspectives of the preservice teachers on the teaching profession (Ndhlovu, Nkhata, Chipindi, Kalinde, Kaluba, Malama, Mambwe, 2021). In Botswana, teachers are placed on two-year probation. Rebecca and Musisi (2022) claim that this is a disorganized process since there is no oversight and the School Management Team makes decisions based on the needs of the school. Whereas, the above paragraph is informative, the authors are silent on statistical evidence to support its claims. Its argument could benefit from citing quantitative data that demonstrate the consequences of the unstructured mentoring system. I posit that a mentoring framework can only be deemed effective if it thoroughly examines and incorporates every significant piece of knowledge. As such, the current investigation employs a mixed-methods strategy to get an all-encompassing model, seamlessly integrating every essential component of mentorship protocols.

Like many developing nations, Ghana has not implemented a well-defined mentorship program for pre-service teachers (Buckler, 2020). Matiba, 2023; Buckler, Stutchbury, Kasule, Cullen, and Kaije, 2021). agree that Ghana does not have a formalized mentoring program for nascent or inexperienced educators. They continue by stating that the introduction of pre-service teachers in certain other developing nations, like Ghana, is essentially a process of trying a variety of approaches and learning from failures until a solution is found. As a result, effective mentorship programs are required to assist pre-service teachers while also increasing teacher retention in the profession. The text rightfully points out that the establishment of effective mentorship programs could offer substantial support to pre-service teachers. However, the authors do not address potential challenges and successes to implementing programs on a trial and error. Inclusion of these could strengthen the argument of mentorship in preservice teacher education.

2.7.2 Mentoring Preservice Teachers: International Studies

Formal mentoring programs have not been widely implemented, especially in developing nations, even though mentoring is crucial for helping pre-service teachers make it through their first year of teaching (Bjorklund et al., 2020). This also includes

South Africa. However, in industrialized nations, other than the US. As a result of their recognition of the value of formal mentoring of pre-service teachers, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom, Australia, and other nations like Switzerland, France, New Zealand, Japan, and China have established well-funded, well-supervised mentorship programs that assist all pre-service teachers for a minimum of three years.

Pre-service teachers in New Zealand receive their first year of instruction as an extension of their first training. This is what Kenrick (2019) refers to as their college education. A minimum of two years of classroom experience is required for teachers to become qualified registered teachers, according to the New Zealand Teachers Council (2020). Teaching tools and guidance are provided to pre-service teachers over the first two years. and are also seen by educated academics.

In Australia, most schools volunteer to mentor newly hired teachers. Education authorities have their own set of guidelines and protocols for acclimating recently qualified educators to the field. Unfortunately, due to major differences in the goals of application and new teacher support, these policies are not being appropriately implemented across Australia (Kurti, 2023). In Australia, especially in rural and isolated locations, school principals have the authority to design and operate institution-based mentorship programs, and websites related to these programs are the primary source of support for aspiring teachers (James, Hudson, and Lascik, 2022). There is a distinct demand for newly qualified instructors to be inducted in urban and inaccessible areas. However, the paragraph does not elaborate on the effectiveness or accessibility of these mentoring programs, neither does it draw from empirical data or state how these programs satisfy the various needs of educators in distant versus urban settings. According to me, this study seeks to close the existing gap by confirming the mentorship program's effectiveness. Through active participant involvement in the planning and development process, the program seeks to be customized to educators' individual needs, addressing the difficulties that participants in urban and distant areas may encounter. By establishing a more approachable and pertinent support structure, this participatory method aims to improve educators' overall mentoring experience.

Research carried out in Kosovo by Nopriyani et al. (2019) showed the need of providing a mentorship strategy, especially to help prospective teachers improve their

pedagogical skills. The least common mentoring element utilized by mentors was system requirements mentoring, per (Albakri et al., 2021; Munijita, 2021; Vrtič et al., 2021). This implies that many final-year pre-service teachers may not have been aware of the objectives, curricula, or policies related to elementary education before beginning their careers. The present state of mentor feedback disputes and challenges in the teaching practicum is revealed by research (Beek et al., 2019; Byars-Winston & Butz, 2021). Although the Nopriyani et al. (2019) study is cited to emphasize the value of a mentoring method, it is vague about the nature of these pedagogical skills and how the mentoring technique promotes them. In a similar vein, the paragraph may use a more thorough examination or concrete instances of successful mentoring approaches.

The state of mentoring in developing countries remains a crucial area requiring attention and investment. While the importance of mentorship in nurturing future educators is widely acknowledged, I acknowledge that there is often a lack of structured and comprehensive mentorship programs in place. As developing nations endeavor to tackle issues in their educational systems, such as attracting and retaining qualified educators, the creation of strong mentorship programs becomes more crucial. I assert that by prioritizing mentorship and providing adequate resources and support, developing countries can empower pre-service teachers to thrive in their roles, ultimately contributing to the improvement of education quality and outcomes for generations to come.

2.7.3 Mentoring in the Foundation Phase: A Critical Examination

Mentoring in the Foundation Phase is a critical aspect of teacher education, given the unique developmental characteristics of learners in this stage and the specialized pedagogical approaches required to facilitate effective learning. The Foundation Phase, covering Grades R to 3, is widely regarded as the most formative stage of education as it lays the groundwork for literacy, numeracy, and cognitive and social-emotional development (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2020). Research suggests that a strong foundation in these areas significantly influences a child's future academic success and lifelong learning trajectory (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019). At this stage, children exhibit rapid cognitive development, with increasing attention spans,

curiosity, and the ability to engage in structured learning activities (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2018). Socially, they begin to develop essential interpersonal skills, including cooperation, empathy, and communication, which are reinforced through interactive and play-based learning environments (Gravett & Cilliers, 2022). Given these characteristics, it is imperative that preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase are mentored effectively to ensure they are equipped with the pedagogical knowledge, classroom management strategies, and emotional intelligence required to support early learning effectively.

One of the defining features of Foundation Phase education is its emphasis on play-based learning, which is widely recognized as a developmentally appropriate and effective teaching approach (Fleer, 2021). Play-based learning involves the use of structured and unstructured play activities to promote cognitive, social, and emotional development. It allows learners to explore concepts in literacy and numeracy through hands-on experiences, fostering problem-solving skills, creativity, and critical thinking (Pyle, DeLuca & Danniels, 2017). For instance, literacy development in this phase often integrates phonics instruction with storytelling, singing, and dramatization to enhance language acquisition (Gravett, 2022). Numeracy, on the other hand, is reinforced using manipulatives, visual representations, and real-life scenarios to help learners understand abstract mathematical concepts (Naicker & Mestry, 2021). An interactive learning environment is equally essential in the Foundation Phase, as it encourages active participation, collaboration, and experiential learning. Teachers in this phase must create inclusive, stimulating, and safe classroom settings that nurture learners' confidence, motivation, and enthusiasm for learning (Donald et al., 2018). Without effective mentoring, preservice teachers may struggle to implement these teaching strategies effectively, thereby compromising the quality of early education.

To be effective in the Foundation Phase, teachers must possess specific attributes that align with the developmental needs of young learners. Patience, enthusiasm, adaptability, and creativity are essential qualities, as teachers must engage learners in age-appropriate and dynamic instructional methods (Gravett & Cilliers, 2022). Additionally, strong communication and relationship-building skills are crucial, as Foundation Phase teachers frequently interact with parents and caregivers to support children's holistic development (Mphojane, 2019). Emotional intelligence is another critical attribute, as young learners require a nurturing and responsive teacher who

can manage their emotions, provide reassurance, and create a supportive learning environment (Bernstein, 2020). Without proper mentoring, preservice teachers may find it challenging to develop these competencies, leading to ineffective teaching and classroom management in the Foundation Phase.

Despite the importance of mentoring in the Foundation Phase, several challenges hinder its effectiveness. A major issue is the lack of structured and well-resourced mentorship programs that focus specifically on the unique demands of early childhood education (Rusznayak, 2022). Many mentor teachers lack formal training in mentorship, resulting in inconsistent guidance for preservice teachers (Mphojane, 2019). Additionally, the limited availability of experienced Foundation Phase mentors in schools means that many preservice teachers do not receive adequate exposure to best practices in early childhood pedagogy (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019). Another challenge is the disconnect between theoretical training and practical implementation, where preservice teachers struggle to translate their academic knowledge into effective classroom strategies due to insufficient hands-on experience (Gravett, 2023). These gaps highlight the need for a more robust and structured approach to mentoring in the Foundation Phase.

Enhancing the effectiveness of mentorship in the Foundation Phase requires a comprehensive and research-informed framework. Structured mentorship programs should include regular observation, constructive feedback, and reflective practice sessions to help preservice teachers refine their skills (Naicker & Mestry, 2021). Digital tools such as video recordings, virtual classroom observations, and online professional development platforms can also be integrated into mentorship programs to provide additional learning opportunities (Gravett & Cilliers, 2022). Collaborative learning communities, where preservice teachers engage with experienced educators, peers, and researchers, can further enhance their professional growth by exposing them to diverse perspectives and best practices (Pyle et al., 2017). Furthermore, mentor teachers should receive targeted training to develop their capacity to guide and support preservice teachers effectively, ensuring that mentorship in the Foundation Phase is purposeful, structured, and impactful.

Mentoring in the Foundation Phase is a critical aspect of teacher development, given the unique characteristics of young learners and the specialized pedagogical approaches required at this level. Effective mentorship must equip preservice teachers with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to create engaging, play-based, and interactive learning environments that support holistic development. However, challenges such as inadequate mentor training, limited structured mentorship programs, and gaps between theory and practice hinder the effectiveness of mentoring in this phase. Addressing these challenges requires a structured, research-informed approach that incorporates ongoing professional development, digital tools, and collaborative learning communities. By strengthening mentorship in the Foundation Phase, teacher education programs can ensure that preservice teachers are well-prepared to provide high-quality early childhood education, ultimately contributing to improved learning outcomes for young learners in South Africa.

2.7.4 The Foundation Phase and Child Development Theories

The Foundation phase is a critical period in a child's educational journey, as it lays the groundwork for future learning and cognitive development. During this phase, children undergo significant growth in terms of their social, emotional, and cognitive abilities, which are fundamental for their later academic success. It is during these early years that children begin to develop the foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social interaction, which will shape their future learning experiences.

A crucial aspect of understanding how children develop during the Foundation phase is considering relevant child development theories. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory offers an insightful framework for understanding how children learn through social interaction and cultural context. According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development is heavily influenced by the child's interactions with more knowledgeable individuals—such as parents, peers, and teachers—within their sociocultural environment. This perspective highlights the role of adult guidance in helping children progress through their zone of proximal development (ZPD), where learning is most effective when supported by more experienced individuals.

For preservice teachers in the Foundation phase, understanding Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding is essential. Scaffolding refers to the support that mentor teachers

provide to help preservice teachers bridge the gap between what they can do independently and what they can do with assistance. In the Foundation phase, this type of support is particularly vital, as it allows preservice teachers to effectively guide young learners through their own developmental ZPD, enhancing their learning experiences and outcomes.

Moreover, Vygotsky's emphasis on language as a crucial tool for cognitive development underscores the importance of communication in the classroom, particularly in the Foundation phase where language acquisition is a key focus. Mentor teachers need to be adept in using language to support children's thinking and learning, as well as to scaffold the learning of preservice teachers, modelling effective communication strategies in the classroom.

2.7.5 Linking Child Development Theories to Mentoring Needs

For mentor teachers working with Foundation phase preservice teachers, understanding child development theories like Vygotsky's is essential to providing effective mentoring support. Mentors need to be equipped to guide preservice teachers in understanding the developmental stages of children and how to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. This involves not only providing subject-specific knowledge but also helping preservice teachers develop the skills needed to support children's social and emotional development, which are foundational to academic success in the early years.

In terms of mentoring needs, Vygotsky's theory implies that mentor teachers must create learning environments where preservice teachers can engage in meaningful social interactions with children. This involves modelling teaching strategies that promote active engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Furthermore, mentor teachers should be attuned to the individual developmental needs of each preservice teacher, recognizing that they may be at different points in their own ZPD as they transition into professional educators.

Additionally, child development theories also point to the importance of emotional support during the mentoring process. The emotional and social needs of both preservice teachers and young children should be considered, as these elements

significantly influence learning. Mentor teachers who provide positive reinforcement, empathy, and encouragement help create a nurturing environment that promotes both the personal and professional development of preservice teachers.

The integration of child development theories, especially Vygotsky's theory, into the mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers is essential for ensuring that both the cognitive and emotional needs of preservice teachers and young learners are met. Mentor teachers must be prepared not only with content knowledge but also with the ability to scaffold learning, foster social interactions, and support the emotional development of both preservice teachers and children. Understanding these developmental dynamics is crucial for designing an effective mentoring framework that prepares preservice teachers to succeed in the complex and dynamic environment of the Foundation phase.

2.8 Models of Mentoring

The mentoring literature contains a plethora of mentorship models, many of which use interchangeable nomenclature (Lasater et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The literature abundantly emphasizes the advantages of mentorship for mentors and mentees, despite the absence of standard terminology and definitions (Lorenzetti et al., 2019; Oddone Paolucci et al., 2021; Petherick et al., 2020; Nowell, 2022). An overview of various mentorship models, such as group mentoring, peer observation, traditional mentoring, and reciprocal mentoring, is provided below. The purpose of this overview is to encourage additional research into the potential applications of these models in higher education teaching techniques.

Traditional mentoring, where a senior or experienced faculty member guides a junior colleague, is indeed a valuable model for developing teaching competence, confidence, and career goals. It offers access to resources and networks crucial for professional growth. However, there are potential drawbacks. Power imbalances can hinder open communication and growth if not addressed. Mismatched expectations, where the mentor and mentee have different understandings of the relationship's purpose or scope, can lead to frustration or disappointment. Lack of diversity in mentoring pairs may limit exposure to different perspectives and experiences. To mitigate these issues, clear roles, boundaries, and objectives should be established from the outset. Both parties should openly discuss expectations, goals, and

communication preferences. Regular feedback and evaluation sessions can help address any issues early on and ensure alignment between mentorship dynamics and the mentee's needs. By fostering a transparent and collaborative mentoring environment, traditional mentoring can effectively support the development of junior faculty members while minimizing potential pitfalls (Ambrosetti et al., 2017)

Reciprocal mentoring represents a shift towards a more egalitarian and collaborative approach, where two faculty members with distinct backgrounds or expertise mutually support and learn from each other. Within academia, this strategy fosters a culture of variety, creativity, and ongoing progress. By leveraging diverse perspectives, reciprocal mentoring can enhance interpersonal and communication skills, leading to richer professional development experiences. However, this model also demands a high level of trust, commitment, and openness from both parties. Engaging in reciprocal mentoring requires a willingness to challenge and be challenged by one's partner, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and insights. Choosing a courteous and compatible partner is essential to the success of reciprocal mentoring. Clear and realistic goals and expectations should be established from the outset, providing a framework for the mentoring relationship. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions can help maintain alignment and address any issues that may arise. Overall, reciprocal mentoring offers a promising alternative to traditional mentorship models, promoting mutual learning and growth while fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity within academic settings (Ambrosetti et al., 2017)

Peer observation, a form of mentoring, entails the observation and reciprocal observation of teaching practices among colleagues, followed by constructive feedback and discussion. This model holds potential for enhancing teaching quality, effectiveness, and reflective practice while fostering collegiality and professional growth within academic settings. However, peer observation also presents challenges. There's a risk of bias in observations, and participants may experience anxiety or defensiveness about their teaching being scrutinized. Moreover, conducting peer observations requires dedicated time and resources.

It's critical to provide a private, encouraging space where individuals feel comfortable having candid conversations to address these issues. Following a structured and evidence-based process can help ensure fairness and effectiveness. This includes

setting clear expectations, focusing on specific teaching goals or areas for improvement, using validated observation tools, and providing training and support for observers. Furthermore, promoting a culture of mutual feedback and ongoing development might assist in reducing worries about prejudice and defensiveness. Encouraging a growth mindset, where feedback is viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than criticism, can further promote professional development and collaboration among peers. While peer observation has its challenges, it can be a valuable tool for improving teaching practice by encouraging a culture of ongoing education s and collaboration within academic communities when implemented thoughtfully and supportively (Ambrosetti et al., 2017).

Group mentoring in the foundation phase offers a collective and interactive approach to mentorship, where faculty members with common interests or objectives convene regularly to share insights, experiences, and guidance. This model holds the potential to enrich social and intellectual capital, foster diversity, spur innovation, and alleviate feelings of isolation and stress among participants. However, group mentoring comes with its own set of challenges. Managing group dynamics, logistical arrangements, and ensuring meaningful outcomes can be complex. Moreover, there's a risk of losing focus or direction amidst diverse perspectives and discussions. To optimize the effectiveness of group mentoring, it is crucial to establish a clear purpose and agenda for each session. This helps ensure that discussions remain relevant and productive. Additionally, facilitating active and inclusive participation among members is key. Encouraging open dialogue, respecting diverse viewpoints, and providing opportunities for all members to contribute can enhance engagement and foster a supportive learning environment. Regularly assessing and refining the group mentoring process based on feedback from participants can also help address challenges and improve outcomes over time. By actively managing group dynamics and maintaining a focus on shared goals, group mentoring can be an effective tool for academic communities' professional growth and cooperation (Ambrosetti et al., 2017).

2.9 Advantages/Benefits of Mentoring

The topic of teaching quality and effectiveness, particularly in relation to the comprehension and knowledge retention of foundation phase preservice student

teachers, has garnered significant scholarly attention (Stronge, 2018). Furthermore, there is an increasing emphasis on foundation phase preservice student teachers' professional development, which suggests a change in the understanding of the significance of preparing foundation phase teachers for the demands of modern teaching practices (Tammets, Pata, & Eisenschmidt, 2019).

Scholars (Cheng & Szeto, 2016) argue that when foundation phase preservice student teachers are encouraged, supported, and strategically developed, they have the potential to help improve the standard of instruction, support creativity, and aid in the academic achievement of students (Cheng & Szeto, 2016). Moreover, scientists from a variety of fields have highlighted the broad and well-established advantages of mentoring in this regard, emphasizing its role in promoting professional and psychological development (Attard Tonna, 2019; Booth, Merga, & Mat Roni, 2016).

Consequently, there has been a growing integration of mentoring into institutionalized practices and policy (MrTeq, 2015, 2022). Additionally, research in this field has grown, offering empirical proof of the advantages of mentoring for mentors as well as mentees (Jeong, Irby, Boswell, & Pugliese, 2018). According to Fu, Tang, Xue, Li, & Shan (2019), these advantages include mutual learning, resilience, career capital, improved problem-solving skills, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

2.10 Challenges and Barriers to Mentoring

The environment and working conditions within an organization has a big influence on how well mentoring relationships work. Effective mentoring thrives in environments that foster learning and support (Mphojane, 2021). Institutions should strive to create platforms that facilitate interaction and idea-sharing among individuals at various levels. Members should demonstrate consideration, sensitivity, and a willingness to empower one another. Mentoring activities in the foundation phase should also be prioritized and supported by institutional culture, job design, reward systems, and management practices (Ehrich, Hansford & Ehrich, 2011).

However, certain factors within the institution can hinder successful mentoring relationships. These may include physical barriers, such as foundation phase teachers being confined to their workshops or classrooms, limiting opportunities for social interaction (Mphojane, 2021). Time restrictions, poor teamwork, a lack of professional

experience, personality conflicts, and a lack of funding are a few more potential obstacles (Hudson, 2013). It is imperative to tackle these obstacles to provide a setting that is favourable for successful mentoring.

2.10.1 Lack of Time

A major obstacle to the successful mentorship of foundation phase preservice student teachers is time, either insufficient or poorly managed (Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022). It is challenging for mentors and mentees to have meaningful conversations and offer feedback when mentorship activities are not allotted time (NTIP, 2011). Because their schedules are usually packed with classroom responsibilities, mentor teachers frequently find it difficult to find time to share their experiences with mentees (Goldrick, 2016). Teachers in many South African township schools have little leisure time, which is frequently devoted to other tasks.

Foundation phase mentors must set aside specific time to concentrate on assisting and mentoring preservice student teachers during the mentoring process in order for mentoring to be effective. It is essential that mentoring activities have enough time and space. Insufficient time allotted might be a sign of insincerity and lack of commitment to mentoring or other developmental relationships (NTIP, 2011). According to research by Ehrich et al. (2011), mentor teachers' busy schedules and lack of time frequently make it difficult for them to carry out their mentoring duties. Leshem (2014) brought attention to this issue by observing rushed interactions between mentors and mentees in school hallways or during breaks, which suggests that mentoring meetings are not given enough time.

Even with limited time, mentors frequently manage to provide their mentees with guidance and assistance. But another factor that is mentioned as a hindrance to successful mentoring is the absence of cooperation between mentor teachers and mentees.

2.10.2 Lack of Collaboration

An additional obstacle to productive mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees is a lack of teamwork, which prevents mentees from taking charge of the

program. According to Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009), a lot of organizations fail to consider the role that their members play in the creation of mentoring programs, which creates the impression that participation is required rather than optional among mentors and mentees. Participants may become resistant because of this lack of participation in the planning process, which would ultimately reduce the mentorship program's efficacy. The success of the program depends on the cooperative involvement of all stakeholders, especially throughout the planning and implementation phases (Hudson and Hudson, 2018).

Hakwendenda and Njobvu (2019) emphasizes the importance of mentors recognizing and valuing collaboration, as it fosters continuous professional growth, innovation, and enthusiasm. Healthy relationships among coworkers are encouraged in collaborative work environments, which also lessen emotional stress and burnout and boost output and job satisfaction. Additionally, preservice student teachers benefit greatly from staff collaboration since it enables them to learn from seasoned colleagues and avoid the trial-and-error method that is sometimes observed in the early stages of their employment (Shah, 2012).

2.10.3 Absence of Specialized Knowledge

Foundation phase mentors' lack of professional experience is another major disadvantage of mentoring for mentees. When mentors lack the requisite abilities and comprehension of the goals of the planned activities, mentoring becomes ineffective or even destructive (Professional Growth Networks, 2015). In the absence of both initial and continuous high-quality mentoring to aid in their professional development, mentors find it difficult to lead and help novice instructors with their difficulties. (Goldrick, 2016). Mentoring can be perceived as burdensome and emotionally draining when mentors are expected to mentor preservice student teachers without being adequately prepared or provided with the necessary resources and support from their superiors (Ehrich, 2013). Moreover, sustaining a mentoring plan becomes challenging for mentors if their colleagues know that it lacks approval from school authorities (McCollum, 2014).

Effective mentoring programs should include essential information such as the program's purpose, goals, objectives, and participants' roles and duties (Ehrich et al.,

2011). According to Hobson and Malderez (2013), mentorship programs should offer mentor training focused on communication, listening, and feedback skills. Universities are essential to the success of mentorship programs in the foundation phase because they place a high value on mentor training (Professional Growth Networks, 2015). Care should be taken when choosing a training location, whether it is done by outside experts or on school property and administered by local staff. Participating in expert learning communities that respect professional ethics, follow relevant content area standards, and prioritize teacher growth, problem-solving, and mutual support is beneficial for preservice student teachers (Sokhulu, 2022). Opportunities for interactions, cooperation, professional discussions, and reflection are offered by regularly planned workshops and online learning groups. When the objective and goals of a mentorship program are made apparent to all participants, it is more likely to be successful and produce the desired results. Furthermore, mentorship may suffer from personality mismatch (Sokhulu, 2022).

2.10.4 Personality Mismatch

Differences in philosophy, ideology, or knowledge between people are referred to as personality mismatches, and they can occasionally cause conflict in relationships (Ehrich, 2013). These incompatibilities can cause relationship problems in mentoring when there is minimal to no compatibility between the partners because of personality or worldview discrepancies. Partners with divergent opinions may quarrel and find it difficult to accomplish desired results rather than working toward a common goal (Van Ginkela et al., 2015). Formal mentorship programs should minimize the likelihood of compatibility problems by giving participants some autonomy in choosing their partners. Compatibility is less of a concern in casual mentoring agreements since both individuals actively seek the relationship and may already be acquainted, increasing the likelihood that they will get along.

According to NTIP (2011), mentors and mentees should set clear expectations and always uphold a high standard of professionalism. Positive working relationships are fostered, and mistrust is decreased when both mentors and mentees maintain control over their relationship. Mentees' attitude and degree of interest can also be a hindrance to their performance in a mentorship program, as these variables might

negatively affect their participation (Dishena, 2014). When mentees exhibit a willingness to learn and actively participate in the process, mentoring is more effective. Furthermore, financial resources may also act as a barrier to mentoring that is effective.

2.10.5 Insufficient Funds

Enough money and time must be dedicated to mentoring and other preservice student teacher support programs. One of the difficulties with financial resources is acknowledging that mentoring increases staff members' already heavy workloads. According to Dominguez and Kochan (2020), mentor teachers ought to receive compensation for the extra duties they perform. If mentors are to be compensated at all, the partnering universities must determine how. According to Liston, Whitcomb, and Borko (2006), mentoring should not be seen as an extra activity that teachers might choose to add to their burden; rather, it is a responsibility that needs time commitment. For mentor mentors to properly concentrate on mentoring, their teaching time should be minimized. Additionally, mentors are important because they have a good impact on the school's complete teaching and learning environment (Liston et al., 2006).

Incentives such as salary increases can serve to motivate mentors. Kilburg (2007) emphasizes the importance of compensating mentor teachers for the time they invest in mentoring, as taking personal and family time without compensation is not sustainable. School districts and school management teams should consider providing monetary compensation to mentors, demonstrating a commitment to, and valuing the conversations that mentees and mentors need to have regularly.

For mentors, it's essential to reduce their workload while maintaining their salaries. This reduction is important since in the initial years of teaching, lesson preparation takes a lot of time. It also enables mentees to take an active part in mentoring programs.

2.10.6 Contextual Components

The mentoring process is influenced by several circumstances, including demanding work environments that can result in feelings of ineffectiveness and burnout, such as large teaching loads, extracurricular obligations, resource constraints, and long hours (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005). Furthermore, elements of the educational setting, including school culture, goals, policies, curricula, administrative support, and resource availability, impact the effectiveness of mentoring (Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). According to Mabaso (2012), a supportive school culture—which encompasses instructors' comprehension of the school's structure, work requirements, and interpersonal relationships is crucial for the effectiveness of mentoring.

The curriculum of the school, which includes instructional paradigms and policies for classroom management, and instructional techniques, also shapes the learning environment and affects mentoring outcomes (Mabaso, 2012). Preservice student teachers require orientation not only on educational practices but also on administrative tasks and resources within the school to alleviate frustrations and stress (Mabaso, 2012). Cultural factors within the school, such as mentor motivation, preservice student teacher engagement, the efficiency of mentoring is influenced by resources available, support from school administration teams, and other factors (Nghaamwa, 2017).

Disabling school cultures characterized by poor leadership, professional isolation, and demoralized staff can hinder good mentorship (Intellectual Growth Networks, 2015). According to Liston et al. (2006), there is a substantial impact of workplace conditions specifically, supportive leadership and well-informed decision-making on teachers' competency and professional development. Mentees' professional identities and experiences are greatly influenced by their educational environment, and collaborative cultures are conducive to successful outcomes (Dishena, 2014; Nghaamwa, 2017).

However, in some schools, preservice student teachers may face challenges such as excessive workloads and unfair distribution of responsibilities, which can lead to frustration and burnout (Nghaamwa, 2017). To create a supportive learning environment for mentees, schools should focus on collaboration, leadership in learning, and recognizing mentees as valuable assets (Gravett and Ramsaroop,

2019). Supportive school cultures, where the needs of preservice student teachers are recognized and addressed, are essential for their success (Gravett and Kroon, 2023).

In order to create a supportive culture for mentees, mentors play a critical role in offering assistance, organizing mentoring programs, and encouraging cooperation among stakeholders (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). To guarantee the success of mentoring programs, all relevant parties' teachers and school administrators included should be included (Iancu-Haddad, 2009). Mentoring programs might not be successful if stakeholders don't support them (Liston et al., 2006).

In conclusion, addressing the barriers to effective mentoring requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders and a commitment to creating a supportive school culture. Changing a school's culture takes time, but with patience and incentives, such as rewards for teacher participation, it can be achieved (Schussler, 2006).

2.11 Group Mentoring as a Sustainable Solution for Mentees

Group mentoring can indeed serve as a sustainable solution for mentees in various contexts. In a group mentoring setting, mentees have access to a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and expertise from multiple mentors and peers. This diversity can offer comprehensive guidance and support that addresses different aspects of their professional and personal development. Group mentoring encourages collaboration and shared learning among mentees. Through discussions, brainstorming sessions, and collaborative projects, mentees can improve their combined knowledge and abilities by learning from one another's achievements, difficulties, and tactics (Ambrosetti et al., 2017).

Mentees in group mentoring settings often feel a sense of accountability to their peers, which can motivate them to set and achieve their goals (Ambrosetti, Dekkers, and Knight, (2017). Knowing that they are part of a supportive community where progress is monitored and celebrated can boost mentees' commitment and perseverance. Group mentoring exposes mentees to a broader network of mentors, peers, and professionals in their field. This expanded network can provide valuable connections, opportunities for collaboration, and access to resources that contribute to their long-term success and sustainability (Mphojane, 2021)

Group mentoring can be more cost and time efficient than traditional one-on-one mentoring, as it allows mentors to support multiple mentees simultaneously. Additionally, mentees benefit from shared resources, experiences, and support, maximizing the impact of mentoring efforts. Group mentoring can facilitate ongoing support and mentorship beyond formal programs or specific timeframes. Mentees may remain in touch with their peers and mentors, developing enduring bonds and getting assistance all throughout their professional lives (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022).

Overall, I assert that group mentoring offers a sustainable and holistic approach to mentorship, leveraging the collective wisdom, support, and resources of a community to empower mentees in their personal and professional growth journey. According to my findings, group mentoring exemplifies a comprehensive and enduring methodology for mentorship, capitalizing on the shared expertise, encouragement, and assets of the mentoring collective. This communal framework serves to uplift and assist mentees as they pursue their developmental trajectories in both their personal lives and career paths. The collective approach not only distributes mentoring responsibilities among a wider group, but also enriches the mentoring experience with diverse viewpoints, creating a robust support system that fosters individual advancement within the context of a nurturing community.

2.12 Mentoring Framework

The framework for mentoring programs, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership (2011) and exemplified by Queensland Health's Continence Clinicians mentoring framework, encompasses various essential components. These include identifying the target population, defining objectives and aims, facilitating mentor-mentee matching, determining the form and logistics of mentoring, establishing meeting arrangements, and involving relevant stakeholders such as advisors, staff, and participants (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011)

Queensland Health's framework, for instance, aimed to promote professional development principles, support clinicians in a dynamic work environment, offer tailored support, foster knowledge and skill growth, enhance recruitment and retention, improve workplace communication and efficiency, encourage a culture of

organizational learning, and bridge training and clinical implementation gaps (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011)

Effective mentoring frameworks require careful consideration and planning. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2011), setting up and managing such frameworks involves various components such as the mentoring process itself, mentor identification and training, routine organizational activities, public relations efforts, fundraising activities, budget allocations, and data collection for evaluation.

Successful mentoring frameworks are grounded in established mentoring methods and strategies, as highlighted by Montgomery (2017). Key discussions in forming a shared understanding about mentoring frameworks include communication methods, meeting frequency and objectives, and mentoring aspirations (Montgomery, 2017).

To ensure successful outcomes, it is crucial for mentors and mentees to have clear expectations and obligations (Grant, 2015; Washington & Cox, 2016). Megginson et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of establishing measurable outcomes linked to defined goals and expectations, as well as achieving a shared understanding of the mentoring discussion's nature and the form of the mentoring relationship.

Strike and Nickelsen (2011) suggest that effective mentoring frameworks typically span over several years, with ongoing support, professional development, and evaluation processes in place. Cordingley (2019) further emphasizes ten principles informing mentoring frameworks, including structured professional discourse, collaborative support, self-direction, goal-setting, and efficient resource utilization.

In summary, designing and implementing a sustainable mentoring framework requires careful consideration of objectives, target populations, logistics, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing evaluation processes. Clear communication, shared expectations, and a commitment to growth and development are essential for the success of mentoring programs.

2.13 Developing A Mentoring Framework

The creation of a mentoring framework for mentor teachers and preservice student teachers fulfils the vital function of offering assistance and direction in navigating the

demands and obligations of their positions. According to Hudson & Hudson (2018) major aims of such a framework include:

Understanding Job Expectations: Mentors and mentees should be able to comprehend their employment tasks, responsibilities, and expectations with the aid of the mentoring framework.

Mentors can provide insights into the day-to-day tasks, leadership responsibilities, and effective strategies for managing school operations.

Navigating Challenges: Mentees may encounter various challenges in their roles, such as managing conflicts, implementing new policies, or improving academic performance. The mentoring framework should equip mentees with strategies and resources to effectively address these challenges and overcome obstacles.

Improving Communication and Understanding: Effective communication is essential for successful mentorship. Mentors can support mentees in enhancing their communication skills, fostering positive relationships with staff, learners, and parents, and promoting a culture of collaboration and trust within the school community.

Establishing Professional Networks: For mentees to obtain resources, exchange best practices, and ask seasoned colleagues for guidance, they must first create professional networks. The mentoring framework should facilitate opportunities for mentees to connect with other educational mentors, both within and outside their school district.

Providing a Support System: Mentors often face high demands and levels of stress in their jobs. Principals should feel at ease asking for advice, disclosing issues, and getting encouragement from peers and mentors in a supportive environment created by the mentoring framework.

Enhancing Trust and Self-esteem: Mentoring can help boost mentees' confidence in their leadership abilities and decision-making skills. A strong sense of self-worth and role competency can be developed in principals through mentorship, support, and constructive criticism.

Promoting Professional and Personal Development: Ultimately, the mentoring framework should aim to foster the professional and personal growth of mentees.

Mentors can support mentees in setting goals, identifying areas for improvement, and pursuing professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

By addressing these key objectives, a well-designed mentoring framework can provide invaluable support to novice or struggling principals as they navigate the complexities of educational leadership and work towards achieving their professional and personal goals (Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

Model for Teaching Practice Mentoring Emanating from The Study

The figure below sets out the framework and interventions emanating from the data. From the six broad themes, a model for operational effectiveness was developed, as shown below:

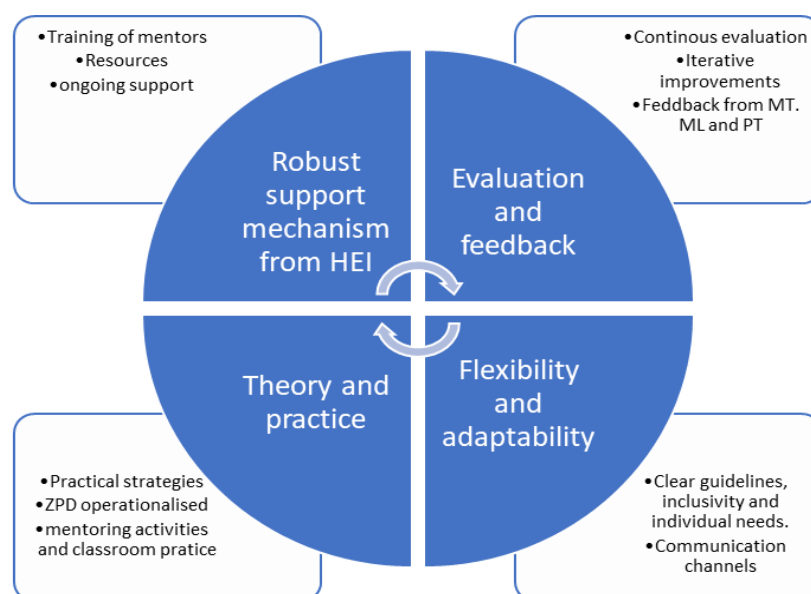


Figure 2.2: Model for Teaching practice mentoring

For foundation phase preservice teachers to complete their teaching practice in schools, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are essential sources of support. To create mentorship cultures that work, these institutions need to make sure that mentor instructors have strong support networks and opportunities for interaction. This necessitates a careful review and improvement of mentorship rules and associated

guidelines for teaching practices. The foundation for how mentor lecturers and mentor teachers conduct their mentoring sessions is provided by the laws and framework that regulate teaching practices. As a result, taking care of these elements is crucial to creating a thorough and successful mentoring strategy.

One concept drawn from Vygotsky's theory that emphasizes the importance of collaboration, shared decision-making, and a strong sense of community between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By utilizing this Vygotskian paradigm while mentoring Foundation Phase preservice teachers, an environment of respect for one another, candid communication, and cooperative problem-solving can be fostered. The ZPD method promotes power-sharing based on knowledge and a shared comprehension of the goal of education. By enabling mentor teachers to actively participate in decision-making processes and offer their experience, this collaborative process facilitates successful decision-making and problem-solving.

The concept is consistent with Vygotsky's observation that decisions and policies ought to result from dialogue that leads to agreement (Vygotsky, 1978). It emphasizes how crucial it is to meaningfully and collaboratively include mentor teachers in decision-making processes. Mentor teachers and lecturers can share their insightful knowledge and are held responsible for doing so. This collaborative decision-making increases the overall efficacy of the mentoring process and promotes a sense of ownership. Important elements of this paradigm are open, honest communication, strong administrative procedures, and efficient monitoring and assessment systems.

These components deal with issues with participant trust, communication, and coherence. The Vygotskian principle of shared learning emphasizes the need for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to align their beliefs, goals, and sense of accountability to foster a supportive learning environment and build trust (Kiral, 2020). Despite the important function that mentoring plays, a lack of training in many programs prevents upward mobility within mentoring jobs. Mentors frequently take strict, prescribed methods that might not be in line with how teaching is changing.

Mentoring frameworks need to put flexibility and creativity first in order to solve this. The mentoring framework should incorporate ongoing professional development and training to guarantee that mentors have the abilities needed to successfully navigate the changing educational landscape.

The new mentoring framework has a strong emphasis on professional development and leadership, which is in line with the study's conclusions. Control over resources, such as time, materials, and personnel, is frequently emphasized in traditional management teachings (Wana, 2019). But to be truly effective, mentoring needs to move from a model of control to one of service and support. "Leaders don't command and control; they serve and support," as Wana (2019) observes. It is imperative that mentors have the authority to make judgments grounded in professional ethics and collaborative principles. This emphasizes the necessity of providing mentors with both initial and continuous training and development.

Preservice teachers need a strong mentoring program to develop into excellent educators. Recognizing how mentor lecturers and mentor teachers impact the learning process is crucial to resolving problems with mentoring methods. A cohesive and effective mentoring environment requires cooperation between mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers.

Contextual elements like location, available resources, and institutional support also need to be considered because they have a big impact on how effective mentoring is. Comprehending these variables facilitate enhanced problem-solving efficacy and aids in detecting possible obstacles within the mentoring procedure.

HEIs can improve the assistance given to preservice teachers and mentor teachers by incorporating these components into the mentoring framework. This will ultimately result in more effective teaching practices and professional development.

2.14 Hudson's Five-Factor Framework for Mentoring

A five-factor model was identified by Hudson (2013) and includes the following: modelling, feedback, system needs, pedagogical expertise, and personal traits (see Figure 2.3). Every element has a major impact on how successful mentoring relationships and instructional strategies are. The five-factor model is explored below.

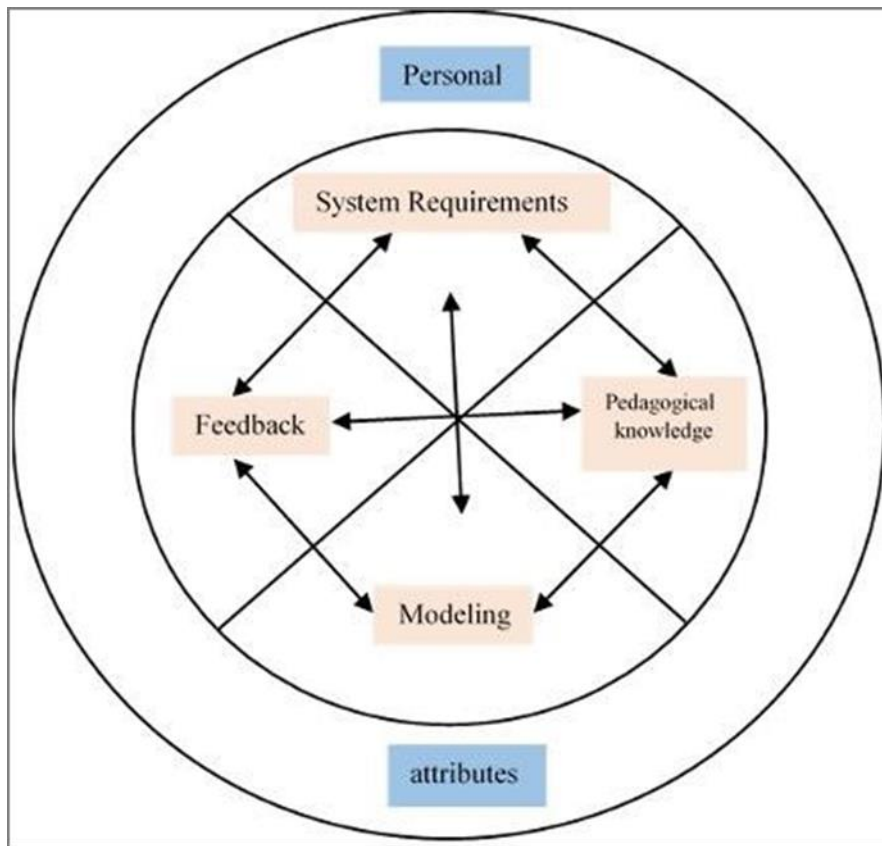


Figure 2.3: Five-Factor Framework for Mentoring Developed By Hudson (2013)

Personal Attributes: This component includes the traits and personal attributes of mentors as well as mentees. Personal attributes such as empathy, communication skills, adaptability, and openness to feedback are crucial for building strong mentoring relationships and fostering professional growth. Mentors and mentees with positive personal attributes are more likely to establish rapport, trust, and mutual respect, which are essential for effective mentoring.

Pedagogical Learning: is the comprehension of educational theories, practices, and concepts. Mentors should possess a deep understanding of pedagogy and instructional strategies to provide meaningful guidance and support to mentees. This includes knowledge of curriculum development, assessment techniques, differentiated instruction, and classroom management strategies. Mentors with strong pedagogical knowledge can help mentees improve the learning outcomes for their students and their efficacy as teachers.

System Requirements: encompass the organizational structures, policies, and procedures that influence mentoring programs and educational practices. Mentors and mentees must navigate various system requirements, such as administrative expectations, resource allocation, time constraints, and accountability measures. Understanding and effectively managing these system requirements are essential for implementing successful mentoring programs and achieving desired outcomes.

Modelling: involves the demonstration of effective teaching practices and professional behaviours by mentors. Mentors serve as role models for mentees, showcasing exemplary teaching strategies, decision-making processes, ethical conduct, and reflective practices. Mentees gain knowledge from mentors' modelling behaviours through observation and imitation, which they then implement into their own teaching practices. In mentoring relationships, modelling is an effective way to impart knowledge, skills, and values.

Feedback: is essential for promoting continuous improvement and reflective practice in mentoring relationships. Mentors provide constructive feedback to mentees based on observations, assessments, and interactions. Effective feedback highlights strengths, identifies areas for growth, and offers specific suggestions for improvement. Mentees benefit from receiving timely and actionable feedback from mentors, which helps them refine their teaching techniques, address challenges, and achieve professional goals (Hudson, 2013).

The five-factor model developed by Hudson (2013) emphasizes the complexity of mentoring relationships and instructional strategies. Mentors and mentees can improve student learning outcomes, foster professional growth, and increase their effectiveness by addressing personal qualities, pedagogical expertise, system requirements, modelling, and feedback.

The mentoring study makes use of Hudson's (2013) five-factor framework since it provides a comprehensive and empirically supported method for comprehending the workings of successful mentoring partnerships. Each element is crucial in defining the experiences and outcomes of mentors and mentees, including human traits, pedagogical knowledge, system requirements, modelling, and feedback. This study uses this framework to assess how these components operate in the mentoring program, especially with regard to mentees improved professional development.

Additionally, the framework makes it possible to analyze the mentoring process in a more systematic manner and provides insights into the ways in which professional competence, institutional expectations, and personal traits interact to create meaningful, introspective learning experiences. Furthermore, Hudson's model aids in identifying the mentoring framework's strong points and potential areas for development, directing the creation of interventions that can enhance the standard of mentoring and, in turn, enhance instructional strategies and student achievement. By applying this framework, mentoring relationships are guaranteed to be in line with best practices and to foster long-term development in the context of education.

2.15 Conclusion

Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive examination of models of mentoring, the conceptualization of mentoring, and the roles of mentors and mentees, with a particular focus on the context of South Africa, other African countries, and developing nations. Throughout the literature review, various models of mentoring have been explored, highlighting the diverse approaches to mentorship found in different educational settings. From formal structured programs to informal peer mentoring arrangements, the review has demonstrated the importance of flexibility and adaptability in mentoring practices to meet the unique needs of preservice student teachers.

Additionally, the conceptualization of mentoring has been discussed, emphasizing its multifaceted nature as both a supportive relationship and a professional development process. Mentoring is not only about imparting knowledge and skills but also about fostering personal growth, confidence, and resilience among mentees.

The roles of mentors and mentees have been delineated, underscoring the importance of collaboration, guidance, and mutual respect in mentoring relationships. Mentors play a crucial role in providing support, feedback, and encouragement to mentees, while mentees contribute their enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and openness to feedback.

Furthermore, the concept of mentoring in South Africa, other African countries, and developing nations has been examined, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced in these contexts. Limited resources, lack of mentoring programs, and socio-economic disparities present significant barriers to effective mentorship, yet

innovative approaches and community-driven initiatives offer promising avenues for supporting mentees in these settings.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 delved into the relevant literature pertaining to the subject of the study. It provided background information on the mentoring of preservice student teachers in South Africa, outlined the study's location and context, and reviewed the impact of mentoring in various studies and contexts. Moreover, it examined both challenges and success factors influencing mentoring preservice student teachers. The chapter also discussed effective mentoring areas, mentor and mentee roles, responsibilities, and the obstacles encountered in mentoring.

As previously highlighted, the study aimed to design, implement, and evaluate a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers while identifying barriers hindering effective mentoring in a South African higher education institution. It also investigated issues affecting mentoring and defined what constitutes effective mentorship. The study also considered factors impacting lecturers and mentor teachers, given the emphasis on preservice student teacher mentorship. The parts that follow provide a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework used in the study as well as the mentorship structure.

3.2 Mentoring Framework

The framework for mentoring programs, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership (2011) and exemplified by Queensland Health's Continence Clinicians mentoring framework, encompasses various essential components. These include identifying the target population, defining objectives and aims, facilitating mentor-mentee matching, determining the form and logistics of mentoring, establishing meeting arrangements, and involving relevant stakeholders such as advisors, staff, and participants (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011)

Queensland Health's framework, for instance, aimed to promote professional development principles, support clinicians in a dynamic work environment, offer tailored support, foster knowledge and skill growth, enhance recruitment and retention, improve workplace communication and efficiency, encourage a culture of

organizational learning, and bridge training and clinical implementation gaps (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011)

Effective mentoring frameworks require careful consideration and planning. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2011), setting up and managing such frameworks involves various components such as the mentoring process itself, mentor identification and training, routine organizational activities, public relations efforts, fundraising activities, budget allocations, and data collection for evaluation.

Successful mentoring frameworks are grounded in established mentoring methods and strategies, as highlighted by Montgomery (2017). Key discussions in forming a shared understanding about mentoring frameworks include communication methods, meeting frequency and objectives, and mentoring aspirations (Montgomery, 2017).

To ensure successful outcomes, it is crucial for mentors and mentees to have clear expectations and obligations (Grant, 2015; Washington & Cox, 2016). Megginson et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of establishing measurable outcomes linked to defined goals and expectations, as well as achieving a shared understanding of the mentoring discussion's nature and the form of the mentoring relationship.

Strike and Nickelsen (2011) suggest that effective mentoring frameworks typically span over several years, with ongoing support, professional development, and evaluation processes in place. Cordingley (2019) further emphasizes ten principles informing mentoring frameworks, including structured professional discourse, collaborative support, self-direction, goal-setting, and efficient resource utilization.

In summary, designing and implementing a sustainable mentoring framework requires careful consideration of objectives, target populations, logistics, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing evaluation processes. Clear communication, shared expectations, and a commitment to growth and development are essential for the success of mentoring programs.

3.3 Developing a New Mentoring Framework

Developing a mentoring framework for preservice student teachers and mentor teachers serves the crucial purpose of providing support and guidance to navigate the

challenges and responsibilities of their role. According to Hudson & Hudson (2018) primary objectives of such a framework include:

Understanding Job Expectations: The mentoring framework should help mentors and mentees to gain a clear understanding of their job roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Mentors can provide insights into the day-to-day tasks, leadership responsibilities, and effective strategies for managing school operations.

Navigating Challenges: Mentees may encounter various challenges in their roles, such as managing conflicts, implementing new policies, or improving academic performance. The mentoring framework should equip mentees with strategies and resources to effectively address these challenges and overcome obstacles.

Improving Communication and Understanding: Effective communication is essential for successful mentorship. Mentors can support mentees in enhancing their communication skills, fostering positive relationships with staff, learners, and parents, and promoting a culture of collaboration and trust within the school community.

Establishing Professional Networks: Building professional networks is critical for mentees to access resources, share best practices, and seek advice from experienced colleagues. The mentoring framework should facilitate opportunities for mentees to connect with other educational mentors, both within and outside their school district.

Providing a Support System: Mentors often face high levels of stress and pressure in their roles. The mentoring framework should establish a supportive environment where principals feel comfortable seeking guidance, sharing concerns, and receiving encouragement from their mentors and peers.

Enhancing Trust and Self-esteem: Mentoring can help boost mentees' confidence in their leadership abilities and decision-making skills. Through constructive feedback, encouragement, and mentorship, principals can develop a strong sense of self-esteem and competence in their role.

Promoting Professional and Personal Development: Ultimately, the mentoring framework should aim to foster the professional and personal growth of mentees. Mentors can support mentees in setting goals, identifying areas for improvement, and pursuing professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

By addressing these key objectives, a well-designed mentoring framework can provide invaluable support to novice or struggling principals as they navigate the complexities of educational leadership and work towards achieving their professional and personal goals (Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Framing the study within a pragmatic paradigm allows for a flexible approach, combining various methods to address the research questions effectively (Leavy, 2017). The chosen theoretical framework should align with the research questions and provide guidance for data analysis.

Given the focus on examining the mentoring orientation of South African teacher preparation within its context, Vygotsky's constructivism theory, particularly the concepts of scaffolding and zone of proximal development (ZPD), were selected. Vygotsky's theory is appropriate for comprehending how mentoring functions within the context of teacher preparation since it highlights the importance of social contact and assistance in learning (Leavy, 2017).

As an additional conceptual framework for the study, Hudson & Hudson's five-factor framework on effective teacher training (2013) was included. This framework provides a paradigm that covers many facets of teacher training and provides an organized method for analyzing successful mentoring methods.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study can effectively explore the dynamics of mentoring in South African teacher preparation programs, considering both the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications for designing an effective mentoring framework. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how mentoring operates within the specific context of South African teacher education, while also providing insights into the practical implementation of mentoring practices. By considering both theoretical principles, such as Vygotsky's constructivism theory, and practical considerations outlined in frameworks like Hudson and Hudson's, the study can offer valuable guidance for the development of mentoring programs that meet the needs of novice teachers and contribute to their professional growth and development (Hudson, 2013).

3.4.1 Social Learning Theories and Mentoring

The integration of social learning theories, such as Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978), into mentoring programs can greatly enhance the effectiveness of mentoring for preservice student teachers. The importance of social interaction and teamwork in the learning process is emphasized by Vygotsky's theory. In this situation, mentoring acts to encourage social contact and give mentees directed support as they advance their knowledge and abilities.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning happens when people connect with more experienced people, like mentors, who help learners by offering guidance and scaffolding when they take on tasks that are beyond their current capacity. Mentors serve as expert others who guide and facilitate the mentees' learning process, gradually transferring responsibility to the mentees as they gain confidence and competence.

Furthermore, social learning theories stress how crucial modelling, imitation, and observation are to the learning process. Mentors can demonstrate effective teaching practices, provide feedback, and offer opportunities for mentees to observe and emulate successful strategies in real-world contexts.

By integrating social learning principles into mentoring programs, mentors can create collaborative learning environments where preservice student teachers have opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, receive tailored support, and actively participate in their own learning. This method not only helps mentees advance professionally, but it also builds a sense of support and companionship between mentees and mentors. Incorporating social learning theories into mentoring programs for preservice student teachers can help mentors effectively support mentees' learning and development by providing scaffolding, modelling, and opportunities for social interaction and collaboration. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of learning and can contribute to the success and effectiveness of mentoring initiatives in education (Vygotsky, 1978).

3.4.2 Social Cognitive Theories and Mentoring

Bandura's social cognitive theory, as described by Kasai (2012), provides valuable insights into how people learn through observation, imitation, and practice in social environments. This theory underscores the significance of mentors as role models whose behaviours and actions are observed and emulated by mentees. The emphasis on observation, imitation, and practice highlights the iterative process through which individuals internalize and refine their skills and behaviours.

The mentor-mentee relationship, as depicted in this theory, is characterized by mutual understanding and reciprocal learning. Mentors serve as critical friends, guides, and counsellors, actively engaging in a relationship that benefits both parties. This aligns with the idea that mentoring is a two-way stream, where mentors and mentees derive value from each other's experiences, perspectives, and skills.

Furthermore, the theory underscores the importance of social learning in various contexts beyond formal mentoring programs, such as schools, churches, and sports fields. This highlights the pervasive nature of social learning and its relevance in diverse social settings.

Bandura's assertion that most human behaviour is learned through observation underscores the significance of modelling and social interaction in shaping individuals' behaviours and choices. However, it is essential to recognize that observation alone is not sufficient for learning; individuals' own motivation and cognitive processes also play a crucial role in determining what is learned and how it is applied.

Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a compelling framework for understanding the role of observation, imitation, and practice in learning within social contexts. By recognizing the importance of mentors as models and facilitators of learning, this theory informs effective mentoring practices aimed at supporting mentees' professional and personal development.

In this study, Bandura's theory of social learning is not utilized in the development of the mentoring framework. Bandura's theory emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in learning behaviour, suggesting that individuals learn from their environment through social interactions and the experiences of others. While Bandura's theory offers valuable insights into how individuals acquire new knowledge

and skills through observation and modelling, it may not directly align with the specific focus of the mentoring framework being developed in this study.

Therefore, while Bandura's theory offers valuable insights into social learning processes, I highlight that it is not directly applied in the development of the mentoring framework in this study, as the focus is on integrating Vygotsky's constructivism theory and Hudson and Hudson's framework to address the specific research questions and objectives.

3.4.3 Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory

The zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is central to Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, offers a useful framework for comprehending the mentor-mentee relationship in the context of education. The difference between what a learner can do on their own and what they can accomplish with the help of a more experienced person, such a mentor, is known as the ZPD.

The mentoring model aligns well with Vygotsky's theory, as mentors play a crucial role in guiding and scaffolding the learning of their mentees. Mentors provide the necessary support and assistance to help mentees progress from their current level of understanding and skill to a higher level of proficiency. This process involves a gradual transfer of responsibility from the mentor to the mentee, as the mentee gains confidence and competence in their abilities.

Vygotsky highlighted how people build knowledge through their relationships with others, emphasizing the importance of social interactions in learning. As a result, mentoring turns into a cooperative process in which mentees and mentors cooperate to meet common learning objectives. Mentees actively participate in learning activities and strive to internalize new information and abilities, while mentors offer direction, criticism, and modelling.

In the mentoring process, the idea of intersubjectivity, or shared understanding, is essential. The duties and objectives of the mentoring relationship must be understood by both mentees and mentors. This common viewpoint promotes efficient communication and teamwork, which helps the mentor and mentee transmit information and abilities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes the value of social interaction, scaffolding, and shared understanding in the learning process, provides insightful understanding of the dynamics of mentoring relationships overall. By putting Vygotsky's theories into practice, mentors can assist their mentees in realizing their full potential and advancing on their learning path. The way the mentor raises the mentee's ZPD is depicted in Figure 2.4 (Vygotsky, 1978).

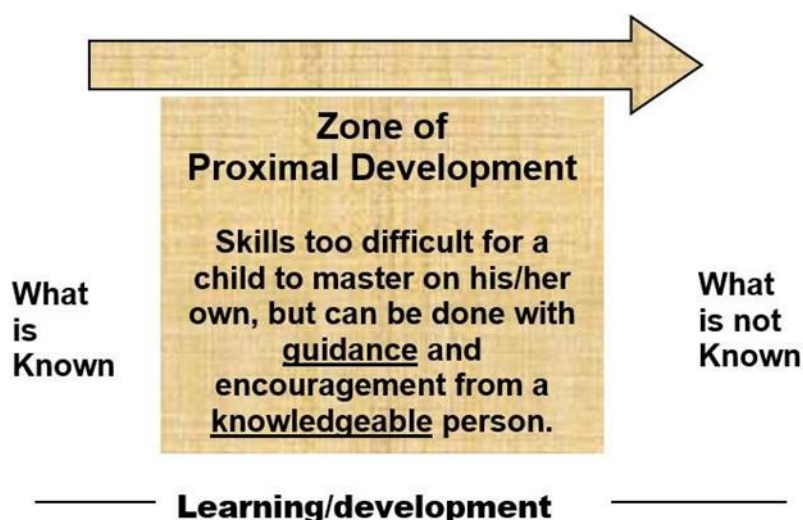


Figure 3.1 Zone of Proximal Development (Adapted from Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

This study defines the zone of proximal development (ZPD) of preservice student teachers as the difference between their potential level and the level of knowledge they now possess from their teaching practice, under the guidance of seasoned mentors. This emphasizes the notion that mentors, texts, in-service training, and observation are some of the other resources that help preservice student teachers advance their ZPD in addition to their university education.

Actively participating in the process of transitioning from one ZPD to the next is essential for ongoing development, both personally and professionally. Stalling ZPD can occur from nonparticipation in developmental initiatives. Setting specific short- and long-term goals and keeping track of advancement are necessary to maintain one's ZPD. It is advised for preservice student teachers to take charge of their own development rather than relying only on mentors. To advance both personally and professionally, preservice student teachers must participate in ongoing professional

development programs and get mentorship early in their careers. According to Vygotsky, the ZPD represents the difference between what a learner can accomplish on their own and what they can accomplish with help. "Proximal" refers to the degree to which the help offered is in line with the learner's prior knowledge or abilities. Mentees can improve their knowledge and abilities through interaction with seasoned mentors through collaborative initiatives like mentoring programs. (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Chaiklin (2003), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is reached when a student gains the capacity to work independently through contact or cooperation with their teacher. The teacher provides opportunities for learning, imitation, observation, and gradual skill improvement. As per Vygotsky (1998), the ZPD can be established through collaboration, which enables the extraction of components that propel mental growth both during and post the developmental stages of the learner. Vygotsky (1998) used collaboration and interpretation as techniques of instructional experiments to identify and support learners with smaller ZPDs in moving to larger ones, as noted by Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, and Miller (2003). For people to advance from their current developmental stage to their potential level, scaffolding is necessary. When scaffolding is used throughout the mentoring process, mentees benefit since it makes it more likely that they will learn the skills they are taught using this method.

Scaffolding



Figure 3.2: ZPD and Scaffolding (Adapted from McLeod, 2018, np).

According to McLeod (2018, np), Figure 5 shows the extent of a child's capacity for autonomous learning, the knowledge that can be acquired with help, and the concepts that are above their current level of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning should occur through social contact, with more experienced people serving as mentors and leaders. These adults could give verbal directions or set an example of behaviour until the youngster is able to complete the task on their own. This procedure is like the use of scaffolding in building, where support is given while a structure is being built and taken down once it is finished or stable.

Foundation phase preservice teachers face the challenge of bridging theoretical knowledge acquired during pre-service education with practical applications in schools. This transition can be complex and unsettling, necessitating scaffolding. Scaffolding involves teachers ensuring that learners academically benefit from instruction and learning materials (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). These supportive measures are crucial, as the volume and complexity of knowledge acquired may leave preservice student teachers at a threshold, rather than fully integrating them into the learning environment. Similarly, as adult learners navigating new teaching environments, preservice student teachers may experience uncertainty and require guidance to acclimate to the work environment.

Scaffolding is defined by Balaban (1995:52) as the direction that the teacher gives the student while utilizing targeted questions and encouraging interactions to promote learning. According to Van de Pol, Volman, Oort, and Beishuizen (2019), it entails assisting the student in moving from their present level of understanding to their prospective level of understanding. Van de Pol et al. (2019) claim that the scaffolding and assistance provided to learners to do tasks successfully determines their success in any given activity. By assigning assignments of a suitable level of difficulty, overseeing them skilfully, and modifying their support as necessary, teachers offer contingent support. Scaffolding is a metaphor used by Van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2019) to represent the temporary help that is given in education to satisfy the requirements of learners.

Scaffolding in education refers to individualized help that is catered to the needs of students and the educational norms (Van de Pol et al., 2019). This implies that scaffolding entails students being guided by an experienced teacher who progressively withdraws support, in a manner akin to how scaffolding is taken down when construction is finished. When it comes to mentoring, an experienced teacher who has more knowledge and experience is in charge of assisting a new teacher in learning the nuances of the classroom until the new teacher is competent enough to run the program on their own without the mentor's help.

3.5 Linking the Newly Developed Mentoring Framework to Vygotsky's Theory

Scaffolding: The new mentoring framework aligns with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding by providing temporary, targeted support to help preservice teachers achieve tasks they cannot perform independently. The framework's structured feedback and personalized support mechanisms mirror the scaffolding approach, offering step-by-step guidance that gradually reduces as preservice teachers gain competence. This ensures that support is closely matched to the preservice teacher's current abilities and developmental needs.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The framework directly connects to the ZPD by focusing on providing support within the range of tasks that preservice teachers can perform with guidance but cannot yet complete on their own. By tailoring feedback and support to the preservice teacher's ZPD, the framework ensures that challenges are appropriately aligned with their developmental level. This helps preservice teachers progress from guided learning to independent practice, effectively bridging the gap between their current capabilities and potential.

Relationship-Building and Trust: Building trust and respect between mentors and preservice teachers is crucial for effective scaffolding. The framework's emphasis on relationship-building activities and supportive interactions is consistent with Vygotsky's view that a positive and collaborative learning environment is essential for effective scaffolding. Strong mentor-preservice teacher relationships facilitate a supportive learning atmosphere where preservice teachers feel comfortable seeking help and exploring new concepts.

Professional Development for Mentors: Ongoing professional development ensures that mentors are equipped with the skills necessary for effective scaffolding. Training in advanced mentoring techniques and communication skills helps mentors identify and address the ZPD of their preservice teachers, providing appropriate and effective support. This continuous professional growth aligns with Vygotsky's idea that educators need to be well-prepared to support learners' developmental needs.

Regular Evaluations: Evaluations of the mentoring process conducted on a regular basis show how scaffolding is dynamic and adapts to the changing demands of the learner. By ensuring that mentoring support is adaptable to changes in the preservice teacher's ZPD, the framework's iterative evaluation approach promotes continued growth and learning.

In summary, the new mentoring framework integrates Vygotsky's principles of scaffolding and the ZPD by offering tailored, step-by-step support, focusing on the preservice teacher's developmental level, fostering strong relationships, and ensuring continuous professional development and evaluation. This theoretical alignment enhances the framework's effectiveness in supporting the growth and development of preservice teachers.

3.6 Conclusion

The theoretical framework and mentorship structure supporting the study were thoroughly outlined in this chapter's conclusion. The chapter established the groundwork for understanding how these theories feed successful mentoring practices by examining the pertinent ideas that informed the research, such as Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. The intricacies of the mentoring relationship were scrutinized via the prism of the theoretical framework, specifically with regard to preservice teacher development within the context of a higher education environment in South Africa.

A thorough explanation of the mentorship framework was also provided, highlighting the duties and obligations of lecturers and mentor teachers in assisting preservice teachers as they progress through their careers. In addition to assisting in the development of teaching competencies, this framework was intended to provide a

positive learning atmosphere where preservice teachers could evaluate their methods and get helpful criticism. The chapter emphasized the interaction between theory and practice, showing how the mentorship framework's conception and execution were guided by theoretical precepts.

To summarize, this chapter presents the theoretical framework and mentorship structure that serve as the conceptual and practical basis for the research. These components are essential for comprehending the study of the mentoring framework's efficacy that follows, as well as for identifying problems and potential areas of development. This chapter will provide valuable insights that will be crucial in analyzing the results and developing suggestions for improving mentorship in teacher education.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1. Introduction

Chapter Three of this study focused on the theoretical framework and concepts that guided the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The social learning theorist Vygotsky (1978) and his influential works on scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development theory significantly deepened the critical analysis of the research outcomes. This chapter emphasized the importance of aligning research sites, methodology, design, instruments, sampling techniques, study participants, and rationale with the study's objectives and research questions.

The methodology chapter is divided into several sections that outline the reasoning behind participant selection, the rationale behind specific study site selection, and the underlying reasoning for methodological decisions. The pragmatic paradigm, which served as the research paradigm for this study, is also covered in depth in this chapter. The chapter ends with a brief analysis of the limitations of the study and how they were overcome.

4.2 Critical Research Question

As previously stated, this study aims to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for pre-service teachers, in a higher education institution in South Africa.

Research questions are derived from knowledge gaps that have been found in each field or subject. These inquiries may result from in-depth literature assessments or original research projects (Maree, 2020). They are the first steps in a research activity since they are inquiries into problems or concerns that need to be looked at. On the other hand, the research topic is the initial stage of a research project that is usually started after a thorough grasp of the topic needs to be investigated (Creswell, 2017).

A substantial body of published research characterizes the research topic as a targeted investigation that forms the basis of a research study. It expresses the facet of a subject that the investigator hopes to explore (Maree, 2020; Willis, 2023). In a subject of study, research questions are created to fill in knowledge gaps or investigate novel occurrences. They give the research process direction by advising the choice of suitable methodologies, tactics for gathering data, and approaches for analysis. A well-written research topic is precise, succinct, and clear, allowing the investigator to methodically examine and respond to it via empirical study (Ibrahim & Bryant, 2023; Newman & Gough, 2020).

The study is directed by the following main research question, which considers the demands of mentor teachers, lecturers, and preservice student teachers during teaching practice:

How is a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed?

4.2.1 Research Hypothesis

The inclusion of hypotheses that align with the quantitative aspect of the study is reasonable, considering the mixed-method approach utilized in the research. A statement or assertion that the researcher wants to verify or investigate is called a hypothesis in a research project. It usually asserts a conclusion regarding a study's findings or forecasts a relationship between two or more variables (Maree, 2020). A clear direction for data gathering and analysis is provided by the hypothesis, which directs the research process, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). As per Creswell & Creswell (2018), the hypothesis presents a particular claim or forecast that the investigator hopes to verify by empirical research.

The aim of this study is to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for foundation phase pre-service teachers. This study is motivated by the recognized importance of good mentoring in shaping foundation phase pre-service teachers' professional development and accomplishments. Although traditional mentoring approaches have shown to be beneficial, they might not be sustainable or

able to adjust to new difficulties in teacher preparation (Hudson & Hudson, 2018; Haas, Hudson, and Hudson, 2022). Consequently, the investigation of a sustainable mentorship structure tailored to pre-service teachers' evolving requirements is suggested by this study.

Based on the above given circumstances, the ensuing research hypotheses are developed:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There won't be a discernible difference between the sustainable mentoring model and conventional mentoring techniques in terms of how effective mentoring is for pre-service teachers.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): When compared to conventional mentoring techniques, the sustainable mentoring model will result in far higher efficacy in mentoring pre-service teachers.

According to the alternative hypothesis, traditional mentoring methods will not result in the same level of progress or effectiveness for pre-service teachers as the sustainable mentoring model. By conducting a thorough empirical investigation, this research seeks to investigate and validate this theory.

4.3 Rationale for Developing a Framework for Preservice Teachers

The rationale of the proposed study originally arose from the researcher's contact and informal conversations with a few mentor teachers she met during teaching practice at partnering schools. During these conversations, mentor teachers indicate that they were frustrated and faced uncertainty about how to conduct mentoring with foundation phase student teachers. In addition, the researcher encountered foundation phase student teachers who attended teaching practice at the same partnering schools who voiced their frustrations about not knowing what to expect during teaching practice mentoring.

Based on these encounters the researcher started investigating the literature available in this regard but soon realized that although there was literature available on this topic, there was a lack of literature that was conducted with an aim of addressing gaps in practice, structure, support, mentee learning, and developing a context-specific

mentoring framework that will provide guidance to the mentor teachers and student teachers.

In line with the above statements, it is evident that there is an opportunity and a greater need for a mentoring framework to be developed. In taking advantage of the gap that exists this study aims to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for pre-service teachers that enhances teaching practice of preservice in a higher education institution in South Africa.

4.4 Research Site

The environmental context in which the study is conducted, and the data is gathered is known as the research setting (Yin, 2018; Maree, 2020). The research site, Mavuba Primary School, is situated in the township of Siyabuswa. For the sake of anonymity, it is referred to by aliases in this study. By keeping the research site anonymous, readers are better able to avoid assuming anything about the institution based on its location or reputation. This makes it possible to keep the findings and analysis front and center rather than the site's particular features.

South Africa's province of Mpumalanga has the township of Siyabuswa. The capital of the Kwa Ndebele Bantustan during the Apartheid era was Siyabuswa. It served as the capital from 1981 to 1986, when Kwa Mhlanga assumed the role.

The ethnic Ndebele people make up most of the population. The social structure of the people of Siyabuswa is diverse and influenced by a multitude of factors, such as their cultural background, economic status, and historical background. The community is defined by ties to one another, a feeling of shared identity, and comfortable connections. Township people work in a range of occupations that show a blending of the formal and informal economies. Siyabuswa does, however, have social issues, just like many township areas. These issues, which include issues with poverty, education, and resource availability, might have an impact on the community's overall social cohesiveness (Phahlamohlaka & De Villiers, 2021).

4.4.1 'Mavuba Primary School'

Mavuba primary school is an ordinary school specializing in full-service subjects. Since the school is a Section 21 institution, the Department of Education provides funding for it. The school must use the allotted funds to purchase textbooks and student stationery, pay for electricity and water, and take care of its own maintenance. With a population of 1633 and 30 teachers serving it, the school falls into quintile 2, meaning that the learner-teacher ratio is 54:1. According to student enrolment in schools, quintiles are assigned. Parents and students do not contribute to school fees if they fall under the national quintile 1 to 3. This reflects the socioeconomic status of the students.

The quintile and enrolment data for the primary school are shown in the diagram below.

NATIONAL QUINTILE	2021 SCHOOL ENROLMENT	2022 SCHOOL ENROLMENT	2023 SCHOOL ENROLMENT
NQ1-3	1466	1536	1610
NQ 4	735	770	807
NQ 5	590	598	650

Table 4.1: National Quintiles of Schools

The selected public-school falls within the quintile 1-3 threshold, which means that they are no-fee-paying schools. The schools' population is depicted in the table below.

SCHOOL	POPULATION/ENROLMENT
Mavuba Primary School	1633

Table 4.2: Learner Enrolment of the Selected Primary School

4.5 Target Population

The participants were assigned pseudonyms that represented their roles in the study for the sake of confidentiality: the abbreviations MT, LT, and PT stood for mentor teachers, lecturers, and preservice teachers, respectively. The development of a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers throughout their teaching practice was

the focus of this study's research. Purposive selection of the participants was done using the qualitative method.

The process of choosing research participants for information-rich data from a certain place to fulfill the study's objectives is known as purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling is used to reach "knowledgeable people," or those who have in-depth knowledge due to their professional function, power, and access to networks, expertise, or experience, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017). Lewin (2019) states that purposeful sampling comprises selecting people, groups, or institutions (like schools) who possess a wealth of knowledge that may be utilized to solve the research questions.

By purposefully choosing the participants, I aimed to reduce the impact of bias and improve the validity and reliability of the results. The validity and reliability of my study were enhanced using a range of methodologies, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis (Yin, 2009). Mavuba Primary School was purposefully chosen by me because of its proximity to the university, which makes it convenient for collaboration. The foundation phase mentor teachers there are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their respective fields. They are deeply aware of the complexities and difficulties associated with teaching in their setting. Purposive sampling, according to Weyant (2022), entails the researcher's deliberate selection of participants. Researchers may choose cases by hand to include in the sample based on their assessment of the cases' typicality.

According to Creswell (2021), it is critical that the researcher gains knowledge from the research participants who provide the data. Since they follow course and module guidelines, the mentor lecturers will be included in this sense. Because subject-integration is a crucial component of their curricular practices, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. Pre-service teachers in their third year of schooling have usually finished most of their teacher education program and acquired fundamental information and abilities. They are now in a position where they can actively participate in mentoring relationships and offer insightful criticism on the creation of a mentoring framework.

Research issues aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the mentorship framework will be addressed using quantitative data. To obtain the respondents, stratified sampling will be employed. By grouping the population into subgroups or strata according to specific traits that are pertinent to the study, stratified sampling is a sampling technique. In 2020, Maree; in Creswell and Creswell (2018). Stratified sampling is a technique that divides the population into homogeneous subgroups, or strata, depending on characteristics, and then chooses a proportionate number of participants from each stratum to guarantee that the sample accurately represents the community.

Table of target population

Research participants	Gender	Race	Qualifications
Mentor teachers	4 Females 1 male	All African	All have bachelor's degrees
Lecturers	3 females	2 black 1 white	All have doctoral degrees
	2 males	1 black and 1 white	
Preservice teachers	10 females 10 males	All black	Third year Bachelor of education in Foundation phase students

Table 4.3 Table of Target Population

4.6 Sampling techniques

A sampling approach is a method used in research to choose individuals from a population (Maree, 2020). Because of the nature of the research project, participants in the teaching practice program were chosen through the technique of purposive sampling. Because it enables the researcher to select participants who are both easily accessible and have pertinent information, the purposive sampling method is suitable for qualitative research. As per Lewin (2019), purposeful sampling comprises selecting individuals, groups, or institutions (like schools) that possess copious amounts of information that can be employed to tackle the research problems. Careful thought and effort went into the selection of participants, which took place within the HEI. The

mentor teachers were recruited as participants using purposive sampling. The sample consisted of five mentor lecturers and five mentor teachers in addition to 20 preservice teachers who are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. These 20 third-year students are preservice teachers pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree with a Foundation phase concentration.

The third-year preservice students were recruited through an email invitation. An email was sent to all third-year students in the B.Ed. Foundation phase program, explaining the purpose of the research and inviting interested individuals to participate. Due to their extensive mentoring experience with preservice teachers, the five mentor teachers will be chosen as the most knowledgeable. They were therefore supposed to have amassed important knowledge that could be converted into relevant data. Because they follow course and module guidelines, the five mentor lecturers will be included. Because subject-integration is a crucial component of their curricular practices, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. Based on casual contacts that led to observations that they would provide the most relevant data; these five mentor lecturers are the most knowledgeable since they showed that they owned a great deal of mentoring information that they were eager to share.

Since year three preservice teachers at the research site are allocated to mentor lecturers and mentor teachers who will be evaluating them, quantitative data from year three preservice teachers will be gathered. Research issues aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the mentorship framework will be addressed using quantitative data. To obtain the respondents, stratified sampling will be employed. According to specific characteristics that are pertinent to the research, the population is divided into subgroups or strata using the stratified sampling approach (Maree, 2020; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

For this reason, foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers who are participating in teaching practice at the higher institution are welcome to participate in the research of this study. Several criteria were used to categorize the participants into groups: the mentees' experience level in mentoring, the mentor instructors' mentoring skills, and the fact that they are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. The five mentor lecturers who are

assigned to third years out of a possible 10 mentor lecturers will be chosen through stratified sampling from among the twenty foundation phase preservice teachers, who are third-year students pursuing the B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Preservice teachers who attend teaching practice at fifteen cooperating schools are paired with five mentor teachers.

4.7 Research Design

According to Van Wyk & Taole (2021), the research design is the road map that directs a researcher in choosing how to conduct their study strategy. As such, it is an exact description of how a researcher would do their work. To make sure that the study's conclusions adequately answer the research questions, research designs are plans for connecting the data to be gathered, the data to be analysed, and the research questions. (2020, Babbie). The type of research topic under investigation, the target audience for the study, and the specific objectives of the research project all influence the research design, in my opinion.

The design that is employed is exploratory sequential design. Exploratory sequential design is a three-phase study in which a researcher follows the constructivist approach. In the first step, a researcher conducts a thorough investigation of the issue; in the second part, the variable and statistical trend are identified and measured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to this design, testing and collection of quantitative data come after the analysis and gathering of qualitative data (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Dawadi, 2020). The first step in this strategy is the gathering and examination of qualitative data. Finally, a researcher quantitatively evaluates the variable they have identified and interprets the quantitative data in terms of how it generalizes and extends the qualitative findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). These steps build on the qualitative findings and lead to the development of quantitative measures or instruments (Maree, 2020).

The exploratory sequential design is helpful when the researcher and the research topic are more qualitatively oriented and when the researcher is interested in the transferability or generalizability of the phenomena (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Researchers claim that this architecture enables the construction of a new instrument at any point during the study process (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

The aim of the proposed study is to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase pre-service teachers that enhances teaching practice of preservice in a higher education institution in South Africa. Structured interviews were utilized to gather qualitative data from the purposively selected participants in the exploratory sequential design. The results of the collected data were utilized to create a new tool (questionnaire), on which the researcher performed a quantitative evaluation of the variable they have identified and interpret the results, determining how the quantitative data expands and generalizes the qualitative results. The research employs a sequential design that is exploratory in nature. In this design, gathering and analyzing qualitative data comes before gathering and analyzing quantitative data.

Here's how the study was conducted: Qualitative Phase:

Structured interviews were used to gather data from participants who were purposefully chosen. The analysis of qualitative data would be done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis.

Phase of Quantitative Analysis:

Using the prepared questionnaire, the variable found in the phase of qualitative analysis was assessed quantitatively. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends, and linkages. The mentorship framework in this study will be developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it will be objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings.

4.7.1 Research Type

An intervention study is used in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are being used to gather data on the HEI's mentorship program. Interventions can be investigated using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). This study, which is an instrumental intervention study, will use triangulated mixed methods to concentrate on gaining a

comprehensive picture of how much mentoring is done during teaching practice by preservice teachers and mentor teachers.

The intervention type was selected because it allowed for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform. The researcher investigated the causal relationship between mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers by creating a questionnaire based on the qualitative findings. This also offered a chance to comprehend how the mentoring framework affects the individuals involved. To measure the impact of the mentoring framework, the researcher created and distributed a questionnaire to participants. The newly developed mentoring framework is implemented during mentoring sessions between foundation phase mentees and mentor teachers and between foundation phase mentor lecturers and mentees. The intervention in this study is the introduction of the newly developed mentoring framework, which is developed through the participants' needs, which is identified through the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.8 Research Paradigm

Assumptions made at the outset of the study must align with the approach, techniques for collecting data, and analysis used (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). According to Coates (2021), a paradigm is a worldview, or a framework for understanding and interpreting the complexity of the outside world. Guba (2018) and Lincoln (2018) define a paradigm as a set of attitudes and convictions about the world and how it ought to be comprehended and investigated. Philosophical presumptions concerning the nature of truth or reality regarding a phenomenon (ontology), the attitude or stance of the researchers in comprehending that truth or reality (epistemology), and the values that the researchers may attach to the entire study process (axiology) all inform a paradigm. Research studies are informed by a few paradigms. Post-positivism, participative, positivism, critical realism, and pragmatism are a few of these (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I have decided to use the pragmatism paradigm for my research. The study easily fits under the pragmatism paradigm because it is a social science that attempts to provide a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers during their teaching practice.

The paradigm of pragmatism encourages researcher to gather data that support the rational creation of the reality in which study participants are situated (Wilkinson & Staley, 2019). The pragmatic paradigm, according to Dawadi (2020), is based on the notion that reality is the outcome of interactions between people and the outside world. It is based on the idea that as people interact with their natural surroundings, they are actively creating new information. To attain successful outcomes, this paradigm promotes experimentation, flexibility, and modification based on the observed results. It disproves the idea that knowledge can only be produced through a single process and that several approaches must be taken to it.

I chose this study paradigm because it allows me to collect detailed data on the day-to-day interactions that foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers have when utilized mentoring as a teaching approach in the classroom.

I gave practical effectiveness priority while creating a mentoring framework based on the pragmatic paradigm, taking into account the following pragmatist principles as stated by Sharma, Devi and Kumari, (2018).

Flexibility and adaptability: In my capacity as a researcher, I provide for flexibility in the mentoring framework's design by acknowledging the distinct demands and learning preferences of mentees, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers. This enables the mentorship structure to be modified in response to the development of the mentees, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers.

Action-oriented approach: The researcher promotes the use of knowledge and concrete actions. To guarantee that mentorship has a noticeable effect, mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers are placing an emphasis on the actual application of skills in their day-to-day interactions.

Learn from experience: By allowing the mentor lecturers and mentor teachers to offer real-world knowledge and lessons gained, the researcher can draw on prior experiences from the mentorship.

Iterative development: I approach the mentorship as an iterative procedure. The framework may be improved and modified by the researcher in response to the changing requirements of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and mentees.

By incorporating these principles, the researcher has the opportunity of creating a mentoring framework that aligns with the pragmatist paradigm, emphasizing practicality, adaptability and a focus on achieving tangible outcomes in real world.

4.9 Research Approach

According to Tashakori, Johnson, and Teddlie (2021), the study's mixed methodology suggests that it enables the researcher to expand their investigation to a suitable depth and scope. For this reason, a mixed-methods strategy, which balances the shortcomings of each method, has the best chance of addressing research issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are integrated and combined into a single study using mixed methods research. To learn more about a phenomenon and find answers to research questions, it comprises obtaining and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Maree, 2020).

Combining the two approaches yields a more comprehensive picture and permits a wider range of opposing or complementary points of view. These are valuable perspectives because they not only encourage further thought and deepen our comprehension of a phenomenon, but they also pave the way for more research in the future (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Additionally, the results of mixed-methods research offer a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as well as additional insights into its various components, which can help create meaningful theories (Creswell & Clarke, 2018).

Put differently, qualitative research, especially in the context of educational theory and practice, aims to understand, analyze, and provide an explanation for specific events by drawing on the experiences and/or perspectives of the participants. Broadening the body of evidence, enhancing the validity of research findings, and contrasting the outcomes of one method with the other are the objectives of mixed method research (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Maree, 2020).

The development of a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers throughout their teaching practice was the focus of this study's research. The study explains the events that occur inside the participants' native context—a rural higher education institution—using the qualitative approach. To better comprehend and capture the significance that participants attach to the phenomenon under research, the behaviour and experiences of the participants is recorded as the occurrences take place. The

utilization of quantitative technique expands the scope of the investigation by helping the researcher collect data from several sources regarding different aspects of a phenomena.

4.10 Exploratory Sequential Design

A popular research methodology in the social sciences and other domains, exploratory sequential design employs a multi-phase approach to collect comprehensive data (Creswell, 2022). It allows researchers to initially investigate a topic qualitatively before doing more organized quantitative analysis since it integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a sequential fashion (Weyant, 2022).

The exploratory sequential design is carried out in phases, with the researcher first collecting qualitative data using techniques including focus groups, interviews, and observations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). Identifying factors of interest and gaining a thorough understanding of the research issue are the goals of this phase. After data collection, analysis is done to find themes and trends. The creation of research questions or hypotheses for the following stage is influenced by this analysis. Based on the knowledge gathered from the qualitative phase, researchers create quantitative investigations in the following phase. Surveys, tests, and other quantitative techniques may be used in this process to test theories and extrapolate results to a broader population. Ultimately, researchers combine their findings from the two stages to present a thorough grasp of the subject matter. Weyant (2022) asserts that this integration can produce richer insights and enable a more nuanced interpretation of data than either qualitative or quantitative methods alone.

Exploratory sequential design has several benefits, such as the capacity to modify research strategies in response to new information, the chance to examine complicated phenomena from several angles, and the possibility of triangulation, which improves the validity and reliability of results (Maree, 2020). By integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, it enables researchers to have a thorough grasp of a research issue (Creswell, 2021). They can investigate the subject from several angles with this method, gaining a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject.

Triangulation is a technique that researchers can use to improve the validity and reliability of findings by combining qualitative and quantitative data. To avoid biases and corroborate conclusions, triangulation entails using different methods, data sources, or perspectives from researchers.

4.10.1 Motivation for Using Exploratory Sequential Design

As part of a mixed methods research methodology, the exploratory sequential design initially collects and analyses qualitative data before moving on to gather and analyze quantitative data (Maree, 2020). It enables researchers to investigate a research problem step-by-step, beginning with the larger background before using qualitative inquiry to go further into parts (Creswell, 2021).

Structured interviews were used to gather data from participants who were purposefully chosen for the study. The analysis of qualitative data would be done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis. The variable found in the qualitative phase was quantitatively evaluated in the quantitative step using the created questionnaire. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends, and linkages. The mentorship framework in this study will be developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it will be objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings.

Using qualitative research techniques, the studies of Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), Mphojane (2019), and Mkhasimbe (2018) investigated the creation of a mentorship framework for preservice teachers. Preservice teachers' development could be improved by using this kind of framework, as these studies have repeatedly shown.

This study benefits greatly from the use of an exploratory sequential design. This strategy makes sure that every aspect of the research is fully explored, from the preliminary qualitative approaches of topic investigation to the more in-depth quantitative inquiry. This thorough methodology allows for a complete knowledge of the mentorship framework and its possible impact on the development of preservice teachers, which adds deeper value to the research.

Furthermore, by evaluating the mentorship framework, the exploratory sequential design offers a chance to learn more about its efficacy. Researchers can unearth nuanced viewpoints and pinpoint areas where the mentorship framework needs to be improved by iteratively combining quantitative findings with qualitative investigation. The research findings are strengthened by this iterative approach, which also adds to a deeper comprehension of how the framework might assist in the development of preservice teachers.

4.11 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a crucial procedure in research involving human subjects. For research participants to make an informed decision about whether to engage in a study, this approach must guarantee that they receive all relevant information. Therefore, it is essential that participants receive a thorough explanation of every aspect of the research before providing their signed informed consent to participate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For study participants to give their "fully" informed consent to engage in the research, it is imperative that special consideration be given to the documentation that they receive (Yilmaz, 2019).

The information sheet included a clear and simple overview of the research project and its goals, outlining every step of the study process in a way that even a non-expert audience could comprehend. Additionally, it should describe what participation implies in terms of timing, location, and contents (Creswell, 2017). The information sheet for this study included details regarding the study's goals and methodology. The letters of consent and authorization for carrying out the study were made public. Refer to Appendix B for more information.

4.12 Instruments for Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using a combination of measuring tools and descriptive information-gathering techniques that are typical of exploratory research. Following ethical approval, data collection was conducted. Additionally, the selection of the method for recording data was an essential step in the process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.12.1 Qualitative Data Collection Methods

This study employed qualitative data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews and observations of mentoring sessions. These methods allowed the researcher to gather rich, contextualized data regarding the experiences and perspectives of mentor teachers, mentor lecturers, and preservice teachers during their teaching practice. The Theoretical Framework—Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory (1978) guided the selection of questions for the semi-structured interviews. Vygotsky’s emphasis on social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) forms the foundation of this study’s approach to mentoring, as the mentor-mentee relationship directly influences the preservice teachers’ learning and development. The interview questions were designed to explore the application of constructivist mentoring techniques in practice, focusing on the strategies mentors use to support the growth of preservice teachers within their ZPD. These questions reflected key insights from the literature and aim to gauge the depth of mentoring expertise and the participants’ understanding of effective mentoring practices.

4.12.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary method for data collection. This approach is ideal for gathering in-depth insights into participants’ experiences while allowing for flexibility to explore themes that emerge during the interview process. According to Creswell (2021), semi-structured interviews provide a balance between pre-determined questions and the opportunity for participants to share their unique perspectives, offering rich, qualitative data.

The interviews were organized in two distinct formats:

Focus group interviews with mentor teachers and mentees will provide opportunities for group discussions, fostering interaction and the exchange of diverse viewpoints regarding mentoring practices. The focus groups consist of 4-6 participants each, allowing for a dynamic exchange while ensuring that each participant has the chance to contribute. These sessions were conducted at a suitable location that encourages open discussion, such as a meeting room within the school or university.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with mentor lecturers to obtain individual, in-depth responses. These interviews were scheduled in advance and conducted in a quiet, confidential setting to encourage honest and reflective responses.

All interviews were conducted in English, with the option for participants to provide input in their preferred language, where necessary. The sessions were recorded (with participant consent), transcribed, and analysed thematically to uncover key patterns related to mentoring practices and the needs of preservice teachers during teaching practice.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, with follow-up questions based on participants' responses to explore their experiences further. The interviews were structured around pre-determined questions, but the semi-structured nature of the interviews to allow the researcher to probe deeper into any significant responses or emerging themes.

4.12.3 Observations

Observations were used to capture firsthand information regarding how mentoring sessions are conducted during teaching practice. These observations focused on the interactions between mentor teachers and preservice teachers, particularly during lesson planning, teaching, and feedback sessions. Observations were conducted in the classrooms where mentoring sessions took place, allowing the researcher to gather context-specific data on the mentoring process.

Each observation session was scheduled in advance with the consent of all parties involved, and it were conducted in the presence of the mentor teacher and preservice teacher, without interrupting the flow of the session. The researcher used an observation checklist to guide the observation process, focusing on key aspects of the mentoring relationship such as communication, feedback, modelling, and the application of constructivist mentoring strategies.

The researcher conducted a total of 10 observation sessions, each lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes, spread across multiple teaching practice sessions. These observations were recorded using field notes and a video recording device (with consent), to capture both verbal and non-verbal aspects of the mentoring process. The observations were followed by brief debriefing sessions with the mentor teacher and

preservice teacher to clarify any points of interest and ensure accurate interpretation of the data.

4.12.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was structured and organized as follows:

Scheduling: All interviews, focus groups, and observation sessions were scheduled in advance, with appropriate time allocated for each.

Consent: Written informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring they are aware of the purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures of the study.

Recording: Interviews were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and observations were recorded using field notes and video recording (with consent).

Data Analysis: Once data collection was completed, the recorded data was transcribed, coded, and analysed using thematic analysis.

By employing a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observations, this study gathered rich, detailed data that provided deep insights into the mentoring process and the impact of mentoring on the development of preservice teachers in the Foundation phase. The procedure for each method was closely followed to ensure that data collection is conducted in a rigorous and ethical manner.

4.12.4 Document Analysis

Documentary evidence is one of the methods or strategies for data production that is used in this investigation. Documentary evidence is essential to give further data for triangulation because research cannot be only dependent on the statements of research participants. This method is important since it offers data that would have been hard to come by otherwise. Records of events, actions, and procedures made by people or organizations are referred to as documentary evidence (Maree, 2020). Many documents govern instruction and are necessary for implementing policies in higher education institutions (Cohen, 2021).

The Department of Higher Education's training policies on teaching practice, mentee portfolios, notebooks, a teaching practice study guide, and mentoring brochures are included as documentary evidence in this study. As guidelines for instructional practice, the following documents are utilized: The South African Department of Higher Education released the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) in 2015, which is a manual for teaching practices.

Because I wanted to examine if the mentor's written reflections can reveal anything about how she views her function as a mentor and the way that mentoring sessions are run, I concentrate my data analysis efforts on documents.

4.12.5 Quantitative data collection

To provide data for the quantitative analysis of this study, preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers completed closed-ended survey questionnaires. Creswell and Clark (2018) assert that one of the best methods for effectively gathering a lot of data while reducing bias is the questionnaire, which guarantees the validity and reliability of the research tool. Closed-ended questions' organized format enables uniform answers, which makes comparison and analysis more objective.

1. Research Design and Justification

To find patterns, trends, and correlations between variables, the study used a descriptive quantitative research approach. Because it allows for a methodical analysis of preservice teachers', mentor lecturers', and mentor teachers' perspectives and experiences with the mentorship framework, the descriptive technique was used. The study sought to produce generalizable conclusions that represent wider trends in mentorship practices throughout teacher education by utilizing quantitative data.

2. Sampling Strategy

Those directly involved in the mentorship process were chosen using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Included in the sample were:

The mentorship structure was experienced by foundation phase preservice teachers. Mentor lecturers oversee managing mentorship initiatives.

Preservice teachers received guidance from mentor teachers throughout their school-based teaching practicum.

This selection strategy ensured that participants had relevant experience to deliver meaningful responses. The sample size was selected based on the minimum criteria for statistical analysis, ensuring that the acquired data was representative enough to draw meaningful findings.

3. Structure of the Questionnaire

Three sections made up the questionnaire, each intended to record a distinct facet of the mentoring experience:

Section A: Demographic Information: While keeping respondents anonymous, this section gathered their background information (such as years of experience and mentorship role).

Closed-ended statements were included in Section B: Knowledge and Understanding of Mentorship to evaluate preservice teachers' comprehension of mentorship and foundation phase teaching techniques. Participants' opinions and attitudes toward the mentorship framework were assessed in Section C: Attitudes Toward Mentoring. Assessed participants' attitudes and perceptions regarding the mentorship framework; each section included ranking items, multiple-choice questions, and Likert-scale items to ensure structured responses that could be statistically analysed.

4. Pretesting and Instrument Validation

A pre-test was carried out to improve the questionnaire's validity, reliability, and clarity.

The pre-test was given by a faculty member to assess for:

Ambiguity in wording and phrasing.

Grammar and spelling mistakes.

Ideas for enhancing the relevance and clarity of the question.

The questionnaire was revised based on pre-test feedback to make sure all the items were clear and in line with the goals of the study.

5. Data Collection Procedures

Participants in the study were given standardized questions to complete both in-person and online. To guarantee a high rate of response:

Clear instructions on how to complete the survey were provided to participants.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to promote truthful answers. Participants had plenty of time to react over the many weeks when the data was being collected.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

To find patterns and connections, statistical techniques were applied to the quantitative data that had been gathered. The following methods were used:

Use descriptive statistics to compile participant responses, such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution.

To investigate relationships between variables, inferential statistics are used, such as correlation analysis, chi-square tests, and t-tests.

To check the internal consistency of Likert-scale items, use reliability analysis.

SPSS software was used for statistical analysis, guaranteeing precision in computations and interpretation.

7. Reliability and Validity of the Quantitative Instrument

The following measures were taken to guarantee the instrument's validity and reliability:

Face Validity: The questionnaire was examined by experts to ensure that it measured the things it was supposed to.

Construct Validity: The questions were created with important mentorship ideas in mind.

Reliability Testing: To ensure internal consistency, the pre-test findings were examined.

8. Ethical Considerations

Before the poll was conducted, ethical approval was acquired. Participants included: informed of their ability to withdraw and the goal of the study.

guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

requested to give their informed consent prior to filling out the survey.

9. Limitations of the Quantitative Approach

Although the quantitative approach yielded quantifiable and organized insights, it had many drawbacks.

Restricted depth: Because responses were limited to pre-established choices, in-depth personal insights (addressed by qualitative methods) were not possible.

Possible response bias: It's possible that participants gave socially acceptable responses rather than their true thoughts.

Sampling limitations: Results may not be entirely transferable to different educational contexts because they were based on a particular group

This study's quantitative approach made it possible to evaluate the mentorship framework in an impartial and methodical manner. Significant insights into the efficacy of mentorship methods were obtained using statistical analysis, organized data collecting, and closed-ended questionnaires. The study balanced statistical rigor and contextual depth to ensure a thorough review by integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

4.13 Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness is comprised of multiple elements, such as credibility, confirmability, transferability, and reliability (Kimmons, 2022). Credibility is the extent to which the data are authentic and precise, ensuring that the findings accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation. The study's generalizability is enhanced by how well its conclusions may be applied to various contexts or populations. Transferability is the term for this. Depending on how well study results hold up over time and in different contexts, dependability measures how stable and consistent the data are. By guaranteeing that results are unbiased and objective, confirmability guards against subjectivity and bias in research.

Harrison, Reilly, and Creswell (2020) state that to enhance the rigor, dependability, and transparency of the research process, researchers employ a range of techniques and procedures, including peer debriefing, member checks, triangulation, and rigorous documentation. These methods also contribute to a rise in confidence in the validity and reliability of the findings.

4.13.1 Measures of Trustworthiness

According to Korstjens & Moser (2018) and Statistics Solutions (2020), research is considered trustworthy if the methods used are honest and precise, and the results accurately reflect the data that was obtained. The (UFS)Research Ethics Code of

Conduct (UFS, 2019) shall serve as the foundation for these procedures regarding ethical issues. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies differ in how reliability metrics are provided.

4.13.2 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Outcomes Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are characteristics of reliability in qualitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

- **Credibility**

Credibility, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018), is the degree of confidence that is put in the accuracy of research findings to guarantee that the conclusions represent legitimate data that is correctly deduced from the data that was first collected from the study area. This study concentrated on a few of the issues brought up in the literature that indicated areas of knowledge that required further investigation. In this study, appropriate questions were formulated with the help of the evaluated literature to elicit appropriate answers.

- **Transferability**

According to Maree (2020), "transferability" refers to how well the results of qualitative research may be used in different contexts. The study employed an exploratory sequential design to thoroughly examine the qualitative and quantitative data collected from each participant. This approach allowed for the elaboration and confirmation of the study findings in a way that would strengthen their overall applicability in different contexts. To facilitate potential users' perception of the study's findings as meaningful, the methodology described by Korstjens and Moser (2018) will be employed to provide contextual detail when conducting qualitative research that involves witnessing and evaluating social meaning.

- **Dependability**

Dependability is the ability of results to remain consistent across time (Mandal, 2018). Achieving this consistency can be facilitated by ensuring that a research technique is logical, thoroughly recorded, and suitably audited (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Therefore, a thorough description of the full research project is created and securely

maintained throughout the inquiry to guarantee the validity of this study. The stability of these results ensured by ensuring that all interpretations and suggestions of the study are founded on the real data obtained from the study field. On electronic devices, passwords are used to protect the original data. Together with the electronic data that has been backed up, any print-formatted data will also be kept on e-storage devices.

- **Confirmability**

The degree to which the findings of a research study may be independently corroborated by other researchers is known as confirmability. The researcher in this study impartially examines the whole investigation to ensure that the conclusions and interpretations are backed up by data. It is necessary to maintain records of the research path and the findings throughout the study in order to reduce and eliminate personal prejudices, preferences, and predispositions that negatively affect how a researcher evaluates the descriptive data collected from participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the researcher must approach the topic with objectivity and neutrality. Thus, the process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data is used for the qualitative part of this study.

4.14 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Research Results

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are measured to determine the research's trustworthiness or rigor, which effectively refers to the degree to which researchers strive to improve the quality of their study (Smit, 2021; Leech, 2021). According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell & Creswell (2018), validity is the degree to which a reality is precisely assessed, and reliability is the accuracy of measuring that directly influences a measure's consistency levels. It was crucial to make sure that every statement in Sections B and C addressed the appropriate material on mentoring during teaching to guarantee that the framework used in this study appropriately assessed the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' knowledge levels of mentoring as well as the prevalence of pre-mentoring attitudes. Content validity was guaranteed by the meticulous selection of the assertions (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Construct validity, or the capacity to draw conclusions about numerical data collected for this study regarding the knowledge of preservice teachers and mentor teachers and the prevalence of pro-mentoring attitudes, will be ensured

by carefully crafting quantifiable statements that can be added up to create a summation that measures the realities. The researcher employed test-retest-reliability testing to apply the mentoring framework to a group of carefully chosen individuals to verify the accuracy of the framework used in the study.

4.15 Ethical Considerations

To discuss topics including permission to enter, participant rights, informed consent, privacy, and pro vulnerability. injury, obtaining confidentiality, upholding professionalism, and the susceptibility of participants. The creation of legitimate and trustworthy research studies requires careful consideration of ethical issues. The researcher adheres to the following ethical guidelines (Korstjens & Moser, 2018):

- **Confidentiality**

The respondents' privacy is appropriately safeguarded. Respondents are advised not to submit any private information, including their name or address. Confidentiality is maintained since reporting won't reveal any private information about study participants.

- **Seeking Consent**

Participants in the study are not coerced or coerced into taking part. Prior to the data being gathered, written consent will be required.

- **Reporting the Findings**

The study's conclusions are presented honestly, without editing or tampering.

4.16 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis, which involves examining, interpreting, and synthesizing data to identify important patterns, relationships, and insights, is a crucial stage in any research endeavor. It is the foundation of scientific inquiry, enabling researchers to compile data, draw inferences, and make decisions that can be defended considering verifiable facts. Data analysis is, at its core, the process of turning raw data into meaningful information by using precise and rigorous methodologies. It encompasses a wide range of techniques and approaches that are tailored to the specific objectives and

features of the research project. In a wide range of fields and disciplines, data analysis—whether quantitative or qualitative in nature—is crucial for providing answers to research questions, validating hypotheses, and producing new information.

In today's big data and advanced analytics environment, effective data analysis is more crucial than ever. As data sources proliferate and research challenges get more complicated, researchers are faced with the task of extracting meaningful insights from big and diverse datasets. As such, mastering the art and science of data analysis has become essential for researchers attempting to navigate the intricacies of today's research environment. This research delves into the fundamental ideas, approaches, and optimal procedures of data analysis, offering a synopsis of the principal ideas and strategies utilized throughout the procedure.

4.16.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The gathered data is thematically analysed using both deductive and inductive reasoning, following the methodology developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Researchers utilize a framework of approaches known as data analysis to identify patterns, offer information on the data collected to answer study questions, and clarify facts (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). One kind of qualitative analysis that is used to examine categories and display themes or patterns that are connected to the data is called thematic content analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2023). According to Braun and Clarke (2023), inductive analysis selects codes and categories depending on the data, while deductive analysis uses a theoretical or conceptual framework to structure the study in the analysis of data. Thematic analysis is used to identify distinct, noteworthy patterns by coding in six stages.

This procedure entails the following steps: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating the first codes, searching the codes for themes, evaluating the themes, characterizing and identifying the themes, and generating the final report. It will be necessary to read and reread the data that was gathered from the participants' reflections to become comfortable with it. The first step in constructing the codes is to identify recurring patterns in the data set and arrange the patterns according to the study themes. The data will be thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that only relevant

information is used. The researcher will first clearly identify and categorize any emergent themes from the data before searching for patterns in the codes. A critical analysis and examination of these issues will be conducted. Using the theoretical frameworks (Vygotsky's) to describe and label the topics, the evolving categories will be confirmed.

Ultimately, the investigator constructs themes that provide relevant information to address the study inquiries. These ultimately are developed into the primary subjects that form the structure for the research findings' presentation and interpretation.

4.16.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics is used for the quantitative data analysis. Methods for computing, characterizing, and summarizing collected research data in a logical, understandable, and effective way are known as descriptive statistics (Maree, 2020). In the paper, descriptive statistics are shown graphically in the figures or quantitatively in the text and/or tables. Large numbers of observations are reduced into indices by the research using percentages and other methods, which are then explained and utilized to characterize the data that was gathered using particular factors. IBM SPSS version 28.0, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program, is used to compute the results of the second analysis of the quantitative data that are gathered using the inferential test of relationships

4.17 Ethical Considerations

To cover issues relating to gaining entry, participants' rights, informed consent, confidentiality, pro vulnerability. harm, achieving anonymity, maintaining professionalism, participants' vulnerability.

Ethical considerations are critical in the development of valid and reliable research studies. The following ethical considerations is observed by the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018):

- **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of the respondents is well protected. Respondents are instructed not to provide any personal information such as their name or contact details. Reporting does not disclose any sensitive information regarding the research participants and as such, confidentiality is protected.

- **Seeking Consent**

Respondents are not forced or induced to partake in the study. Written consent is obtained before the data is collected.

- **Reporting the Findings**

The findings of the study are truthfully reported without any changes or manipulation.

4.18 Limitations of the Study

Any research endeavor must acknowledge and address any study restrictions. "Limitations" refers to the constraints, imperfections, or inadequacies that can compromise the reliability, validity, or applicability of the study's findings (Weyant, 2022). Understanding and communicating these boundaries is necessary to maintain the research process's integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. A constraint of the study is its small sample size, which precludes extrapolation of the results and conclusions to a larger population (Creswell, 2021). However, because several data creation tools were employed, the study's findings were more trustworthy (Maree, 2020).

4.18.1 Limitations of methodology used

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study creates a sustainable mentorship framework for Foundation Phase preservice teachers in a South African higher education institution by combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies. Although this technique offers a thorough understanding of the efficacy of the mentorship framework, it is important to recognize several methodological constraints.

First, there are limitations related to generalizability and sample size. The study's results may not be as applicable to other universities with various mentorship

arrangements or contextual issues because it was only carried out in one higher education institution. Although preservice teachers (PTs), mentor lecturers (MLs), and mentor teachers (MTs) are included in the sample, the limited sample size might not adequately represent the range of experiences across institutions.

Second, it's important to consider the possibility of response bias when gathering quantitative data via closed-ended surveys. Participants may have given socially acceptable replies rather than completely objective evaluations of the mentorship framework's efficacy since they were aware that their answers could affect changes to the framework. Furthermore, although the Likert-scale answers provide quantifiable information, it's possible that they don't adequately convey the subtleties of participants.

Thirdly, the use of focus groups and interviews results in limits in the gathering of qualitative data. These techniques provide a more thorough examination of mentoring experiences, although they are prone to participant subjectivity and interviewer bias. Because of power relations, some participants might have been reluctant to voice critical opinions, especially preservice instructors who might feel awkward criticizing their mentors.

Furthermore, comprehensive theme analysis is necessary to assure validity and reliability because the interpretation of qualitative data is fundamentally subjective. Time restrictions are another drawback because the mentorship system was developed, implemented, and evaluated over a particular academic time frame. This made it more difficult for the study to monitor long-term effects on the professional development and efficacy of preservice teachers in the classroom. Deeper understanding of the mentorship framework's sustainability would be possible with a long-term study.

Finally, mixed-methods research presents methodological integration issues. Although qualitative and quantitative results are complementary, it can be challenging to align them such that they can be interpreted seamlessly. The need for additional data collection instrument improvement may be indicated by differences between survey results and qualitative insights.

4.19 Conclusion

I have carefully described the methodology used in this chapter, explaining the research strategy, data gathering strategies, and data analysis procedures used in our current study. My focus to following a methodical and exacting strategy highlights my commitment to making sure the study findings are legitimate, dependable, and credible.

An effective framework for the investigation was supplied by the choice of an exploratory sequential design. This design was selected due to its capacity to facilitate a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the research subject. My objective was to obtain a thorough grasp of the phenomenon I was studying, by beginning with qualitative data collecting and then moving on to quantitative investigation. With the use of this methodology, the researcher was able to use qualitative analysis to investigate preliminary patterns and trends and quantitative analysis to go further into the underlying meanings and contexts.

Furthermore, the utilization of focus groups, observations, and interviews helped to make it easier to collect detailed and extensive data. These techniques were chosen because they were thought to be appropriate for capturing the complex viewpoints, experiences, and insights of the subjects. I was able to sort through the data, find reoccurring themes and patterns, and derive insightful information that was pertinent to the study objectives using data analysis.

Conclusively, the methodology chapter constitutes the fundamental basis of our investigation, steering our strategy and molding the course of our study. We work hard to create research findings that stand up to scrutiny and have a significant impact on our area through our thorough attention to detail and dedication to methodological rigor.

CHAPTER 5 (i): DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF FIVE MENTOR LECTURERS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FROM THE FIVE MENTOR TEACHERS AND TWENTY PRESERVICE TEACHERS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter four, the researcher explained the research method and design. The research design, data collection technique, research questions, analysis of data methods and other relevant aspects related to the research methodology were discussed. This chapter is divided into sections. The first section (chapter 5A) presents an analysis and interpretation of the data that was generated from interviews of five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions from the five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. The second section (chapter 5B) presents an analysis of the observations conducted throughout the study and the analysis of the questionnaire which was used as an evaluating tool the proposed mentoring framework.

The insights and reflections of the participants comprising the Mentor teachers, Mentor lecturers and Preservice Teachers are critical to the research questions. The participants provide a comprehensive perspective and understanding of the entire breadth of the teaching practice environment which is aided by the distinct perspectives that each group offers, which are based on their roles and experiences. The participants collectively represent the teaching practice community. Due to the leadership and mentoring roles that they perform, their input was critical to the research questions being explored. The teaching practice community is centrally responsible for shaping the professional development of preservice teachers, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teaching practices, facilitating the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience, providing continuous feedback and support to preservice teachers, fostering a collaborative and reflective learning environment, and guiding and modeling best practices in education. The participants were knowledgeable about the best practices in mentoring and supporting preservice teachers. The researcher sought to gain more insight into the development of a mentoring framework for foundation phase preservice teachers. This was done through the medium of individual semi-structured interviews and focus group

interviews which meant that the knowledge and experiences of the teaching practice community could be understood from both the individual and the group perspective.

Mixed method research was selected as best suited because it allows the researcher to widen their inquiry with sufficient depth and breadth (Tashakkori, Johnson and Teddlie (2021). In the study, teaching practice mentoring as a phenomenon is being explored with the teaching practice community in the selected primary schools. This research study utilized an exploratory sequential design, using two data collection sites.

5.2 Overview of the Data Collection Process

As mentioned in Chapter 4, to address the study topics, mixed-method data was gathered. The first section of this chapter will explain the qualitative data analysis, which offers in-depth participant comments and perspectives. The chapter will next provide the quantitative data analysis, which provides a numerical and statistical viewpoint on the research findings, after the qualitative analysis. The methodical methodology enables a thorough comprehension of the study topics by presenting the rich and intricate accounts from the qualitative data first, then moving on to the empirical proof from the quantitative data.

This mentoring study's mixed-methods approach is warranted since it integrates both qualitative and quantitative data to offer a thorough knowledge of the mentoring process. While quantitative data from questionnaires enables the evaluation of patterns and trends across a wider group, qualitative methods like observations and interviews offer rich, in-depth insights into the individual experiences and perceptions of mentors and mentees. By using triangulation to validate subjective experiences with empirical data, this combination guarantees a more nuanced study and improves the trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, complementary insights are made possible by the mixed-methods approach, whereby quantitative data confirms effectiveness through statistical analysis and qualitative data explains the "why" and "how" of specific events. This methodology is especially advantageous in the assessment of the mentoring framework, guaranteeing a comprehensive examination of its influence on career advancement, mentor-mentee bonds, and educational advancement.

The following table depicts the number of participants who took part in the interview

and focus group discussions. Conducting focus groups in addition to interviews enabled a deeper, more in-depth investigation of the research question. While focus groups offer breadth and highlight group dynamics, interviews offer depth and individual insights. When combined, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topics, improve the validity of the findings, and enrich the data collection process. The participants were coded as follows:

Set 1: Individual Interviews

- Group 1: Mentor lecturers (ML)
ML1; ML2, ML3, ML4 and ML5

Set 2: Focus Group Interview

- Group 2: Mentor teachers (MT)
MT1; MT2, MT3, MT4 and MT5

Set 3: Focus Group Interview

- Group 3: Preservice teachers (PT)
PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4 to PT 20

The rich, in-depth narratives that the members of the teaching practice community supplied are the focus of the qualitative data analysis. To identify the recurring themes and patterns in the experiences of Mentor Teachers, Mentor Lecturers, and Preservice Teachers, this part analyzes their observations and insights. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data highlights the nuances and complexity of the roles, challenges, and contributions made by the participants to the preservice teachers' professional growth. This study, which begins with qualitative data, offers a thorough, contextual grasp of the research questions and establishes the framework for the quantitative analysis that follows.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The semi-structured questions were posed to the participants and interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The researcher first listened to the recordings of each interview. The transcripts were read and re-read to get a general understanding of the interviews and to identify categories and units of meaning.

The following table portrays the number of participants who took part in the interview and focus group discussions.

PARTICIPANTS	NO	OF	METHOD	OF	DATA
	PARTICIPANTS		COLLECTION		
ML1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5		Individual		
MT1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5		Focus Group		
PT1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-20	20		Focus Group		

Table 5.1 Participants' Distribution in the Interview and Focus Group Discussions.

The entire teaching practice community was interviewed. This approach was used to ensure that an overview of different perspectives was established. This presented an opportunity to triangulate the findings.

5.3 Data Collection Process

In this study, data was collected over eight months. The participants have busy schedules and need to be accommodated. The participants were allocated days and time slots for the interviews. Consideration of the availability of the participants was necessary to ensure optimal participation. The researcher undertook to collect data from participants when it was most convenient for them and without disturbing their daily programme as teaching practice community. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the method of data collection, and the voluntary nature of the interviews was communicated in written form.

The data collection methods included observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews and perusal of teaching practice mentoring documents. Observation as an approach was chosen for this study to observe what and how the mentors and mentees conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice. Direct observations were conducted in classrooms whenever the participants meet, such as during mentoring sessions during teaching practice. The duration of the observations was

carefully planned to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring phenomenon. These were conducted over a three-month period where observations were conducted weekly.

The individual interviews took an average of an hour and a half whilst the focus group interviews took an average of two and a half hours.

5.4 Data Analysis Approach

Cohen (2019) argues that qualitative data analysis includes organizing, accounting for, and explaining, the data to make sense of it in terms of the participant's perspective on the situation, as well as recognizing patterns, themes, categories, and regularities. The data from the focus group discussions and interviews were then converted into text by the researcher. This allowed for the identification of themes. To discuss the results in an orderly and relevant way, the identified themes were arranged following the study questions.

To analyze the data, thematic analysis and narrative description were used. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within a dataset. Thematic analysis involves systematically organizing and interpreting qualitative data to uncover meaningful patterns and insights.

According to Braun and Clarke (2023), researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading and re-reading it. This step helps the researcher to become familiar with the content and gain a holistic understanding of the dataset. The researcher then started the coding process by identifying and labeling segments of data with code. Codes are typically short labels that capture the essence of the data (Squires, 2023). This was done through line-by-line coding. Codes are then grouped based on similarities to form higher-order categories known as themes. The themes are patterns or concepts that capture important aspects of the data. The researcher searched for recurring ideas or patterns. The researcher mapped out the relationships between themes and allocated appropriate names or labels for each theme. The researchers present their findings by describing and illustrating each theme with supporting quotes or examples from the data. The report should provide a clear and coherent narrative that reflects the richness of the data.

5.5 The Data Coding Process

Coding is an essential component of qualitative data analysis. Coding is the labeling and organization of qualitative data to uncover themes and patterns. The goal of coding is to give structure to free-form material so that it may be studied methodically. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), a code is a term or phrase that expresses a common subject or idea in the data. Coding is a fundamental step in qualitative data analysis, allowing researchers to organize, analyze and interpret large volumes of qualitative information (Maree, 2020). The code name should be meaningful and should convey the substance of the free-form response or observation.

Researchers begin by reading or listening to all the data and assign codes to basic phrases, ideas or categories that emerge. The codes could be the participant's words, a label, description, definition or category name. The goal of this round is to obtain an overall grasp of the data. The researcher should review and mind the data line by line, refining the list of codes and adding detail. The coding process involves line-by-line analysis where coding, the categorization of codes and generating themes occurs. Codes may be grouped based on their similarities or, if they are related, on the same topic or broad notion. The researcher then goes through the categories, looking for any themes or patterns that emerge throughout the data set (Maree, 2020).

The research also focused on the challenges and successes mentor teachers and preservice teachers faced in the two selected primary schools, in terms of:

- Roles and responsibilities as mentor teachers.
- Strategies that need improvement.
- Training and development opportunities.
- Promoting a conducive environment for mentors and mentees.

In addition to that, the questions are further focused on the factors that contribute to effective mentoring during teaching practice. Lastly, mentor teachers, preservice teachers and mentor lecturers probed their reflections to assist mentor teachers to become more effective in their roles. The themes that emerged in the interview questions are presented in Table 4 below. The contributions of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers and preservice teachers are discussed thereafter.

Research question	Interview question/ focus group question	Themes
Q.1 What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution?	1.1 Talk to me about your understanding of what a mentoring framework is? 1.2 What are your expectations from your mentor in terms of support and guidance? 1.3 How do you envision the mentorship relationship aiding you in your personal and professional development? 1.4 What specific goals or objectives do you hope to achieve through this mentoring experience? 1.5 How comfortable are you receiving constructive feedback and guidance from your mentor?	THEME 1: Effective Mentoring Practices in Teacher Education
Q.2 What has been your experience with the mentoring framework provided by your institution during your teaching practice?	2.1 How are mentoring sessions conducted during teaching practice? 2.2 In what ways do you feel the mentoring framework has supported or hindered your development as a preservice teacher? 2.3 How is the framework used in the development of preservice students during teaching practice?	THEME 2: Effectiveness and areas of improvement of the Mentoring Framework

Q.3 Are there any specific aspects of the mentoring framework that you feel have not been effective in supporting your development during teaching practice?	3.1 Have you encountered any challenges or limitations in implementing the mentoring framework in your teaching practice placements? 3.2 What improvements or changes would you suggest making the mentoring framework more effective for preservice teacher development? 3.3 What are the challenges experienced by mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?	THEME 3: Challenges experienced during mentoring sessions
Q.4 Can you share any challenges or difficulties you have faced while working with your mentor teacher during mentoring sessions?	4.1 Have you experienced any communication or compatibility issues with your mentor teacher during mentoring sessions? 4.2 How do you perceive the level of support and guidance provided by your mentor teacher during mentoring sessions? 4.3 What are the needs of mentor teachers/lecturers and mentees during mentoring sessions?	THEME 4: Needs and expectations in mentoring sessions
Q.5 What support or resources do you feel mentor teachers require to effectively fulfil their role during mentoring sessions?	5.1 As a mentee, what kind of support or guidance do you expect from your mentor teacher during mentoring sessions? 5.2 Are there any specific training or professional development opportunities that you believe would benefit both mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?	THEME 5: Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training

Q 6 Can you describe how the mentoring framework was introduced and explained to you at the beginning of your teaching practice?	6.1 How do you feel the mentoring framework has been implemented in practice during your teaching practice placements? 6.2 Have you received any feedback or evaluations regarding your participation in the mentoring framework? 6.3 What is the impact of the mentoring framework on preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?	THEME 6: Implementation and effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework

Table 5.2: Categories of Research Questions into Themes

5.6 Presentation of the Qualitative Data Analysis

This study employs a mixed methods approach with an exploratory sequential design. This design begins with qualitative data collection to inform the development of a new mentoring framework. The initial phase of our analysis will focus on qualitative data, gathered through observations, structured individual interviews with mentor lecturers (ML), and focus group interviews with mentor teachers (MT) and preservice teachers (PT).

To enhance the credibility and validity of our findings, we are applying methodological and data source triangulation. As Flick (2018) highlights, “Triangulation enriches the data collection process and ensures a more comprehensive understanding by combining different methods and perspectives.” Additionally, Yegidis and Myers (2021) state, “Triangulation enhances the robustness of research findings by integrating diverse methods and perspectives, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.” This approach involves combining qualitative methods—such as observations and structured interviews—with quantitative data from questionnaires to provide a thorough understanding of the mentoring framework.

5.7 Analysis of Structured Interviews and Focus Groups

In this phase of the study, we focus on analyzing the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups. The analysis builds upon the data coding process, during which key themes and patterns were identified.

The interviews conducted with mentor lecturers (ML) and the focus group discussions with mentor teachers (MT) and preservice teachers (PT) offer valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions of the current mentoring practices. This analysis aims to explore and interpret these perspectives to better understand the effectiveness of existing mentoring strategies and identify areas for improvement in the new mentoring framework.

Thematic analysis will be employed to systematically examine the data. Braun and Clarke (2023) describe thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” that allows for a nuanced understanding of qualitative data. Maree (2020) highlights that thematic analysis is “a powerful method for organizing and describing data in rich detail, helping researchers to identify and interpret patterns and themes relevant to the research questions.” This approach will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing mentoring practices, ensuring that the new framework effectively addresses the needs and challenges identified by participants. Below is an analysis of the themes identified during the data coding process.

Theme 1: Effective Mentoring Practices in Teacher Education

The first question was on understanding and establishing the foundation for an effective mentoring relationship.

The responses were analyzed into 3 sub-themes. These are:

- Understanding and Implementation of Mentoring Frameworks
- Support and Guidance in Practical Teaching
- Engagement and Relationship Building in Mentorship

Subtheme 1: Understanding and Implementation of Mentoring Frameworks

Participant Group 1 Responses

Participant Group 1, comprising the Mentor lecturers (ML), demonstrated a thorough understanding of the mentoring framework at their institution. They described it as structured and developmental, emphasizing its role in providing consistent and effective mentorship. ML1 stated, “A mentoring framework is a structured approach that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and processes involved in mentoring.”

ML2 added, “It is a systematic plan that guides the mentor-mentee relationship, ensuring that both parties have clear expectations and objectives.”

ML3 elaborated, “A mentoring framework establishes the guidelines and principles for mentoring, promoting consistency and effectiveness in the mentoring process.” The collective understanding among mentor lecturers highlights their commitment to utilizing the framework to enhance the mentorship experience.

Participants Group 2 Responses

Participant Group 2, comprising the Mentor Teachers (MT), exhibited familiarity with the mentoring framework, noting its structured support and guidance for preservice teachers. MT1 mentioned, “Yes, I am aware of the mentoring framework used by mentor teachers. It provides a structured approach to mentoring, ensuring that we offer consistent and effective support to preservice teachers.”

MT2 commented, “*Yes, I know about the mentoring framework. It includes regular meetings, feedback sessions, and professional development activities to support preservice teachers.*”

MT3 stated, “Yes, I am familiar with the mentoring framework. It focuses on both personal and professional development, providing guidance and support throughout the teaching practice.” This indicates that mentor teachers recognize the framework's role in enhancing the mentoring process and are actively engaged in its implementation.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Participant Group 3, comprising the Preservice Teachers (PT), expressed an understanding of the mentoring framework, focusing on its structured and developmental aspects. PT1 explained, “A mentoring framework is a structured approach that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and processes involved in mentoring.”

PT2 added, *“It is a systematic plan that guides the mentor-mentee relationship, ensuring that both parties have clear expectations and objectives.”*

PT3 stated, “A mentoring framework establishes the guidelines and principles for mentoring, promoting consistency and effectiveness in the mentoring process.” The responses from preservice teachers suggest they are well-informed about the framework and its role in guiding their professional development.

Subtheme 2: Support and Guidance in Practical Teaching

Participants Group 1 Responses

The strategies shared by the mentor lecturers illustrate a well-rounded approach to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in teacher education. Each lecturer employs a distinct method, yet all aim to enhance the preservice teachers' ability to apply theoretical concepts effectively in real-world classroom settings. ML1's approach focuses on integrating real-life examples and case studies into the teaching process. This strategy involves presenting preservice teachers with practical scenarios that mirror actual classroom situations. By relating theoretical concepts to these real-life contexts, ML1 helps preservice teachers understand how abstract theories manifest in everyday teaching practices. This method not only aids in contextualizing theoretical knowledge but also fosters critical thinking by encouraging preservice teachers to analyze and solve problems similar to those they will encounter in their careers. For instance, if a theory on classroom management is being discussed, ML1 might use case studies depicting various classroom management challenges and solutions, thereby demonstrating how theoretical strategies are applied in practice. ML2 emphasizes the importance of reflective practice as a tool for linking theory to practice. This approach encourages

preservice teachers to critically reflect on their classroom experiences and connect these experiences with the theoretical knowledge they have acquired. Reflective practice involves analyzing one's own teaching experiences, identifying what worked well and what could be improved, and understanding how these insights relate to theoretical frameworks. By engaging in reflective practice, preservice teachers develop a deeper understanding of how theory informs their teaching decisions and practices. This continuous cycle of reflection and application helps them refine their skills and adapt their teaching strategies based on both theory and practice. ML3's strategy involves using classroom observations and subsequent feedback sessions to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In this method, preservice teachers are observed in their teaching environments, and their practices are discussed about theoretical concepts. This approach allows for a direct examination of how well preservice teachers apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom situations. Through feedback sessions, ML3 provides constructive critique and guidance, helping preservice teachers understand how their practices align with or deviate from theoretical principles. These discussions not only reinforce the connection between theory and practice but also offer opportunities for growth and improvement. The strategies employed by the mentor lecturers—using real-life examples and case studies, encouraging reflective practice, and conducting classroom observations with feedback—collectively contribute to a robust framework for translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills. By implementing these approaches, the lecturers ensure that preservice teachers are not only able to understand theoretical concepts but also adept at applying them in diverse educational settings. The integration of theory, practice, and reflective practice in this holistic approach provides preservice teachers with the necessary tools and insights to effectively traverse the intricacies of teaching. Teachers can adjust to a range of classroom issues with the support of a complete strategy that combines pedagogical core knowledge with real-world experiences, claims Shulman (2020). Loughran (2020) highlights that a fundamental element of this methodology is reflective practice, which cultivates an enhanced comprehension of pedagogical approaches and advances ongoing professional development. Furthermore, Borko (2020) points out that the development of flexible and reflective teaching methods is supported by a combination of mentoring, observations, and feedback within a comprehensive framework. In the end, this integrated approach produces practitioners who are more thoughtful and productive.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers are pivotal in bridging the gap between theoretical content and its practical application by employing a range of targeted strategies. MT1 integrates real-life examples and case studies with theoretical concepts to illustrate how these concepts manifest in actual teaching scenarios. This approach is designed to contextualize abstract theories, making them more tangible and relevant to preservice teachers. By presenting scenarios that mirror real classroom situations, MT1 helps preservice teachers understand how theoretical principles are operationalized, thereby enhancing their ability to apply these concepts effectively in their own classrooms.

MT2 emphasizes the importance of reflective practice, encouraging preservice teachers to critically examine their own teaching experiences in light of the content knowledge they have gained. This method involves a cyclical process where preservice teachers reflect on their classroom practices, identify areas for improvement, and relate their insights back to theoretical frameworks. Reflective practice not only deepens preservice teachers' understanding of how theory informs their teaching but also fosters continuous personal and professional growth. Through this introspective approach, preservice teachers develop a more nuanced understanding of how to adapt theoretical concepts to meet the diverse needs of their students.

MT3 employs a hands-on approach by using classroom observations and feedback sessions to directly connect theory with practice. For mentors like MT3, a hands-on approach typically involves engaging directly with preservice teachers through practical, interactive methods that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. By observing preservice teachers in action and providing targeted feedback, MT3 facilitates a practical examination of how well theoretical knowledge is being applied in real classroom settings. These observations are followed by discussions that link observed practices with theoretical concepts, offering preservice teachers specific, actionable insights into their teaching methods. This feedback loop not only reinforces theoretical understanding but also provides a platform for

preservice teachers to adjust and refine their practices based on real-time observations and expert guidance.

Together, these strategies underscore the mentor teachers' commitment to ensuring that preservice teachers can effectively translate their theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills. By combining contextual examples, reflective practice, and direct observation with feedback, mentor teachers create a robust framework for preservice teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ultimately fostering a more effective and reflective approach to teaching.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers have articulated a range of expectations from their mentors, reflecting a deep appreciation for the multifaceted support mentors provide. PT1 expressed the need for “regular feedback and guidance on my teaching practice,” emphasizing the importance of continuous assessment and constructive criticism to enhance teaching skills and foster professional growth.

PT2 highlighted the desire for mentors to be “approachable and supportive,” which underscores the necessity of a nurturing environment where preservice teachers feel comfortable asking questions and seeking advice. PT3 sought assistance in “linking theoretical knowledge to practical teaching, providing real-life examples and case studies,” demonstrating a clear need for practical applications of theoretical concepts.

Adding to these, PT4 expressed the expectation for mentors to “model effective teaching practices,” viewing mentors as role models whose techniques and strategies serve as valuable examples to emulate. PT5 emphasized the need for “personalized mentoring that addresses individual strengths and areas for improvement,” reflecting a desire for tailored support that aligns with their specific developmental needs. PT6 hoped for mentors to “facilitate networking opportunities and professional development resources,” recognizing that building connections within the educational community is crucial for career advancement and continued learning. PT7 sought guidance on “integrating technology into my teaching,” indicating a need for support in adapting to modern educational tools and methods.

These expanded expectations collectively reveal that preservice teachers value a comprehensive and individualized mentoring approach. They seek not only practical, hands-on guidance and emotional support but also exemplary role modeling, personalized feedback, professional networking, and technological integration. This holistic support is seen as essential for their development, enabling them to effectively translate theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills while navigating the complexities of the education profession.

Subtheme 3: Engagement and Relationship Building in Mentorship

Participants Group 1 Responses

The responses from mentor lecturers (ML) have underscored the critical role of fostering open and supportive relationships with preservice teachers, reflecting a commitment to creating a positive and effective mentoring environment. ML1 emphasized the importance of maintaining an “open and supportive relationship,” where preservice teachers are encouraged to share their experiences and challenges freely. This approach helps build trust and ensures that preservice teachers feel safe and supported as they navigate their teaching practice. ML2 highlighted the practice of “regularly checking in with preservice teachers,” providing ongoing guidance and support to ensure they feel comfortable seeking help. This proactive approach ensures that preservice teachers are not left to navigate difficulties alone and that they receive timely support to address any issues they encounter.

ML3 added that they “create a collaborative environment where preservice teachers feel valued and respected,” fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging preservice teachers to take ownership of their learning. This collaborative atmosphere helps preservice teachers feel more engaged and invested in their professional development. Additionally, ML4 shared, “I offer constructive feedback and celebrate successes, helping preservice teachers recognize their growth and stay motivated.” This practice not only supports ongoing improvement but also reinforces positive behaviours and achievements, contributing to a more encouraging and motivating learning experience. ML5 noted, “I facilitate regular group discussions and peer reviews, which promote a sense of community and allow preservice teachers to learn from one another’s experiences.” By integrating peer interactions, ML5 helps

preservice teachers benefit from diverse perspectives and collaborative learning opportunities.

These responses collectively highlight the mentor lecturers' efforts to create a nurturing and collaborative environment. Through open communication, regular check-ins, collaborative practices, constructive feedback, and peer learning opportunities, mentor lecturers strive to support preservice teachers effectively. This holistic approach not only addresses the individual needs of preservice teachers but also fosters a positive and engaging learning environment that enhances their overall professional development.

Participant Group 2 Responses

The responses from mentor teachers (MT) have underscored the critical importance of cultivating trusting and supportive relationships with preservice teachers, recognizing that such relationships are foundational to effective mentorship. MT1 emphasized the need for an “open and supportive relationship,” where preservice teachers are encouraged to share their experiences and challenges openly. This approach helps build a trusting environment, allowing preservice teachers to feel secure in expressing their concerns and seeking guidance without fear of judgment. MT2 highlighted the practice of “regularly checking in with preservice teachers,” which involves providing ongoing guidance and support to ensure that preservice teachers feel consistently supported and comfortable reaching out for help. This proactive engagement ensures that potential issues are addressed promptly and that preservice teachers feel continuously supported in their development.

MT3 spoke about creating a “collaborative environment where preservice teachers feel valued and respected,” emphasizing the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and empowering preservice teachers to take ownership of their learning. This collaborative approach not only enhances engagement but also encourages preservice teachers to actively participate in their own professional growth. MT4 added, “I make an effort to understand each preservice teacher’s individual needs and challenges, offering tailored support that meets their specific circumstances.” This personalized approach reflects a commitment to addressing the unique needs of each

preservice teacher, ensuring that support is relevant and effective. MT5 noted, “I build strong, empathetic relationships by actively listening and showing genuine interest in preservice teachers’ progress and well-being.” This empathetic engagement helps create a supportive atmosphere where preservice teachers feel understood and valued, contributing to their overall confidence and motivation.

These insights collectively illustrate that mentor teachers place a high priority on creating a nurturing and trusting environment. By maintaining open communication, providing regular support, fostering collaboration, offering personalized assistance, and demonstrating empathy, mentoring teachers ensure that preservice teachers have the necessary support and encouragement to thrive in their professional development. This holistic approach to mentorship not only addresses individual needs but also contributes to a positive and effective learning experience, enabling preservice teachers to grow and succeed.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Participant Group 3, comprising the Preservice teachers, emphasized the critical role of their mentors' engagement and support, particularly valuing constructive feedback as an essential component of their professional growth. PT1 remarked, “I am very comfortable receiving constructive feedback. I see it as an opportunity to learn and improve my teaching practice.” This statement reflects a positive attitude towards feedback, recognizing it as a valuable tool for learning and skill enhancement. PT2 highlighted, “I value feedback and use it to enhance my teaching skills. Constructive criticism helps me to identify areas of improvement and become a more effective teacher. This perspective underscores the preservice teachers’ appreciation for feedback to pinpoint specific areas for development and to refine their teaching practices.

PT3 added, “I am open to receiving feedback and see it as beneficial. Feedback from my mentor helps me to continuously improve and refine my teaching strategies.” This openness to feedback demonstrates an understanding of its role in ongoing professional development and its importance in fine-tuning teaching methods. PT4 mentioned, “Receiving timely and constructive feedback is crucial for me. It helps me adjust my approaches quickly and ensures I am on the right track.” This statement

illustrates the value of timely feedback in making immediate adjustments to teaching practices, emphasizing the need for regular and prompt evaluations. PT5 said, “I appreciate mentors who are actively engaged in my development. Their insights and suggestions are instrumental in helping me grow as a teacher.” This highlights the significance of active mentor engagement in providing valuable insights that facilitate professional growth.

PT6 noted, “Feedback sessions with my mentor are incredibly valuable for my growth. They offer a chance to reflect on my practice and make informed improvements.” This response emphasizes the reflective aspect of feedback sessions, where preservice teachers can contemplate their practices and implement informed changes. PT7 shared, “I value the constructive conversations with my mentor, as they help me address my weaknesses and build on my strengths.” This reflects the role of constructive dialogues in identifying areas for improvement and reinforcing strengths. PT8 added, “The support and feedback from my mentor provide me with a sense of direction and confidence, which is essential for my development as a teacher.” This highlights how mentorship support contributes to both direction and self-assurance, critical components of professional growth.

Overall, these responses indicate that preservice teachers highly value and appreciate the engagement and constructive feedback from their mentors. They see feedback as a crucial element for identifying areas for improvement, refining teaching strategies, and enhancing overall effectiveness. The emphasis on timely, actionable, and reflective feedback underscores its importance in supporting preservice teachers’ continuous development and helping them grow into competent and confident educators.

Summary of Responses to Theme 1

The analysis of responses from mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers reveals a well-coordinated and effective implementation of the mentoring framework. Each group demonstrated a clear understanding of the framework’s structured approach and its impact on professional development. Mentor lecturers and mentor teachers both emphasized the framework’s role in guiding preservice teachers, underscoring its systematic nature and the consistency with which it is applied. They

highlighted key elements such as providing practical examples, facilitating reflective practice, and maintaining open and supportive relationships, all of which are integral to the framework.

Mentor lecturers focused on creating a supportive and collaborative environment, where preservice teachers are encouraged to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application. This approach involves regular feedback, modeling effective practices, and fostering an atmosphere of trust and respect. Similarly, mentor teachers stressed the importance of maintaining open communication and providing constructive feedback, which they see as essential for helping preservice teachers grow and refine their skills.

Foundation phase preservice teachers, on their part, expressed clear expectations for their mentors, emphasizing their appreciation for timely and constructive feedback, as well as the need for a supportive and approachable mentoring relationship. They acknowledged the value of feedback in identifying areas for improvement and enhancing their teaching practices. The consistency in these expectations reflects a strong alignment with the mentoring framework's objectives, demonstrating that foundation phase preservice teachers value a structured approach to their professional development.

Overall, the alignment across these groups highlights the effectiveness of the mentoring framework in achieving its goals. The structured nature of the framework facilitates a coherent and supportive learning environment that promotes professional growth. By integrating regular feedback, collaborative practices, and supportive relationships, the framework successfully fosters the development of practical teaching skills and enhances the overall effectiveness of preservice teachers. This comprehensive alignment underscores the framework's role in providing a robust foundation for the ongoing development and success of future educators.

Theme 2: Effectiveness and Areas for Improvement in the Mentoring Framework

Question 2 focused on the effectiveness of the framework used in the development of preservice students during teaching practice?

Participant Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers acknowledge several key aspects of the mentoring framework as crucial for providing structured support and guidance to preservice teachers. A major highlight is the feedback sessions, which are consistently recognized for their value in offering ongoing support and clarity. ML1 remarked, “The regular feedback sessions are particularly beneficial as they provide ongoing support and clarity on areas needing improvement,” underscoring how these sessions help preservice teachers identify and address specific areas for growth. ML4 echoed this sentiment, noting that feedback is instrumental in helping preservice teachers understand their strengths and areas for development, thereby enhancing their overall teaching skills.

The goal-setting component of the framework is also highly valued. ML2 emphasized that “The goal-setting component allows preservice teachers to focus on specific areas of their teaching practice, which helps in tracking their progress over time.” This structured approach not only aids in maintaining focus and motivation but also ensures that development efforts are aligned with clearly defined objectives. ML3 added, “Setting clear goals helps preservice teachers understand what is expected of them and how to achieve their teaching targets,” highlighting the importance of goal setting in providing direction and purpose in their professional development.

Reflective practice is another critical element praised by mentor lecturers. ML3 explained that “The reflective practice sessions encourage preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching and identify areas for growth.” This reflective process is essential for bridging theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experiences, allowing preservice teachers to evaluate their performance critically and make informed improvements.

Overall, mentor lecturers view these components—feedback sessions, goal-setting, and reflective practice—as integral to the mentoring framework’s success. They provide essential support that facilitates foundation phase preservice teachers’ development, ensuring that their teaching practices are continually refined and aligned with their professional growth objectives.

Participant Group 2 Responses

The mentor teachers of the two selected primary schools largely echo the positive sentiments about the mentoring framework shared by their lecturer counterparts, recognizing several key aspects as particularly beneficial, while also suggesting areas for enhancement.

MT1 and MT4 both emphasized the value of regular observation and feedback, with MT1 noting, “The regular observation and feedback sessions are the most beneficial aspects. They provide preservice teachers with actionable insights and help them align their practice with teaching standards. This emphasis on consistent feedback is crucial as it allows preservice teachers to refine their teaching practices and ensure they meet established educational standards. MT4 further supported this view, highlighting how these sessions contribute to a deeper understanding of effective teaching methods and standards.

The framework's structured approach was also appreciated by MT3, who stated, “The structured approach helps maintain consistency in mentoring.” This consistency is vital for offering a stable and reliable support system, ensuring that mentoring practices are uniformly applied and that foundation phase preservice teachers receive coherent guidance throughout their development. This structured methodology helps in maintaining a clear direction and systematic progression in the mentoring process.

Reflective practice, another core component of the framework, was similarly valued by MT2. MT2 noted, “The reflective practice is particularly useful,” suggesting that this element encourages preservice teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods and identify areas for improvement. This reflective process aligns with the framework's goal of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, allowing preservice teachers to make informed adjustments to their teaching practices.

While mentor teachers recognize these components as effective in supporting preservice teachers, they also acknowledge that there is room for refinement to further enhance their impact. This suggests a willingness to continuously improve the mentoring framework, ensuring it remains responsive to the evolving needs of preservice teachers and maximizes its effectiveness in facilitating their professional growth.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers recognize several valuable components of the mentoring framework but report mixed experiences regarding its effectiveness. Regular feedback is particularly appreciated by PT1 and PT4, with PT1 noting, “The regular feedback and structured observations have helped me identify areas for improvement.” This highlights the critical role of consistent feedback in facilitating growth and addressing specific areas for development. PT4 similarly values the feedback process, emphasizing its importance in refining teaching practices and aligning with educational standards.

Structured observations are also highly regarded by PT3 and PT7. PT3 remarked, “Structured observations have been beneficial in guiding my development,” indicating that these observations provide clear, actionable guidance that supports their professional growth. PT7 added, “The structured observations give me detailed insights into my teaching practices,” suggesting that this component helps in identifying specific strengths and areas needing enhancement.

Goal setting is another aspect that PT2 finds beneficial, stating, “The goal setting keeps me focused and motivated.” This feature helps foundation phase preservice teachers maintain a clear direction and stay engaged with their development objectives. Additionally, PT5 and PT6 acknowledged the value of goal setting, with PT5 noting, “Setting goals helps me track my progress and stay on target,” and PT6 adding, “Clear goals provide a sense of purpose and direction in my teaching practice.”

However, despite these positive aspects, some preservice teachers express concerns about areas where the framework might fall short. PT8, for instance, noted, “While feedback is helpful, it sometimes lacks specificity for my unique challenges.” This indicates a need for more tailored feedback that addresses individual circumstances. PT9 shared a similar sentiment, saying, “The structured observations are useful, but I sometimes feel they do not fully capture the complexity of my teaching interactions.” This suggests that while structured observations are beneficial, they may not always encompass the full scope of teaching dynamics.

Overall, while preservice teachers value the regular feedback, structured observations, and goal-setting components of the mentoring framework, they also

highlight areas for improvement, indicating a need for more personalized and comprehensive support to fully meet their developmental needs.

Summary of responses to Theme 2

The analysis of the mentoring framework's impact on preservice teachers reveals a nuanced view of its effectiveness and areas for enhancement. Mentor lecturers and mentor teachers generally perceive the framework as beneficial, noting several key strengths. Regular feedback is highlighted as a particularly valuable component, with mentoring lecturers and teachers emphasizing its role in providing ongoing support and clarity on areas needing improvement. Feedback sessions are seen as crucial for helping foundation phase preservice teachers refine their teaching practices and adhere to educational standards. Additionally, the structured approach to mentoring and goal setting are appreciated for maintaining consistency and direction throughout the mentoring process. Reflective practice is also valued for encouraging critical analysis and continuous improvement of teaching methods.

Foundation phase preservice teachers also acknowledge these strengths, expressing appreciation for the regular feedback, structured observations, and goal-setting aspects of the framework. Many find these components helpful in identifying areas for growth, maintaining focus, and receiving actionable guidance. However, their experiences are mixed, with some reporting that the framework does not fully address their individual needs. Challenges include the need for more specific and personalized feedback, as well as concerns that structured observations may not capture the full complexity of their teaching interactions. The analysis thus highlights a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring framework's impact on preservice teachers. While its structured support and guidance are broadly beneficial, the feedback also points to areas where refinements could enhance its effectiveness. Addressing these challenges—such as providing more tailored feedback and ensuring observations capture the nuances of teaching—could further improve the framework's support for foundation phase preservice teachers' professional growth. This balanced view offers valuable insights into both the strengths and potential areas for development within the mentoring framework, ensuring that it can more effectively support the evolving needs of preservice teachers.

Theme 3: Challenges Experienced During Mentoring Sessions

Question 3 looked at the challenges experienced by mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?

Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers voiced facing significant challenges in managing time and resources, which directly impact their ability to effectively mentor preservice teachers. One of the primary issues is finding adequate time for each mentee amidst their packed schedules. ML1 pointed out, "One of the primary challenges is finding adequate time to dedicate to each mentee due to our packed schedules. Often, sessions are shorter than ideal." This limitation in time can reduce the depth and quality of interactions during mentoring sessions, making it difficult to address each mentee's needs thoroughly. Additionally, the difficulty of balancing academic responsibilities with mentoring duties is highlighted by ML2, who said, "Balancing my academic responsibilities with mentoring duties can be quite difficult." This balancing act often results in mentor lecturers struggling to allocate sufficient attention to mentoring, which can affect the effectiveness of the support provided.

Resource limitations are another critical issue. ML3 noted, "We sometimes face challenges with insufficient resources and materials, which hampers our ability to provide practical support." This scarcity of resources can impede the ability to offer hands-on guidance and practical experiences that are crucial for the preservice teachers' development. Moreover, the diverse learning needs and styles of foundation phase mentees add to another layer of complexity. ML5 observed, "Addressing the diverse learning needs and styles of mentees can be overwhelming." This diversity requires mentor lecturers to continuously adapt their approaches to meet individual needs, which can be challenging without adequate time and resources.

To address these challenges, mentor lecturers employ various strategies to support their mentees effectively. ML1 focuses on a strengths-based approach, stating, "I focus on addressing gaps by first highlighting the mentee's strengths before introducing areas for improvement." This strategy helps maintain motivation and provides a positive reinforcement framework for addressing developmental areas.

ML2 emphasizes the importance of providing feedback in a “supportive and non-judgmental manner,” which is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment and fostering mentee growth. Additionally, ML3 recommends supplementary readings and resources to help mentees overcome weaknesses, thus bridging gaps that may not be addressed within the constraints of direct mentoring. Encouraging self-reflection is another key strategy, as ML5 highlighted, “Encouraging foundation phase mentees to reflect on their own practices before receiving feedback helps them identify their own gaps and solutions.” This reflective practice promotes autonomy and self-awareness among mentees, enhancing their ability to address their own development needs.

Balancing multiple roles and maintaining mentee engagement are persistent challenges. ML1 observed, “One significant challenge is balancing mentoring with my other academic duties. I constantly strive to manage my time effectively,” indicating the ongoing struggle to effectively juggle mentoring responsibilities with other professional obligations. ML2 echoed this sentiment, noting the difficulty in managing institutional expectations while meeting the diverse needs of mentees. Maintaining engagement, particularly when mentees struggle with practical applications, is another critical challenge. ML3 noted, “Keeping foundation phase mentees engaged and motivated, especially when they struggle with practical applications, is a persistent challenge.” To counter these issues, continuous professional development is emphasized as essential. ML5 stated, “I continuously engage in professional development to keep up with best practices and improve my mentoring skills.” This commitment to ongoing learning helps mentor lecturers adapt to evolving mentoring needs and enhance their effectiveness despite the challenges they face.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers face significant challenges in managing role transitions and providing consistent feedback. Transitioning from a classroom teacher to a mentor requires a major shift in approach, which MT1 found challenging, noting, “Shifting from being a classroom teacher to a mentor requires a significant change in approach, which can be challenging.” This transition often involves adapting to new roles and responsibilities that differ greatly from traditional teaching duties. MT2 echoed this

difficulty, stating, “I find it difficult to manage both teaching and mentoring effectively.” The dual responsibilities of teaching and mentoring can strain time and resources, making it challenging to balance both roles effectively.

Consistency in feedback is another critical challenge. MT3 observed, “Consistency in providing feedback can be challenging, especially when there are multiple mentees with different needs.” Providing tailored and consistent feedback to diverse foundation phase mentees requires careful attention and can be difficult when trying to meet varying needs simultaneously. MT5 highlighted that “mentoring sessions sometimes lack a clear structure, leading to less effective outcomes,” suggesting that an unstructured approach can result in inefficiencies and less impactful mentoring sessions.

To address these challenges, mentor teachers employ several strategies to improve effectiveness. MT1 provides targeted feedback based on observed teaching practices, stating, “I provide targeted feedback based on observed teaching practices and work with mentees to develop actionable plans.” This targeted approach ensures that feedback is relevant and actionable, helping mentees to make specific improvements. MT2 emphasizes the importance of a structured approach, saying, “Using a structured approach to feedback ensures that mentees receive clear and actionable advice.” Structuring feedback helps to deliver consistent and comprehensible guidance, making it easier for mentees to follow and implement suggestions.

Collaborative problem-solving is a key strategy for MT3, who said, “I work collaboratively with mentees to address gaps in their knowledge, discussing potential solutions and strategies together.” This collaborative approach fosters a partnership in problem-solving and encourages mentees to take an active role in their development. Regular follow-up is also crucial, as MT5 noted, “Regular follow-up meetings help ensure that mentees are making progress in addressing their gaps.” Regular check-ins provide opportunities to monitor progress, adjust strategies, and maintain engagement.

In addition to these strategies, mentor teachers face ongoing challenges related to transitioning roles and managing feedback. MT1 commented, “Transitioning from a classroom teacher to a mentor involves a significant shift in mindset and approach,” highlighting the substantial adjustment required for effective mentoring. MT2 added,

“Finding the right balance between providing guidance and allowing independence is challenging,” reflecting the difficulty of striking an appropriate balance in mentoring practices. Ensuring that feedback is both effective and well-received is another focus, with MT3 noting, “Ensuring that feedback is both effective and well-received is an ongoing challenge.” Finally, MT4 emphasized the importance of utilizing feedback to refine practices, stating, “I use feedback from mentees and colleagues to continuously refine my approach and address any challenges in the mentoring process.” This commitment to refining mentoring practices through feedback helps address challenges and improve the overall effectiveness of the mentoring process.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers face notable challenges with gaps in practical application and inconsistencies in feedback, which significantly impact their professional development. PT1 expressed frustration with the mentoring framework, stating, “The mentoring framework sometimes lacks specific, actionable steps, making it difficult to implement feedback effectively.” This highlights a critical issue: when feedback is not accompanied by clear, actionable steps, it becomes challenging for preservice teachers to translate it into practical improvements. PT2 echoed this concern, noting that “Feedback is often too general and not tailored to my specific teaching context.” Generalized feedback fails to address the unique aspects of each preservice teacher's classroom environment, limiting its applicability and effectiveness.

In addition to the lack of specificity, PT3 pointed out that “Mentoring sessions can be infrequent, which delays the resolution of issues and hinders my development.” The infrequency of sessions means that problems and gaps in knowledge may remain unaddressed for extended periods, slowing down the preservice teacher's progress and development. This delay in addressing issues underscores the need for more regular and timely interactions to facilitate continuous improvement.

The need for personalized feedback is crucial, as highlighted by PT6, who mentioned, “Feedback that doesn't align with my teaching style or classroom environment makes it difficult to apply effectively.” Personalized feedback that considers individual teaching styles and classroom dynamics is essential for making the advice relevant and actionable. Preservice teachers appreciate detailed feedback and practical examples

to bridge gaps in knowledge. PT8 emphasized, “I need more detailed and specific feedback to understand where I am going wrong and how to improve.” Detailed feedback helps in pinpointing exact areas of weakness and provides clearer guidance for improvement. PT9 similarly noted, “Feedback that directly addresses my weaknesses and provides concrete steps for improvement is most helpful.” Concrete step-by-step advice is critical for addressing specific issues and making tangible progress.

The importance of practical examples was underscored by PT10, who said, “Providing practical examples and demonstrations during feedback sessions helps me apply theoretical concepts more effectively.” Practical examples and demonstrations enable preservice teachers to see how theoretical concepts are applied in real-world scenarios, enhancing their ability to implement these ideas in their own practice. Sensitivity in feedback is also crucial, as PT12 noted, “Receiving feedback in a constructive and supportive manner helps me feel more confident in addressing my weaknesses.” Constructive and supportive feedback fosters a positive learning environment and encourages preservice teachers to address their weaknesses with greater confidence.

Inconsistencies in feedback and inadequate support structures are additional challenges. PT7 pointed out, “Inconsistent feedback makes it hard to improve effectively,” highlighting how variability in feedback can undermine the development process. PT8 added, “The lack of practical strategies and examples means I struggle to apply feedback in real situations,” emphasizing the need for more structured and context-specific guidance. PT10 also stressed the importance of better support, stating, “Providing practical strategies and examples related to my teaching context would be beneficial.” This underscores the need for feedback that is not only relevant but also applicable to the preservice teacher’s specific teaching context. Lastly, PT12 emphasized the need for empathy, noting, “Mentors should approach gaps in knowledge with empathy and understanding,” which highlights the importance of delivering feedback in a way that is both supportive and sensitive to the challenges faced by preservice teachers.

Overall, these insights reveal a clear need for more personalized, actionable, and context-specific feedback, as well as regular and empathetic support, to better address the challenges faced by preservice teachers and enhance their professional growth.

Summary of Responses to Theme 3

The analysis of challenges faced by mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers highlights several critical areas where the mentoring framework can be enhanced. Mentor lecturers frequently grapple with time management and resource allocation, which hinder their ability to provide thorough and individualized support to each mentee. ML1 and ML2 pointed out that their packed schedules and academic responsibilities limit the time available for effective mentoring, with ML1 noting that “sessions are shorter than ideal.” Additionally, ML3 highlighted the problem of insufficient resources, which affects the practical support they can offer. Addressing diverse mentee needs is also a significant challenge, as ML5 observed, making it difficult to cater to varied learning styles and requirements.

Similarly, mentor teachers face challenges related to the transition from classroom teaching to mentoring roles. MT1 remarked that this shift requires a substantial change in approach, and MT2 noted the difficulty in managing both teaching and mentoring responsibilities effectively. Ensuring consistency in feedback is another major issue, with MT3 acknowledging the challenge of providing uniform feedback to multiple mentees with differing needs. MT5 further pointed out that the lack of a clear structure in mentoring sessions can result in less effective outcomes, underscoring the need for a more organized approach.

Foundation phase preservice teachers encounter their own set of challenges within the framework. They often struggle with the practical application of feedback, as PT1 noted, finding that the framework sometimes lacks “specific, actionable steps.” PT2 echoed this concern, stating that “feedback is often too general,” indicating a need for more tailored and context-specific guidance. The infrequency of mentoring sessions also delays problem resolution and hampers development, as PT3 highlighted. Furthermore, foundation phase preservice teachers emphasize the need for more detailed and practical feedback to effectively implement improvements. PT8 and PT10 stressed the importance of providing concrete examples and actionable advice during feedback sessions to aid in applying theoretical concepts. Sensitivity in feedback delivery is also crucial, with PT12 noting that constructive and supportive feedback helps in building confidence and addressing weaknesses.

In summary, the mentoring framework's effectiveness is significantly impacted by challenges faced across all participant groups. Mentor lecturers struggle with time constraints, resource limitations, and diverse mentee needs, while mentor teachers deal with the complexities of role transitions, feedback consistency, and session structure. Foundation phase preservice teachers face difficulties in applying feedback due to its general nature, session infrequency, and a lack of practical guidance. Addressing these challenges by improving time management, enhancing resource availability, ensuring structured and consistent feedback, and providing personalized and actionable advice will be essential in strengthening the mentoring framework and better supporting preservice teachers' professional development.

Theme 4: Needs and Expectations in Mentoring Sessions

Question 4 covered the needs and expectations of both the mentors and preservice teachers during mentoring sessions.

Subtheme 1: Skills and Knowledge Expected from Preservice Teachers

Participant Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers play a pivotal role in shaping the competencies of preservice teachers by emphasizing the development of practical teaching skills alongside theoretical knowledge.

According to ML1, a key expectation is that preservice teachers “acquire strong classroom management skills.” This implies not just understanding the principles of classroom management but also being able to apply them effectively in real classroom settings. ML1 further stresses the importance of “applying theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings,” indicating that successful teaching goes beyond theoretical learning to involve hands-on experience. ML2 builds on this by highlighting the necessity of integrating theory with practice. They assert that preservice teachers “need to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate their teaching strategies.” This points to a comprehensive approach where preservice teachers are expected to be adept at designing lesson plans, executing them, and critically assessing their effectiveness to ensure continuous improvement.

Critical thinking and adaptability are also deemed essential by ML3. They argue that “critical thinking and adaptability in the classroom are crucial skills,” emphasizing that preservice teachers must be able to navigate the complexities of classroom dynamics and adjust their strategies as needed.

Reflective practice is another core element highlighted by ML4 and ML5. ML4 notes that “reflection on teaching practices and student outcomes is an essential component,” underscoring the importance of introspection and analysis in refining teaching methods. This reflection helps preservice teachers understand what works well and what needs adjustment.

ML5 complements this perspective by stressing that these reflective skills are necessary for ensuring that preservice teachers are “ready for teaching careers.” This indicates that readiness for the teaching profession is not only about acquiring skills but also about being prepared to continuously reflect and improve.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers underscore the critical importance of practical skills and professional conduct for preservice teachers, highlighting several key areas essential for their development.

MT1 emphasizes the foundational skills that preservice teachers need to master. They assert that developing “classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional strategies” is crucial. This indicates that a well-rounded teacher must be proficient in organizing and managing a classroom environment, designing effective lesson plans, and employing instructional strategies that facilitate learning. These skills are not only fundamental to effective teaching but also pivotal for the preservice teachers' professional growth.

MT2 highlights the importance of adaptability in teaching. They stress that preservice teachers must be capable of “adapting lessons to diverse student needs.” This adaptability ensures that all students, regardless of their varying needs and backgrounds, receive appropriate and effective instruction. It underscores the need for flexibility in teaching approaches to accommodate the unique requirements of each student.

Reflective practice and adherence to professional standards are also central themes highlighted by MT3 and MT4. MT3 underscores the significance of professional behavior by stating, “Understanding professional standards and behaving accordingly is crucial.” This reflects a broader expectation that preservice teachers must not only understand the ethical and professional norms of the teaching profession but also consistently exhibit these standards in their practice.

MT4 complements this by focusing on the role of feedback in the development of preservice teachers. They argue that “providing timely and relevant feedback is crucial to their development.” This points to the importance of continuous and constructive feedback in helping preservice teachers improve their teaching practices and professional skills.

Together, the responses from the mentor teachers reflect a cohesive emphasis on the development of practical teaching skills, such as classroom management and lesson planning, as well as the importance of professional conduct and reflective practice. The integration of these elements is essential for preparing preservice teachers to be effective and professional educators.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Foundation phase preservice teachers are acutely aware of the rigorous expectations placed upon them, though their experiences reveal a range of challenges and insights.

PT1 highlights the necessity of quickly adapting to various foundation phase teaching styles and classroom management techniques, emphasizing the need for versatility in their roles. PT2 and PT3 stress the importance of translating theoretical knowledge into practice, with PT2 noting that “the ability to put theory into practice is crucial,” and PT3 adding that “receiving constructive feedback helps us refine our teaching strategies.” This feedback is vital for improving their methods, yet PT4 struggles with the pressure to demonstrate proficiency quickly, revealing the difficulty of meeting high standards within a short timeframe. Other preservice teachers provide additional perspectives: PT5 points to the challenges of “effective lesson planning and time management,” while PT6 underscores the importance of building rapport with students for effective teaching. PT7 speaks to the need for continuous self-improvement, which can be overwhelming but is necessary for growth. PT8 values collaborative learning

with peers, stating that “working with fellow preservice teachers helps us share strategies and support each other.” PT9 emphasizes the effort required to engage diverse learners, and PT10 notes the difficulty in balancing teaching with administrative tasks. PT11 highlights the importance of maintaining a professional demeanor, and PT12 discusses the challenge of navigating feedback from multiple sources, which can be confusing but is essential for developing a well-rounded approach. These varied experiences underscore the complex transition from theoretical understanding to practical application and the ongoing need for support and guidance in their professional development.

Subtheme 2: Perceptions of Experiences During Teaching Practice

Participant Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers widely regard practical experiences as crucial for the professional development of preservice teachers, viewing these experiences as pivotal in shaping their readiness for the teaching profession.

ML1 emphasizes the transformative nature of these experiences, describing them as “invaluable in bridging the gap between theory and practice.” This perspective highlights how real-world classroom environments enable foundation phase preservice teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations, thereby enhancing their understanding and effectiveness. ML2 further underscores the importance of practical experiences by noting that they help preservice teachers “understand the complexities of classroom dynamics and student interactions.” This insight reflects the multifaceted nature of teaching, where preservice teachers must navigate various interpersonal and instructional challenges that are not fully captured through theoretical learning alone.

ML3 highlights another key benefit of practical experiences: the development of “problem-solving skills.” Facing real-world challenges in the classroom equips foundation phase preservice teachers with the ability to address and resolve issues effectively, which is essential for their professional growth and adaptability.

ML4 and ML5 both recognize the significance of observing growth over time. ML4 finds it “rewarding and indicative of their readiness for a teaching career” to see the progress

of foundation phase preservice teachers throughout their placement period. This view underscores the value of tracking and reflects on the development of teaching skills and competencies over time as a measure of readiness for independent teaching roles.

ML5 complements this by emphasizing the role of practical experiences in fostering ongoing improvement and readiness. The observations of growth and development in preservice teachers provide a clear indication of their evolving capabilities and preparedness for their future careers in education.

In summary, mentor lecturers perceive practical experiences as vital for bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world application, understanding classroom dynamics, and developing essential problem-solving skills. The opportunity to observe and support the growth of foundation phase preservice teachers over time further reinforces the positive impact of these experiences on their overall professional readiness.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers place significant value on the practical experiences gained during foundation phase teaching placements, recognizing these opportunities as integral to the development of foundation phase preservice teachers. MT1 highlights that such experiences “help foundation phase preservice teachers gain confidence and develop their teaching styles.” This observation underscores how immersive, hands-on teaching environments contribute to building self-assurance and refining individual teaching approaches, which are essential for effective classroom management and instructional delivery.

MT2 and MT3 both emphasize the critical role of practical experiences in adapting to various teaching scenarios and meeting diverse student needs. MT2 notes that these experiences are instrumental in helping foundation phase preservice teachers “adapt to different teaching situations,” which reflects the necessity of flexibility and responsiveness in teaching. By navigating different foundation phase classroom contexts and challenges, preservice teachers become more adept at modifying their approaches to suit varying instructional demands and student requirements.

MT3 further asserts that practical experiences are crucial for “professional development and readiness for full-time teaching roles.” This highlights the broader impact of teaching placements, which are not only about immediate classroom performance but also about preparing preservice teachers for the demands and responsibilities of a full-time teaching career. The ability to handle real-world teaching situations effectively is essential for transitioning from preservice training to independent teaching roles.

Overall, the views of mentor teachers align closely with those of mentor lecturers, reflecting a strong consensus on the value of practical experiences in the preparation of preservice teachers. These experiences are seen as vital for building confidence, developing teaching styles, adapting to diverse classroom environments, and ultimately achieving readiness for full-time teaching positions. The emphasis on these aspects underscores their importance in shaping well-prepared and capable

Participant Group 3 Responses

Foundation phase preservice teachers exhibit a range of perceptions regarding their practical experiences, reflecting both the benefits and challenges associated with these placements. PT1 and PT2 view these experiences as crucial for applying classroom theories and understanding real-world challenges. PT1 highlights that “the practical experiences are crucial for applying what we’ve learned,” emphasizing the importance of translating theoretical knowledge into practice. PT2 describes these experiences as “both stressful and enlightening,” capturing the dual nature of their placements as they navigate both the pressures, and the valuable insights gained. PT3 finds that practical experiences have significantly boosted their confidence, stating, “The hands-on experiences have significantly contributed to my confidence as a future teacher.” This highlights how direct classroom involvement can enhance self-assurance and preparedness. However, PT4 expresses feeling overwhelmed by the demands, noting that “sometimes the experiences can be overwhelming and challenging to manage,” reflecting the difficulties that can arise from intense practical experiences. Additional perspectives reveal further nuances: PT11 appreciates the growth opportunities, saying, “The practical placements have allowed me to refine my teaching methods and better understand classroom management.” PT12 mentions the

challenge of balancing theory with practice, noting, “Integrating what I’ve learned with the realities of the classroom is often more difficult than I anticipated.” PT13 values the practical experiences for professional development, asserting, “These experiences are essential for developing the skills and resilience needed for a teaching career.” PT14 emphasizes the importance of feedback, explaining, “Constructive feedback during placements has been invaluable for improving my teaching practices.” Finally, PT15 notes the stress of meeting high expectations, saying, “The pressure to meet high standards can be stressful, but it’s also a powerful motivator to improve.” These varied responses illustrate that while practical experiences are generally seen as beneficial for applying knowledge and building confidence, they also present significant challenges, underscoring the need for support and strategies to manage these demands effectively.

Summary of responses to Theme 4

The responses from the mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers emphasize the pivotal role of practical experiences in teacher preparation, recognizing both their benefits and challenges. Mentor lecturers view these experiences as crucial for bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world application, developing problem-solving skills, and observing growth over time. Mentor teachers similarly highlight their importance in building confidence, adapting to diverse teaching situations, and preparing for full-time teaching roles. Preservice teachers, while acknowledging the value of applying theory and gaining confidence through hands-on experiences, also express a range of reactions, from finding the experiences enlightening and essential for professional development to feeling overwhelmed by the demands and high expectations. Overall, the consensus is that practical experiences are vital for developing effective teaching skills, but they also present significant challenges that require support and effective management.

Theme 5: Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training

Question 5 looked at enhancing the mentorship effectiveness

Subtheme 1: Support and Resources for Mentor Teachers

Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers (MLs) emphasize that mentor teachers (MTs) need structured guidelines, access to pedagogical resources, and ongoing professional development to enhance their mentoring effectiveness. ML1 underscores the importance of clear mentorship frameworks, stating, "I often find myself unsure of what exactly is expected of me in different situations. Having a well-defined mentorship framework would make it easier to provide consistent and effective support." Similarly, ML2 highlights the need for up-to-date educational resources, noting, "Current educational resources and tools are essential for keeping my mentoring practices effective and aligned with the latest teaching methods." ML3 emphasizes the necessity for continuous professional development, observing, "Regular training sessions focused on communication and feedback techniques would be invaluable. These skills are crucial for providing constructive criticism and building positive relationships with preservice teachers." Additionally, ML4 points out the importance of tools for tracking and evaluating preservice teachers' progress, saying, "Having tools or systems in place to track the progress of preservice teachers would help me provide more targeted feedback and support." Finally, ML5 stresses the need for practical strategies, adding, "Ongoing training should include practical workshops that address real-world challenges, such as managing diverse classroom dynamics." Addressing these areas through structured support and resources can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mentor teachers and improve the overall quality of teacher training programs.

Participants Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers (MTs) express a strong need for comprehensive training programs that equip them with practical strategies for various aspects of their role. MT1 highlights the importance of targeted training, stating, "Practical strategies for providing feedback and managing challenging situations are crucial. Without these

skills, it's difficult to effectively support preservice teachers." MT2 adds that access to up-to-date teaching resources is essential, noting, "Having access to the latest educational materials helps me stay current and provide relevant guidance to preservice teachers." Additionally, MT3 emphasizes the value of collaboration, saying, "Opportunities to collaborate with other mentors and share best practices are incredibly beneficial. It allows us to learn from each other's experiences and improve our mentoring techniques." MT4 underscores the need for ongoing support from educational institutions, stating, "Regular workshops and refresher courses are vital. They help us stay updated on new methodologies and address any challenges we face in mentoring." Finally, MT5 advocates for structured professional development, adding, "Training programs should include sessions on handling diverse classroom dynamics and supporting the varied needs of preservice teachers. This ensures we're prepared to tackle real-world challenges effectively." Addressing these needs through structured training and support can significantly enhance the mentoring experience and improve the overall quality of teacher preparation programs.

Participants Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers (PTs) express that mentor teachers (MTs) need enhanced training in emotional intelligence and relationship-building skills to improve their mentoring effectiveness. PT1 comments, "Mentors would benefit greatly from training in emotional intelligence. Understanding and managing emotions can really impact how they interact with us and provide support." PT2 adds, "Building strong relationships is key. Mentors who are good at relationship-building can better understand and address our needs." They also highlight the necessity for comprehensive resources, such as detailed mentorship manuals and feedback templates. PT3 notes, "Having detailed mentorship manuals would help mentors be more structured in their approach and provide consistent guidance." PT4 echoes this sentiment, saying, "Templates for feedback would be useful. They would help mentors give clearer and more actionable advice." Furthermore, PT5 emphasizes the importance of a support network, stating, "Access to a network of experienced mentors would provide valuable support and advice, helping newer mentors navigate their roles more effectively." PT6 agrees, adding, "A support network could facilitate sharing best practices and dealing with common challenges." PT7 suggests that these resources and training would enable mentors to meet diverse needs better, saying, "If

mentors had more tools and training, they could tailor their support to the various needs of preservice teachers more effectively.” Finally, PT8 concludes, “Overall, improving these aspects would lead to a more supportive and productive mentoring relationship.” Addressing these needs through targeted training and resources can significantly enhance the mentoring process and better support preservice teachers.

Subtheme 2: Training and Professional Development for Mentors and Mentees

Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers (MLs) advocate for targeted professional development programs designed to enhance advanced mentoring techniques, including coaching and assessment strategies. They emphasize that such programs should also incorporate reflective practices to promote continuous improvement. ML1 stresses, “Professional development should focus on advanced techniques like coaching and assessment. These skills are essential for providing high-quality mentorship and effectively guiding preservice teachers.” ML2 adds, “Incorporating reflective practices into training allows mentors to critically evaluate their approaches and make necessary adjustments, fostering ongoing growth and effectiveness.” They also believe that professional development should be tailored to meet the needs of both mentors and mentees. ML3 notes, “Programs need to address the specific challenges and needs of both mentors and mentees to be truly effective. This ensures that the training is relevant and applicable in real-world mentoring scenarios.” ML4 highlights the importance of continuous improvement, stating, “Reflective practices help mentors to not only assess their current methods but also to adapt and refine their strategies based on their experiences and feedback.” Finally, ML5 emphasizes the overall impact of well-designed professional development, saying, “Tailored and advanced training programs enhance the overall effectiveness of mentoring sessions by equipping mentors with the skills and knowledge needed to support preservice teachers more effectively.” By addressing these areas through focused professional development, educational institutions can significantly improve the quality and impact of mentoring relationships.

Participants Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers (MTs) propose that training programs should emphasize practical aspects of mentoring, including conducting effective observation sessions, providing constructive feedback, and setting achievable goals. MT1 underscores the importance of observation, stating, "Training on how to conduct effective observation sessions is crucial. It helps mentors provide accurate and helpful feedback that can truly support preservice teachers' development." MT2 highlights the need for constructive feedback strategies, noting, "Mentors should be trained on how to give constructive feedback in a way that is clear, supportive, and actionable. This is essential for guiding preservice teachers towards improvement." MT3 emphasizes the significance of goal setting, adding, "Setting achievable goals is key to ensuring that preservice teachers have clear targets to work towards and can track their progress effectively." They also stress the value of workshops that address specific mentoring challenges. MT4 observes, "Workshops that tackle real-world challenges, such as managing diverse classroom dynamics, are incredibly valuable. They prepare mentors to handle various situations that may arise in the classroom." MT5 agrees, stating, "Support for dealing with mentees who have varying levels of experience is also essential. Training programs should include strategies for adapting mentoring approaches to meet different needs." By focusing on these practical aspects and addressing specific challenges, training programs can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mentoring and better support the diverse needs of preservice teachers.

Participants Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers (PTs) believe that both mentors and mentees would greatly benefit from training in collaborative skills and shared goal setting to improve their mentoring relationships. PT8 highlights the importance of collaborative skills, stating, "Training in collaborative skills would help both mentors and mentees work together more effectively, fostering a more productive mentoring relationship." PT9 adds, "Shared goal setting is crucial. When both parties are involved in setting goals, it creates a sense of ownership and alignment, which enhances the mentoring process." They also suggest that professional development should focus on building mutual understanding and effective communication. PT10 notes, "Workshops that focus on improving communication skills can help mentors and mentees better understand

each other's perspectives and needs." PT11 agrees, stating, "Effective communication is key to resolving misunderstandings and building a strong mentoring relationship." Additionally, PT12 emphasizes the value of managing stress, saying, "Workshops on managing stress are important. Mentoring can be demanding, and learning how to handle stress helps maintain a positive and supportive environment." PT13 concurs, noting, "Stress management techniques can prevent burnout and ensure that the mentoring relationship remains productive and encouraging." PT14 and PT15 also highlight the need for maintaining a positive mentoring relationship. PT14 states, "Training on maintaining a positive relationship helps both mentors and mentees stay motivated and engaged throughout the process." PT15 adds, "A positive relationship between mentors and mentees leads to better outcomes and a more enjoyable mentoring experience." By addressing these areas through targeted professional development opportunities, both mentors and mentees can benefit from enhanced collaboration, improved communication, and a more effective and supportive mentoring relationship.

Theme 6: Implementation and Effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework

QUESTION 6 looked at the effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework.

The implementation and effectiveness of a mentoring framework play a crucial role in the development of preservice teachers, providing structured guidance and support as they navigate the complexities of the teaching profession. Question 6 delves into the practical aspects of applying the proposed mentoring framework within the teaching practice program. It explores how the framework's objectives are being met through systematic integration into the educational setting, the preparedness and involvement of mentor lecturers, and the availability of necessary resources. By evaluating these elements, this question aims to offer insights into the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation process, ultimately assessing the framework's impact on enhancing the teaching skills and professional growth of preservice teachers. Below is an analysis of theme 6.

Subtheme 1: Design and Training of the Framework

Participant Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers have approached the design of their mentoring framework with a strategic focus on practicality, relevance, and continuous improvement. Their design process was informed by careful consideration of practical needs, feedback from previous cohorts, and alignment with national educational standards. ML1 emphasized that “we aimed for a framework that could cater to diverse learning styles and teaching environments,” indicating a deliberate effort to create a versatile and adaptable framework that meets the varied needs of preservice teachers. This approach underscores the importance of accommodating different teaching contexts and learning preferences.

In addition to designing the framework, the selection and training of mentors are crucial components of the process. ML2 highlighted that “training focuses on effective communication and mentoring strategies,” which reflects a commitment to equipping mentors with essential skills for providing impactful guidance. The emphasis on communication and mentoring techniques ensures that mentors are well-prepared to support preservice teachers effectively, fostering a productive learning environment.

Mentor lecturers also integrate current educational research into their framework, which helps keep the mentoring practices up-to-date and relevant. ML3 noted, “Incorporating the latest research allows us to align our practices with contemporary educational trends,” emphasizing the importance of staying informed about new developments in education to enhance the mentoring experience.

The training provided to mentors includes comprehensive workshops that address various aspects of mentoring, from practical techniques to theoretical foundations. ML4 mentioned, “Our workshops cover a range of topics, including conflict resolution and effective feedback, to prepare mentors for different challenges they might encounter.” This thorough preparation reflects the commitment to developing mentors who can address diverse issues and supporting preservice teachers through their development.

Overall, the design and implementation of the mentoring framework by mentor lecturers involve a careful balance of practical needs, feedback integration, and adherence to national standards, with a strong emphasis on flexibility, current research, and comprehensive mentor training.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers highlight that the design of their mentoring framework incorporates feedback from previous implementations and aligns closely with educational standards, reflecting commitment to continual improvement and adherence to best practices.

MT1 emphasized that “mentors are selected based on their experience and ability to provide effective support,” underscoring the significance of choosing qualified mentors who can offer valuable guidance. MT2 further noted that “training involves workshops on the new framework and mentoring best practices,” highlighting the focus on equipping mentors with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the framework effectively. MT3 added that “ongoing evaluations and adjustments to the framework ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to both mentor and preservice teacher needs,” illustrating the dynamic nature of the framework's development. MT4 also pointed out that “mentors receive support in adapting to new educational trends and technologies,” showing an additional layer of preparation aimed at keeping mentors current with evolving educational practices. Together, these perspectives emphasize the framework's design as a comprehensive, feedback-driven process that values mentor qualifications, effective training, and ongoing adaptation to meet the needs of all participants.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers encountered the introduction of the mentoring framework through structured orientation sessions, which provided an overview of its goals and components. PT1 noted, “The framework was introduced through an orientation session where we learned about its goals and components,” indicating a systematic introduction. However, PT2 observed that “its implementation has been somewhat inconsistent,” reflecting variability in how the framework was applied in practice. PT3 experienced that “the practical use of the framework in my placement was not always clear,” suggesting a disconnect between theory and application. PT4 added that there was “a disconnect between what was covered in the orientation and how it was implemented in the classroom,” highlighting gaps in execution. PT5 noted improvements over time, stating, “The framework's application improved as we

received more feedback and guidance.” In contrast, PT6 observed that “some mentors were better at integrating the framework than others,” emphasizing inconsistencies. PT7 found the framework’s structured approach helpful but noted variability depending on the mentor. PT8 faced initial challenges but found later adjustments made the framework easier to follow. PT9 appreciated the framework’s guidance once consistently applied. PT10 experienced disjointed application, feeling supported but confused at times. PT11 saw its effectiveness dependent on mentor engagement, while PT12 experienced mixed results due to inconsistency in application. PT13 suggested more practical examples could improve application, and PT14 saw improvements with more frequent feedback. PT15 and PT16 highlighted issues with flexibility leading to confusion and varying mentor engagement impacting effectiveness. Overall, while the framework’s introduction was well-organized, its practical application varied, affecting preservice teachers’ experiences and emphasizing the need for consistency and ongoing support.

Subtheme 2: Implementation and Addressing Challenges

Participant Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers undertook a structured approach to implement the mentoring framework, which included comprehensive orientation sessions, integration into daily mentoring practices, and regular assessments to monitor progress. However, the implementation process faced several challenges, including inconsistent application and resistance from some mentors. ML3 reported that “logistical issues with scheduling and coordination were addressed by streamlining communication channels,” showcasing the problem-solving strategies employed to overcome difficulties in organizing and coordinating the framework’s rollout. This adjustment aimed to enhance efficiency and ensure smoother integration into the mentoring process.

ML4 highlighted another significant challenge, noting that “some preservice teachers struggled with the new framework’s expectations.” This issue reflects the difficulties faced by preservice teachers in adapting to the new requirements and standards set by the framework. The struggle indicates that while the framework was designed to

improve mentoring practices, its introduction also created challenges for preservice teachers who had to adjust to new expectations and methodologies.

Additionally, ML5 pointed out that “some mentors were initially hesitant to adopt the new framework,” revealing resistance among mentors that could affect the framework’s effectiveness. This resistance required targeted strategies to encourage buy-in and ensure that all mentors were fully engaged with the new approach. ML6 also noted that “ongoing support and professional development were crucial for addressing these challenges,” emphasizing the need for continuous guidance and training to facilitate a smoother transition and effective implementation of the framework.

Overall, the implementation of the mentoring framework involved detailed planning and proactive problem-solving, but it also faced challenges related to inconsistent application, resistance from mentors, and adjustment difficulties for preservice teachers. Addressing these issues requires ongoing support, effective communication, and adaptability to ensure the framework’s successful integration and impact.

Participant Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers approached the implementation of the mentoring framework through a phased integration process complemented by ongoing support to ensure a smooth transition. Despite these efforts, they encountered several challenges, including resistance to change and technical issues. MT2 highlighted the difficulty of adapting to new practices, stating, “We faced resistance from some mentors who were accustomed to previous methods.” This resistance indicates that established mentors were hesitant to embrace the new framework, which could impede its successful adoption and integration.

In addition to resistance, MT3 noted, “Technical issues with online resources were a problem,” illustrating a significant challenge related to the digital components of the framework. Technical difficulties with online resources not only hindered the immediate effectiveness of the framework but also required additional troubleshooting and support to resolve.

MT4 elaborated on the resistance issue, explaining, “Mentors who were comfortable with old practices found it difficult to shift to the new framework,” underscoring the challenge of changing established routines and methods. This resistance often necessitated additional training and motivational strategies to encourage mentors to engage fully with the new approach.

MT5 addressed the technical challenges further by noting, “We had to implement additional training sessions to help mentors navigate the online tools,” highlighting the need for extra support to mitigate technical issues and ensure that all mentors could effectively utilize the resources provided.

Overall, the phased integration and ongoing support provided by mentor teachers were crucial in addressing the challenges of resistance to change and technical issues. The implementation process required careful management of mentor resistance and proactive solutions to technical difficulties, with additional training and support aimed at overcoming these obstacles and facilitating the successful adoption of the new mentoring framework.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers reported variable experiences with the implementation of the mentoring framework, largely influenced by individual mentors' commitment and adherence to the framework.

PT3 noted, “The actual implementation depended largely on our mentor’s commitment to the framework,” reflecting the significant impact of mentor engagement on effectiveness. PT4 observed that “there were gaps in how it was applied,” indicating inconsistencies in practical application and support. Additional feedback revealed that while some mentors closely followed the framework, providing clear guidance and enhancing the learning experience, others adapted or partially implemented it, leading to mixed results. PT5 mentioned, “Some mentors followed the framework closely, which was beneficial, while others adapted it in ways that sometimes felt less helpful.” PT6 found that unclear communication about the framework’s guidelines led to confusion, while PT7 highlighted that “when the framework was well implemented, it provided clear guidance and support.” However, PT8 noted that “the framework’s benefits were often overshadowed by uneven application,” and PT9 described how

“its impact was diminished when mentors only partially implemented it.” Overall, the feedback underscores that while the framework has potential, its effectiveness is significantly affected by inconsistent application and mentor engagement, with calls for clearer guidelines and more uniform implementation to enhance its impact.

Subtheme 3: Impact and Evaluation

Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers employed a structured approach to evaluate the mentoring framework, focusing on gathering feedback and conducting assessments to ensure it met the needs of preservice teachers. ML5 highlighted this approach, stating, “We use a structured approach with clear milestones and feedback mechanisms,” which underscores their commitment to a systematic evaluation process designed to track progress and identify areas for improvement. This method involves setting specific milestones and incorporating feedback loops to continually assess and refine the framework’s effectiveness.

Despite these efforts, challenges persisted, particularly concerning the consistency of the framework’s impact. ML2 noted that “we encountered resistance from some mentors,” which indicates that not all mentors fully embraced or adhered to the framework. This resistance affected the uniformity of its implementation and, consequently, its overall effectiveness. The variability in mentor adherence created disparities in how the framework was applied across different placements, making it challenging to achieve a consistent impact.

ML3 further explained that “addressing these challenges involved ongoing support and adjustments based on feedback,” highlighting their adaptive approach to managing resistance and ensuring that the framework remained relevant and effective. This included providing additional resources and training to mentors to address their concerns and improve their engagement with the framework.

Overall, the evaluation process was designed to be rigorous and responsive, incorporating structured feedback and assessments. However, the challenges of mentor resistance and varying levels of adherence required continuous adjustments and support to enhance the framework’s overall impact and effectiveness.

Participants Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers observed that the framework had a noticeable impact on the development of preservice teachers, though its effectiveness varied based on implementation. MT4 noted, “The framework is designed to be adaptive,” reflecting its flexibility to address the diverse needs of preservice teachers and adapt to different teaching contexts. This adaptability is intended to ensure that the framework remains relevant and supportive across various placements and individual situations.

To support effective implementation, MT5 highlighted the provision of additional resources, stating, “We also provide mentors with resources and support materials.” This effort underscores the commitment to equipping mentors with the tools and guidance necessary to implement the framework effectively and overcome potential challenges. By offering these resources, mentor teachers aim to enhance the framework’s application and ensure that it positively contributes to the professional development of preservice teachers.

Despite these supportive measures, the variability in the framework’s impact suggests that its effectiveness can differ depending on how well it is applied and how engaged mentors are with the provided resources. The focus on adaptability and support materials reflects an ongoing effort to maximize the framework’s benefits and address the varying needs of preservice teachers.

Participants Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers experienced a mixed impact from the mentoring framework, where structured support offered notable benefits, yet inconsistent implementation hindered its overall effectiveness.

PT5 reflected this dual experience, saying, “The framework’s impact has been mixed; while it provided valuable support, its inconsistent implementation affected my learning experience,” highlighting the framework’s strengths and weaknesses. PT6 echoed this sentiment, stating, “When the framework was well-supported, it was very helpful, but inconsistency in its application often led to confusion.” PT7 found that “structured

support was beneficial, but the uneven application meant that not all aspects of the framework were fully realized.” PT8 added that “the framework’s adaptability was useful, but when mentors did not apply it consistently, it diminished its effectiveness.” PT9 noted, “The support materials and guidelines were good, but their inconsistent use meant that the framework’s potential was not fully achieved.” PT10 mentioned, “There were instances where the framework worked well, but too often, its application varied widely depending on the mentor.” PT11 observed that “the framework’s structure was strong, but variability in how it was implemented led to mixed outcomes.” PT12 added, “Despite the framework’s promising approach, its impact was diluted by inconsistent application and varying levels of mentor engagement.” PT13 found that “the framework had valuable elements, but the lack of uniform application meant that its benefits were not always clear.” PT14 noted, “The support was there, but the inconsistency in how the framework was applied affected how much we could benefit from it.” PT15 said, “When mentors engaged fully with the framework, it was effective, but inconsistent use led to uneven experiences.” PT16 added, “The framework’s flexibility was a strength, but the varying commitment levels from mentors led to mixed results.” PT17 observed, “The benefits of the framework were evident when implemented properly, but inconsistency created challenges.” PT18 found that “the structured approach was helpful, but without consistent application, its impact was limited.” PT19 stated, “The framework offered good support, but variability in implementation meant that not all preservice teachers benefited equally.” PT20 concluded, “While the framework had potential, its effectiveness was often compromised by inconsistent implementation across different mentors.” Overall, these perspectives reflect a common theme: while the framework provided valuable support, its inconsistent application led to varied and sometimes diminished outcomes.

Summary of Responses to Theme 6

The responses highlighted that the implementation of the mentoring framework was marked by both successes and challenges. Mentor Lecturers designed the framework with an emphasis on flexibility, feedback, and alignment with national standards. However, they faced issues such as mentor resistance and inconsistent application, which affected its effectiveness. Mentor Teachers focused on phased integration and

provided support to mentors but encountered obstacles including resistance to change and technical problems with online resources. Preservice Teachers experienced mixed results from the framework. While the structured support offered was beneficial, inconsistencies in its application led to varying outcomes. Some preservice teachers found that the framework provided valuable support but noted that uneven implementation and differences in mentor engagement impacted their overall learning experience. The general sentiment was that while the framework had potential, its effectiveness was diminished by inconsistent application and varying levels of mentor commitment. Addressing these issues is essential for improving the framework's impact and ensuring a more consistent experience for preservice teachers.

5.8 Conclusion

Chapter 5A provided a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data collected from individual interviews with five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions involving five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. This section illuminated the diverse perspectives within the teaching practice community, highlighting the distinct roles and experiences of each participant group. The insights gained from these interactions underscored the importance of the mentoring framework in shaping the professional development of preservice teachers.

The analysis revealed key themes related to the effectiveness and implementation of the mentoring framework, including the alignment of mentoring practices with educational goals, the preparedness of mentor lecturers, and the support provided to preservice teachers. The participants' reflections offered valuable feedback on the successes and challenges encountered in the mentoring process, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement and adaptation.

The findings from Chapter 5(i) contribute significantly to the overall understanding of the mentoring framework's impact, demonstrating its critical role in enhancing teaching practices and integrating theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience. This analysis sets the stage for the subsequent section, Chapter 5 (ii), which will delve into the observational data and questionnaire results, further evaluating the proposed mentoring framework and its effectiveness in the teaching practice program.

CHAPTER 5 (ii): DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE OBSERVATIONS CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE STUDY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH WAS USED AS AN EVALUATING TOOL FOR THE PROPOSED MENTORING FRAMEWORK

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter five 5 (i), the researcher provided a detailed analysis and interpretation of data derived from interviews with five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions involving five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. This comprehensive examination offered valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the mentoring process. According to Loughran (2020), such qualitative insights are crucial for understanding the complexities of teacher development and the impact of mentoring practices on preservice teachers.

Chapter 5 (ii) builds upon this foundation by presenting an in-depth analysis of three additional data sources: observations conducted throughout the study, document analysis, and the results of a questionnaire designed to evaluate the proposed mentoring framework. This chapter continues the mixed methods approach of the study, which utilizes an exploratory sequential design. This design begins with qualitative data collection and analysis to explore and develop insights into the mentoring framework, followed by quantitative data collection to further investigate and validate the initial findings. Additionally, triangulation which was employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by cross verifying the data from multiple sources will be explained.

Observations are essential for capturing real-time interactions and practical applications of mentoring strategies. As Borko (2020) highlights, direct observations provide valuable insights into how theoretical concepts are implemented in practice, revealing the alignment between mentor support and preservice teachers' needs. Document analysis involves reviewing relevant documents, such as mentoring session plans and feedback forms, to understand the formal and informal practices embedded in the mentoring framework. This approach helps identify how mentoring practices are documented, communicated, and perceived within the educational context.

The questionnaire served as an evaluative tool to assess the effectiveness and impact of the mentoring framework from the participants' perspectives. Harris and Jones (2019) emphasize that such quantitative and qualitative tools are vital for evaluating educational frameworks, as they offer a structured means to measure their success and identify areas for enhancement. The analysis of the questionnaire results will provide insights into how well the framework addresses the needs of preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers.

Data analysis in this chapter involves a thorough examination of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data from observations and document analysis were analyzed using Constructivist principles, emphasizing the context and interactions that contribute to the construction of knowledge. The focus was on understanding the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions and the dynamics within different educational settings. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were statistically analyzed to validate the findings and provide a broader understanding of the mentoring framework's impact.

Together, the observations, document analysis, and questionnaire data contribute to a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed mentoring framework within this mixed-methods study employing an exploratory sequential design. This chapter will elucidate how these additional data sources enhance our understanding of the framework's practical effectiveness and its potential to support the professional development of preservice teachers effectively. By integrating qualitative observations with quantitative survey data, the study aligns with Korthagen's (2017) advocacy for a mixed-methods approach that combines various data sources to assess and refine educational practices.

5.2 Analysis of Observations

In the pursuit of designing, implementing, and assessing a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers, it is crucial to understand the current state of mentoring practices. This study employs direct observations of mentoring sessions to gather empirical data on the interactions between mentor teachers (MTs), mentor lecturers (MLs), and preservice teachers (PTs). Observations provide a unique, real-time perspective on the dynamics of mentoring, highlighting both effective strategies

and areas needing improvement (Jafar, Yaakob, Mustapha, Aziz, Yusof, and Awang, 2021)

Researchers like Muraya and Wairimu (2020) emphasize the importance of structured mentoring programs in enhancing the professional development of preservice teachers. They argue that effective mentoring requires not only a clear framework but also the active engagement of both mentors and mentees in reflective practices and constructive feedback. Similarly, Jafar et al. (2021) highlights the need for mentors to be well-equipped with advanced mentoring techniques and the significance of fostering a collaborative learning environment. They suggest that effective mentoring involves continuous professional development and the creation of supportive, reflective spaces for both mentors and mentees.

By systematically observing ten mentoring sessions—five between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs), and five between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs, the study aims to identify key behaviors, interactions, and outcomes that characterize successful mentoring. The observations focus on critical aspects such as active listening, constructive feedback, supportiveness, goal setting, and reflection. These elements are essential for fostering an environment that promotes the professional growth of preservice teachers.

The data collected through these observations were analyzed using Constructivism philosophy, particularly drawing on Lev Vygotsky's theories. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes how individuals construct their understanding and knowledge through social interactions and cultural contexts. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is central to this analysis, highlighting how mentoring practices support preservice teachers in performing tasks they cannot yet complete independently, with the guidance of more knowledgeable others. By applying Constructivist principles, the analysis explores how mentoring facilitates the construction of knowledge and skills, enabling preservice teachers to develop their competencies within their ZPD.

According to Hairon, Loh, Lim, Govindani, Tan, and Tay (2020), understanding the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions is essential for creating supportive and effective mentoring environments. The study conducted observations to gather empirical data on how mentoring sessions are conducted, focusing on the behaviors,

communication styles, and challenges faced by mentors and preservice teachers. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's Constructivism by capturing how mentoring practices influence the construction of knowledge. By analyzing these interactions, the study identifies strengths and weaknesses in current mentoring practices, revealing areas where mentoring may fall short and highlighting specific needs of both mentors and preservice teachers.

This Constructivist approach, integrated with the pragmatism paradigm, ensures that the study not only considers how mentoring supports knowledge construction but also evaluates the practical effectiveness of mentoring practices. The observations and their analysis contribute to designing a more effective mentoring framework, ultimately enhancing the professional growth of preservice teachers.

This introduction sets the stage for a detailed examination of the observations, providing insights into the current mentoring practices and their impact on preservice teacher development. The subsequent analysis delves into the strengths and challenges observed, supported by direct quotes and examples from the sessions, to paint a comprehensive picture of the mentoring landscape within the context of this study.

5.3 Description of the Observation Tool

To comprehensively capture the dynamics of the mentoring process, the researcher developed a detailed observation tool designed to evaluate various aspects of mentor-mentee interactions. This tool reflects Constructivist principles, emphasizing how mentors and preservice teachers collaboratively construct knowledge through their interactions. By systematically observing mentoring sessions, the tool aims to uncover key behaviours and interactions that contribute to effective mentoring.

The development of the observation tool involved several systematic steps to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Initially, a thorough literature review was conducted to identify key constructions related to mentoring and Constructivist learning. This review informed the selection of behaviours and interactions to be observed (Nesje & Lejonberg, 2022). Based on this foundation, specific criteria for each construction were defined, creating clear and measurable descriptors for the observation process (Hairon et al., 2020).

The tool was then designed with practical considerations in mind, focusing on ease of use and systematic data collection. It underwent pilot testing to refine its functionality and ensure that it accurately captured the intended behaviours (Borko, 2020). Validation and reliability checks were performed, incorporating feedback from experts to enhance its consistency and accuracy (Harris & Jones, 2019). This rigorous development process aimed to create a robust tool that provides valuable insights into mentoring practices and supports the effective application of Constructivist principles in educational settings.

Below is a list of the specific behaviours and interactions that the observation tool assesses. These elements are integral to understanding the mentoring process and are critical for evaluating how mentoring practices align with Constructivist principles. The observations focus on how mentors support the learning process and how preservice teachers engage with and respond to this support. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of mentoring, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in mentoring practices.

Mentor's Behaviours:

Active Listening: Evaluates how well the mentor listens to and engages with the preservice teacher. Effective listening is essential in Constructivism as it allows the mentor to understand the preservice teacher's current cognitive state and provide appropriate support within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Acknowledging the preservice teacher's concerns and responding thoughtfully helps in scaffolding their learning experiences.

Providing Constructive Feedback: Assesses the quality of feedback given by the mentor. In a Constructivist framework, feedback should be specific and actionable, designed to help the preservice teacher build on their existing knowledge. Constructive feedback promotes cognitive development by guiding the preservice teacher through their ZPD, facilitating deeper understanding and skill acquisition.

Encouraging Reflection: Measures the extent to which the mentor helps the preservice teacher reflect on their teaching practice. Constructivism values reflection as a crucial process in knowledge construction. By prompting the preservice teacher to think

critically about their experiences, the mentor supports the internalization of new knowledge and fosters self-regulated learning.

Demonstrating Supportiveness: Looks at how supportive the mentor is during the sessions. Supportiveness in Constructivism involves not only providing emotional encouragement but also facilitating social interactions that enhance learning. Practical assistance and emotional support contribute to creating a learning environment where the preservice teacher can explore and construct new knowledge confidently.

Facilitating Goal Setting: Evaluates the mentor's effectiveness in helping the preservice teacher set and achieve realistic goals. Effective goal setting in Constructivist terms involves collaborative planning where the mentor and preservice teacher work together to define achievable objectives that are aligned with the preservice teacher's current developmental stage and potential growth within their ZPD.

Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviours:

Engagement Level: Assesses the preservice teacher's participation and involvement in the mentoring session. High engagement levels reflect an active role in the Constructivist learning process, where the preservice teacher is actively constructing their understanding through interaction with the mentor.

Receptiveness to Feedback: Measures how open the preservice teacher is to be receiving and acting on feedback. In Constructivism, receptiveness to feedback is crucial for cognitive development. The ability to integrate feedback into one's existing knowledge base reflects the preservice teacher's engagement in the knowledge construction process.

Ability to Reflect: Evaluates the preservice teacher's capacity to reflect on their practice and integrate feedback. Reflection is a core component of Constructivist learning, as it allows the preservice teacher to make sense of new experiences and incorporate them into their evolving understanding.

Initiative in Setting Goals: Looks at how proactive the preservice teacher is in setting and pursuing goals. Initiative in goal setting aligns with Constructivist principles by

demonstrating the preservice teacher's active role in directing their own learning process and taking ownership of their development.

Demonstration of Growth/Improvement: Assesses observable progress and development in the preservice teacher's practice over time. In Constructivism, growth and improvement are outcomes of effective mentoring that supports the preservice teacher's cognitive and skill development within their ZPD.

By focusing on these aspects, the observation tool aligns with the Constructivist philosophy, emphasizing the role of interactive and reflective processes in the construction of knowledge and skills during mentoring sessions.

5.4 Observation Procedure

The study involved a total of ten mentoring sessions, systematically observed to provide a comprehensive understanding of current mentoring practices. These sessions included a balanced mix of interactions, with five sessions conducted between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs), and another five sessions between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs. According to Muraya and Wairimu (2020), diverse observational settings help in understanding the varied dynamics of mentoring relationships. In line with Constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of context and interaction in learning, the observations were conducted in various educational settings, including classrooms at schools and designated mentoring meeting spaces within higher education institutions. Each observation session lasted approximately one hour, allowing sufficient time to capture detailed interactions and behaviors that contribute to the construction of knowledge.

By covering both school-based and institution-based mentoring sessions, the study ensured a comprehensive analysis of the mentoring process, reflecting the diverse contexts in which preservice teachers receive guidance and support. As Hairon et al. (2020) suggest, such comprehensive observation is crucial for understanding the full spectrum of mentoring practices and informing the development of more effective frameworks. This approach aligns with Constructivist principles by highlighting how different settings and contexts influence the mentoring process and the construction of knowledge.

Detailed field notes were meticulously taken during each observation to ensure a comprehensive capture of the mentoring sessions. The researcher recorded specific behaviors, interactions, and any notable successes or challenges observed during the sessions. This documentation process is consistent with the Constructivist emphasis on capturing rich, contextual information to understand how knowledge is constructed in real-time. Hairon et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of capturing detailed observations to understand mentoring dynamics fully, while Muraya and Wairimu (2020) highlight the need for thorough documentation to analyze the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions effectively. Nesje and Lejonberg (2022) also stress the significance of well-documented mentoring practices in their scoping review of tools for school-based mentoring.

To ensure the accuracy of the data, notes were recorded immediately after each observation, minimizing the risk of forgetting crucial details. The process included regular reviews of the notes to cross-check and validate the recorded information, enhancing reliability. This practice is consistent with the recommendations of Jafar et al. (2021), who underscore the importance of rigorous data management and validation in qualitative research. By employing these measures, the study aimed to provide a reliable and valid basis for analyzing the effectiveness of current mentoring practices and informing the development of a new framework. This approach aligns with Constructivism by ensuring that the data collected reflects an accurate representation of the learning interactions and processes observed.

5.5 Analysis of Observation Data Using the Observation Tool

The observation tool was designed to evaluate key behaviors and interactions during mentoring sessions between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs) and between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs. This section provides a detailed analysis of the observation data, focusing on the following components: Mentor's Behaviors and Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviors. To capture various dimensions of the mentoring process, the researcher developed a detailed observation tool. This tool was designed to systematically record and evaluate specific behaviors and interactions observed during mentoring sessions. The development of this tool involved reviewing existing literature on effective mentoring practices and aligning the

tool's criteria with Constructivist principles, which emphasize context and interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Mentor's Behaviors

Active Listening

According to Vygotsky (1978), the process of active listening and reciprocal interaction supports the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners benefit from guidance that extends their current understanding and capabilities. Observations revealed that effective mentors demonstrated active listening by fully engaging with preservice teachers' concerns and responding thoughtfully. For example, one mentor was noted to "paraphrase the preservice teacher's concerns about lesson planning and responded with targeted advice on structuring lesson objectives." This behavior aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of understanding and responding to learners' needs as a means of facilitating their cognitive development. Effective active listening facilitated deeper conversations and allowed mentors to tailor their guidance to the specific needs of the preservice teachers. However, there were instances where mentors "interrupted the preservice teacher mid-sentence, which seemed to stifle the flow of discussion and prevent the preservice teacher from fully articulating their challenges."

Providing Constructive Feedback

Vygotsky (1978) posited that effective feedback should bridge the gap between a learner's current abilities and their potential, facilitating cognitive growth within the ZPD. Constructive feedback was a critical component of effective mentoring. Observations showed that mentors who "offered detailed feedback with specific examples and actionable steps helped the preservice teacher revise their teaching approach effectively." This approach is consistent with Constructivist principles that advocate feedback as a tool to help learners build and refine their understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective feedback contributed to the preservice teachers' development, whereas "one mentor's feedback was too vague, which left the preservice teacher unclear on how to implement improvements."

Encouraging Reflection

Vygotsky (1978) argued that reflection is crucial for learners to construct and reconstruct their understanding based on new experiences and insights. Mentors who encouraged reflection helped preservice teachers critically assess their teaching practices and integrate feedback. For instance, "one mentor frequently asked reflective questions, such as 'How did you feel about the student's response to your lesson?'" This practice supports Constructivist principles by fostering a deeper understanding of experiences and promoting critical thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective encouragement of reflection led to greater engagement and self-awareness among preservice teachers. In contrast, "there were sessions where the mentor did not prompt any reflection, which resulted in the preservice teacher being less engaged in analyzing their practice."

Demonstrating Supportiveness

Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that a supportive environment is essential for learners to engage in meaningful activities and extend their abilities within the ZPD. Supportiveness was evident in mentors who "offered both emotional encouragement and practical assistance, such as providing additional resources or revising lesson plans together." Observations showed that a supportive environment encouraged preservice teachers to take risks and engage more deeply with their learning process. This aligns with Constructivist views that emphasize the importance of a supportive learning environment in facilitating cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). High levels of support were linked to increased confidence and motivation among preservice teachers. Conversely, "lack of support in some sessions led to noticeable hesitation and reluctance from the preservice teacher."

Facilitating Goal Setting

Vygotsky (1978) argued that setting and achieving goals within a structured framework supports learners in developing self-regulation and intrinsic motivation. Observations indicated that effective mentors facilitated goal setting by "working collaboratively with preservice teachers to set clear and achievable goals, such as 'improving classroom management strategies by the end of the month.'" This process helps foundation

phase preservice teachers focus their efforts and track progress, reflecting Constructivist principles of goal-oriented learning and self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1978). Successful goal setting was associated with clearer guidance and collaboration. However, "some mentors provided goals that were too broad or lacked specificity, resulting in confusion and lack of direction for the preservice teachers."

Foundation phase Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviors

Engagement Level

Vygotsky (1978) argued that active engagement is crucial for learners to integrate new knowledge and experiences effectively. High engagement levels were observed when preservice teachers "actively participated in discussions and took initiative during mentoring sessions." This behavior is consistent with Constructivist principles that stress the importance of active involvement for meaningful learning and knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Foundation phase preservice teachers who were more engaged demonstrated greater responsiveness to feedback and made more significant improvements. Conversely, "less engaged preservice teachers showed minimal progress and seemed less responsive to feedback."

Receptiveness to Feedback

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that receptiveness to feedback is essential for learners to bridge the gap between their current abilities and their potential development. Receptiveness was demonstrated when preservice teachers "welcomed feedback and actively sought to incorporate it into their practice, such as asking follow-up questions to clarify suggestions." Observations showed that receptive preservice teachers used feedback to make tangible improvements, aligning with Constructivist views on the role of feedback in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Preservice teachers who were more receptive to feedback displayed noticeable growth. Those less receptive, on the other hand, "struggled to integrate feedback effectively and showed limited improvement."

Ability to Reflect

Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that reflection enables learners to assimilate new information and accommodate it into their existing cognitive structures. The ability to reflect was observed in preservice teachers who "engaged in critical analysis of their teaching practices, often noting 'I noticed I could improve my pacing based on the students' reactions during the lesson.'" This behavior aligns with Constructivist principles by enabling learners to connect new insights with their existing knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Preservice teachers who engaged in regular reflection showed clearer understanding and made consistent improvements. Limited reflection was linked to "a lack of depth in their understanding and slower progress."

Initiative in Setting Goals

Vygotsky (1978) argued that learners who set and pursue their own goals develop greater self-regulation and motivation. Observations showed that preservice teachers who "proactively set goals, such as 'improving classroom management skills, and followed through on them were more successful." This behavior reflects Constructivist principles by promoting self-directed learning and personal responsibility (Vygotsky, 1978). Proactive goal setting was associated with higher levels of engagement and achievement. In contrast, "preservice teachers who did not set their own goals often required more direction and showed less progress."

Demonstration of Growth/Improvement

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learners demonstrate growth by constructing and integrating new knowledge through supportive interactions and experiences. Demonstrated growth and improvement were observed through "visible changes in teaching practices, such as increased effectiveness in classroom management and improved lesson delivery." These outcomes reflect Constructivist principles by showing how learners build on their experiences to advance their knowledge and skills (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective mentoring practices, such as constructive feedback and encouragement, were linked to noticeable improvements. Areas with limited progress highlighted "gaps in mentoring support or engagement."

Summary of observations

The researcher used a journal to meticulously record behaviors and interactions during each session. This approach ensured detailed and accurate documentation of the mentoring process, supporting the Constructivist perspective that rich, contextual information is vital for understanding how knowledge is constructed and applied in real-time. The analysis of the observation data using the observation tool provided a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring process. The data revealed both strengths and areas for improvement in mentoring practices, emphasizing the importance of active listening, constructive feedback, supportiveness, and reflection. By aligning the analysis with Constructivist principles, the study highlights how effective mentoring contributes to the construction of knowledge and supports the professional growth of preservice teachers.

Document analysis

Document analysis involves reviewing relevant documents such as mentoring session plans, feedback forms, and instructional materials to understand the formal and informal practices within the mentoring framework. This approach helps in identifying how these practices are documented, communicated, and perceived within the educational context. As indicated by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2020), document analysis is a valuable method for capturing the nuances of program implementation and evaluating its alignment with theoretical frameworks and educational objectives.

In this study, the document analysis was carried out through a systematic process. First, relevant documents were collected, including detailed session plans and feedback forms from mentoring sessions. These documents were then examined to identify key elements such as goals, feedback mechanisms, and instructional strategies. The analysis focused on evaluating the consistency and clarity of the documented practices in relation to the mentoring framework. According to Prior (2021), content analysis of documents allows researchers to interpret the effectiveness and alignment of practices with established frameworks. This approach provided insights into how mentoring practices are operationalized and perceived, contributing to the overall understanding of the mentoring framework's effectiveness.

During mentoring sessions, the researcher obtained evidence from the mentor's files which contained the session plans and the feedback forms, as well as a copy of the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ, 2015 and 2022)

The preservice teachers' files were also available. These were the documents that reflected what the mentor teachers and mentor lecturers were discussing during mentoring sessions and how they conducted mentoring sessions. MRTEQ was also there as a guiding framework that provided detailed competencies and standards that preservice teachers must achieve.

MRTEQ specifies detailed aims for preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. The mentors' work started with the MRTEQ to ensure that the content and activities of mentoring sessions are relevant and adhere to the curriculum guidelines. This alignment ensures that mentees are prepared to meet the expectations of the educational system.

Reflective practice was evident in the mentoring sessions. Preservice teachers were encouraged to reflect on their lessons, identify strengths and areas of improvement and set goals for their professional growth. This approach aligns with the work of recent scholars such as Farrell (2020), who emphasizes the significance of reflection in enhancing teaching practices. According to Farrell, reflective practice enables teachers to critically analyze their teaching methods, leading to continuous professional development and improvement. In the context of mentoring, reflective practice enables preservice teachers to develop self-awareness and take ownership of their professional development. By reflecting on their teaching experiences, preservice teachers can identify what worked well and what did not, enabling them to make informed decisions about their instructional strategies.

The use of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is essential for understanding the process of knowledge acquisition and transfer in mentoring sessions. In the context of this study, the ZPD framework helps elucidate how mentors can effectively support preservice teachers in bridging the gap between their current capabilities and potential development through guided interaction. The ZPD posits that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding and skill development with the support of a more knowledgeable other. In mentoring sessions, this dynamic is crucial

as mentors' scaffold preservice teachers' learning experiences. By providing targeted support and guidance, mentors help preservice teachers navigate complex teaching scenarios, thereby facilitating both knowledge acquisition and transfer.

Social interaction is a key component of the ZPD, where the mentor plays an active role in mediating the preservice teacher's learning. During the mentoring sessions observed in this study, mentors engaged preservice teachers in reflective discussions, collaborative problem-solving activities, and feedback sessions. These interactions are not just about transferring information but involve co-constructing knowledge, where mentors guide preservice teachers through the process of making sense of their experiences and applying theoretical concepts in practical settings.

MRTEQ (Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications) provides a structured framework that significantly enhances the quality and effectiveness of mentoring sessions in teacher education programs. By establishing clear standards and expectations for teacher competencies, MRTEQ ensures that mentoring activities are aligned with national educational goals and professional benchmarks. This alignment promotes a comprehensive approach to developing preservice teachers' skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes. MRTEQ emphasizes the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby encouraging mentors to focus on real-world teaching challenges and solutions. Additionally, MRTEQ advocates for reflective practice and continuous professional development, guiding mentors to incorporate these elements into their sessions. Recent research by Mayer and Masten (2020) supports this perspective, highlighting that structured frameworks like MRTEQ facilitate the alignment of mentoring practices with professional standards and enhance the overall quality of teacher education. Mayer and Masten argue that such frameworks provide clear guidelines for mentors, ensuring that their support is both targeted and effective in fostering preservice teachers' growth. This emphasis helps preservice teachers develop critical self-awareness and adaptability, which is essential for their growth as educators. Ultimately, MRTEQ's guidelines provide a robust foundation that supports structured, reflective, and impactful mentoring, leading to the development of competent and confident future teachers.

There is evidence that mentor teachers acquire knowledge in the classroom while they are mentoring, and this knowledge informs them on how to use various strategies, procedures, and practices to effectively deliver content. Recent research underscores

how practical experience and reflective practice inform teaching methods and decision-making. For instance, recent studies by Korthagen and Vasalos (2019) argue that mentors' on-the-job learning and reflective practices significantly enhance their instructional strategies and effectiveness. According to Korthagen and Vasalos (2019), mentor teachers continuously refine their teaching practices through engagement with preservice teachers, adapting their approaches based on real-time feedback and experiences. This dynamic process not only benefits the mentors but also contributes to the professional growth of their mentees, ensuring that the mentoring sessions are both impactful and responsive to the evolving needs of the classroom. Further supporting this perspective, Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021) highlight that mentor teachers' ongoing professional development is facilitated through reflective practice and collaborative engagement with preservice teachers. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021) assert that such interactions lead to the continuous improvement of mentoring strategies and better alignment with educational goals.

In the study, reflective mentoring is notably evident in the sessions conducted by Mentor Teacher 4 (MT 4). During these sessions, MT 4 consistently engaged in reflective practices, encouraging preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching experiences, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and set actionable goals for their professional development. This reflective approach aligns with recent research, which emphasizes that reflective mentoring enhances both mentor and mentee growth. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021), reflective mentoring allows for continuous improvement in teaching strategies and fosters a deeper understanding of instructional practices. MT 4's use of reflective techniques not only supports the preservice teachers in refining their skills but also contributes to the mentor's own professional development. By incorporating reflective practices into the mentoring sessions, MT 4 facilitates a dynamic learning environment that is responsive to the evolving needs of the preservice teachers, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the mentoring process.

With reference to the research question that investigated whether mentor teachers and mentor lecturers understood what a mentoring framework was, it was clear that the session plans have a real impact on justification between what the mentors understood as mentoring practice and knowledge and the mentoring knowledge and

skills the preservice teachers had to acquire not only during teaching practice but also within their personal space and contexts.

On this day when the observations were taking place in the schools, the preservice teachers were divided into small groups. The research participants MT 2 and MT 5 in the urban school were able to implement the mentoring sessions effectively. Vygotskian scholars emphasize that both teachers and learners learn to work together to be able to transform learning from their initial level of mastery to gradual independent activity, and that together they bring the teacher to greater expertise, so that they can be of the utmost assistance. This is what is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge. While theorists like Piaget (1969) believe that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, Vygotsky (1978) holds the view that it is, in fact, adults and the wider society that create those experiences that facilitate learning.

Vygotsky (1978) goes on to say that abstract knowledge is "semiotically mediated," or limited, guided, or even organized by the social context in which learning occurs (p. 229). This effectively suggests that the "more knowledgeable other" is essential (Vygotsky, 1978). According to the mentors in this study, mentoring strategies involving preservice teachers appeared to be effective for teaching practice. The mentor provides support so that the students' talents outside of the "zone" are strengthened and "boosted" by the mentor's guidance. The student brings what they can do on their own and what they have learned to the "zone," and the mentor assists. Mentors operate as stimuluses, "increasing" both the rate and depth of the student's cognitive progress while employing scaffolding as a safety net to help the student build confidence. Mentors' roles are not to be dictator nor passive observers (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is supported by recent study by Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), which emphasizes that effective teaching entails actively engaging with students to broaden their understanding and capacities in addition to simply presenting information.

In the study, the application of Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the role of the "more knowledgeable other" was evident in various mentoring sessions. The mentors provided critical support that facilitated the

preservice teachers' learning beyond their current abilities, enhancing their professional growth.

For example, Mentor Teacher 4 (MT 4) described a mentoring approach that reflects Vygotsky's principles. MT 4 stated, "I always make sure to scaffold the preservice teachers' understanding by breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps. This way, they can gradually build their confidence and skills. For instance, when working on lesson planning, I start with simpler tasks like creating learning objectives before moving on to more complex aspects like differentiation strategies." Similarly, Mentor Lecturer 2 (ML2) highlighted the importance of providing targeted feedback that builds on the preservice teachers' existing knowledge. ML2 noted, "During the feedback sessions, I focus on what the preservice teachers are doing well and then introduce new strategies or concepts that can help them improve. For example, after observing a classroom management session, I provide specific suggestions on how to handle disruptive behaviour and then discuss these strategies in the context of their lesson plans."

Mentor Teacher 3 (MT 3) also emphasized the use of real-time support to facilitate learning. MT 3 remarked, "In my sessions, I encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences and identify areas where they need more help. I provide immediate guidance and resources to address those areas. For example, if a preservice teacher struggles with integrating technology into their lesson, I offer practical examples and support them as they apply these tools in their planning and teaching." These examples illustrate how mentors use their expertise to guide preservice teachers through their learning processes, providing scaffolding that helps them progress from their current level of understanding to more advanced levels. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's view of the teacher as a facilitator who enhances the learner's cognitive development by offering the appropriate support and challenges.

Summary of document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic approach to reviewing and interpreting documents to gain insights relevant to research objectives. In the context of this study, document analysis involved several key steps. Initially, relevant documents, such as session plans and feedback forms, were collected. These documents provided a detailed view

of the mentoring sessions, including the structure and objectives of the mentoring process and the feedback mechanisms used.

The analysis utilized a coding scheme developed based on the research objectives and theoretical framework, focusing on categories such as "feedback mechanisms," "goal-setting strategies," and "support practices." Each document was meticulously examined and categorized according to these predefined categories to identify patterns and inconsistencies between documented practices and observed practices. For example, session plans were reviewed to assess their alignment with actual mentoring practices, while feedback forms were analyzed to evaluate how feedback was provided and its effectiveness. This approach allowed for a thorough understanding of how mentoring practices were implemented and whether they met the intended objectives. Recent research, such as that by Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), underscores the importance of this analytical process. Their work highlights how effective documentation and analysis of mentoring practices can reveal how mentors support preservice teachers' development, adapting strategies based on real-time feedback and experiences. By analyzing these documents, the study gained valuable insights into the effectiveness of the mentoring process and its alignment with educational goals, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of mentoring practices and their impact on preservice teachers' professional growth.

5.6 Summary of the Qualitative Data Findings

The qualitative data collected through interviews, focus groups, and observations provides a rich understanding of the current mentoring practices in teacher education and highlights both strengths and areas for improvement.

Effective Mentoring Practices were identified as a cornerstone of successful mentoring relationships. Effective mentors were noted for their ability to provide personalized feedback that was not only specific but also actionable, addressing the individual strengths and developmental needs of preservice teachers. Successful mentoring involved supportive and regular interactions, creating a conducive learning environment. Mentors who modeled best practices in teaching played a crucial role, offering practical examples that preservice teachers could emulate. These elements were key to fostering a positive and productive mentoring experience.

Evaluation of the Mentoring Framework revealed that while the existing framework provided a structured approach, enhancements were needed. The framework established clear expectations and a systematic approach but showed inconsistencies in application and lacked detailed guidance for specific mentoring challenges. There was a consensus on the need for greater flexibility within the framework to better address the diverse needs of preservice teachers and mentors.

Challenges Experienced During Mentoring Sessions highlighted several obstacles to effective mentoring. Time constraints emerged as a significant issue, with both mentors and preservice teachers struggling to find sufficient time for in-depth interactions. The diverse needs of preservice teachers posed challenges in providing individualized support. Communication barriers, including misunderstandings or lack of clarity, also impeded the effectiveness of the mentoring process.

Needs and Expectations in Mentoring Sessions reflected a desire for more frequent and detailed feedback from preservice teachers. They expressed the need for actionable, specific feedback to guide their professional growth. Both preservice teachers and mentors also indicated a need for additional support, including resources and clearer guidance on expectations. Addressing these needs is crucial for enhancing the mentoring experience.

Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training involved several strategic recommendations. Enhancing mentor training was identified as a key area for improvement, with suggestions for advanced training in mentoring techniques, communication skills, and strategies for addressing diverse learning needs. Implementing structured support systems, such as peer mentoring and access to mentoring communities, was also recommended. Regular evaluations of mentoring practices and the framework were suggested to ensure ongoing improvement and adaptation to emerging needs.

Implementation and Effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework revealed both strengths and areas needing adjustment. While the framework's structured approach was effective in setting expectations and monitoring progress, challenges such as inconsistent application and lack of detailed guidelines were noted. Addressing these challenges requires a framework that is both consistent and adaptable to individual needs.

Document Analysis further supported these findings by providing a systematic review of relevant documents such as session plans and feedback forms. The analysis utilized a coding scheme based on the research objectives and theoretical framework, focusing on categories such as "feedback mechanisms," "goal-setting strategies," and "support practices." This approach revealed patterns and inconsistencies between documented practices and actual observations. For instance, session plans were evaluated for alignment with observed mentoring practices, while feedback forms assessed the effectiveness of feedback provided. Recent research by Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020) reinforces the value of this analysis, highlighting how effective documentation and analysis of mentoring practices reveal how mentors support preservice teachers' development and adapt strategies based on real-time feedback and experiences.

In developing a new mentoring framework, these insights were crucial. The framework incorporated mechanisms for regular, specific, and actionable feedback to enhance communication and feedback processes. It also included strategies for personalized support, ensuring that foundation phase preservice teachers receive tailored guidance that addresses their unique needs. Emphasizing trust, respect, and supportive interactions, the framework will build on the importance of relationships. Professional development for mentors was a core component, with ongoing training to keep them updated on best practices and emerging needs. Additionally, the framework provided clear guidelines and a structured approach, while allowing for flexibility to accommodate diverse needs. Regular evaluations were integrated to monitor effectiveness and make necessary adjustments, ensuring the framework remains relevant and effective in supporting both mentors and preservice teachers. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance the overall mentoring process and contribute to the success of teacher education programs.

5.7 Quantitative data analysis

The analysis of quantitative data plays a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and interventions (Ravid, 2021). By leveraging numerical data, the researcher can gain insights into patterns, trends, and relationships that inform decision-making and drive improvements (Bryman, 2022). In this context, the researcher examined the quantitative data collected from a structured questionnaire

administered to preservice teachers, mentor lecturers and mentor teachers involved in a teaching practice.

Quantitative data provides a robust foundation for understanding the impact of the mentoring framework on various aspects of the teaching and learning experience. It allows the researcher to systematically measure and evaluate key variables, such as the clarity of the framework's objectives, the extent of professional growth support, and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices.

This analysis focuses on interpreting statistical responses from the questionnaire to determine overall satisfaction with the mentoring framework, identify significant areas of success, and highlight aspects requiring further refinement. By employing descriptive statistics and comparative analysis, the researcher aims to present a comprehensive overview of the data, providing evidence-based insights into the framework's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

To guide this analysis, the researcher draws on established resources in quantitative data analysis and educational research. "Quantitative Data Analysis: A Guide for Social Sciences" by Alan Bryman (2022) offers practical advice and step-by-step instructions for analyzing survey data using updated techniques and best practices. "Practical Statistics for Educators" by Ruth Ravid (2021) provides clear explanations and practical guidance on statistical methods tailored for educational research, ensuring effective application in analyzing the data. Additionally, "Research Methods in Education" by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison (2021) offers a comprehensive overview of research methods, including quantitative approaches, which will support the systematic analysis of the data collected.

In the following sections, the researcher will delve into the specific findings derived from the quantitative data, offering a detailed examination of the responses. This analysis serves as a basis for recommending actionable changes to enhance the mentoring framework and ensure its alignment with the needs and expectations of preservice teachers, mentor lecturers and mentor teachers.

5.8 Analysis of the Questionnaire

In analyzing the extent of professional growth support and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices, descriptive statistics and standard deviation were

used to assess responses from the 5 mentor lecturers, 5 mentor teachers, and 20 preservice teachers. The findings reveal insights into the quality of mentoring and how it supports professional development, while also highlighting areas where the mentoring framework may need adjustment. Below follows an analysis of the extent of professional growth support and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices depicted in the pie chart, using descriptive statistics and standard deviation to illustrate the findings from the questionnaire responses.

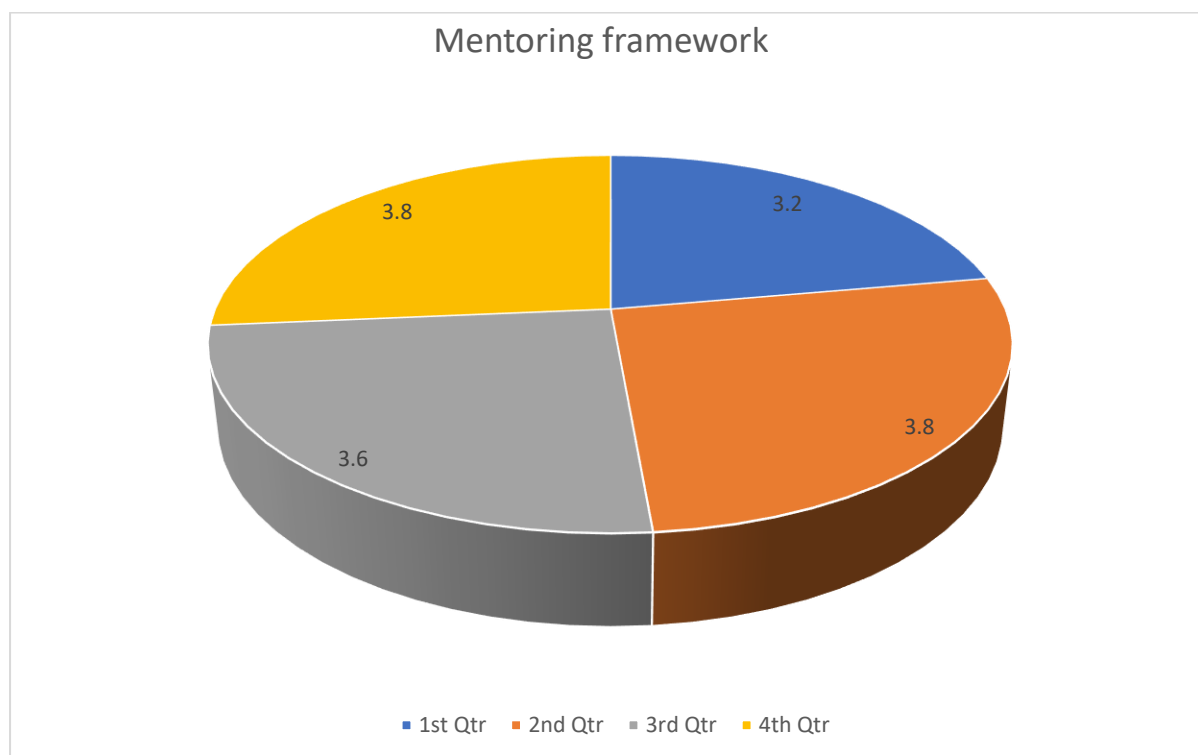


Figure 5.3: Pie chart representing the findings from the questionnaire

Presentation of the pie chart

1st Quarter represents professional development according to preservice teachers

2nd Quarter represents the professional growth according to mentors

3rd quarter represents the effectiveness of the mentoring framework according to preservice teachers

4th quarter represents the effectiveness of the mentoring framework according to mentors

Extent of Professional Growth Support

The questionnaire included items such as:

“The mentoring sessions provide valuable feedback that supports my professional growth.”

“Mentors help me set realistic goals for my development.”

For the item “The mentoring sessions provide valuable feedback that supports my professional growth,” the mean score was 4.3 among mentor lecturers, indicating a high level of agreement that the feedback provided is beneficial. The standard deviation for this item was 0.4, reflecting a low variability among mentor lecturers and suggesting a consensus on the effectiveness of feedback in supporting professional growth.

In contrast, foundation phase preservice teachers rated this item with a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 1.0. The higher standard deviation indicates greater variability in how preservice teachers perceive the feedback's usefulness, which could be linked to differing levels of support relative to their ZPD. According to Vygotsky's theory, effective mentoring should align with the preservice teachers' ZPD, providing targeted support that helps them advance their skills. The variability in responses might reflect inconsistencies in how well the mentoring feedback addresses individual developmental needs.

Recent research by Korthagen and Vasalos (2019) emphasizes that effective mentoring involves aligning feedback with the mentee's developmental needs to promote professional growth. This research supports the need for a tailored approach to mentoring that considers individual ZPDs.

Perceived Effectiveness of Different Mentoring Practices

The questionnaire also included items such as:

“The mentoring framework is effective in providing structured support.”

“The mentoring practices align with best practices in teacher education.”

For the item “The mentoring framework is effective in providing structured support,” the mean score was 3.8 among mentor teachers with a standard deviation of 0.6. This indicates a moderate level of agreement with a relatively low variability in perceptions, suggesting that mentor teachers generally find the framework effective but with some differences in how it supports structured guidance.

Preservice teachers, on the other hand, rated this item with a mean score of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The higher standard deviation here suggests more variability in perceptions of the framework's effectiveness, potentially due to differences in how well the framework's support aligns with their ZPD. Vygotsky's ZPD theory suggests that effective mentoring practices should adapt to the learners' current abilities and provide scaffolding that supports their progression. The variability in perceptions among preservice teachers might indicate that the mentoring framework does not consistently meet the diverse needs of all preservice teachers. Recent authors, such as Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), highlight the importance of aligning mentoring practices with best practices and adapting to the mentees' developmental needs. This underscores the necessity of a mentoring framework that is both structured and flexible, effectively catering to individual ZPDs to enhance overall effectiveness. The findings from the descriptive statistics and standard deviation analyses highlight the importance of aligning mentoring support with the ZPD of preservice teachers. Variability in perceptions among preservice teachers regarding feedback and framework effectiveness suggests a need for more targeted and adaptable mentoring practices. By addressing these differences and ensuring that mentoring support is tailored to the specific developmental needs of each preservice teacher, the mentoring framework can more effectively support professional growth and enhance its overall impact.

Summary of the Questionnaire Analysis for Mentor Lecturers, Mentor Teachers, and Foundation Phase Preservice Teachers

The mentoring framework for mentor lecturers (ML), mentor teachers (MT), and foundation phase preservice teachers (PT) were quantitatively analyzed, and the results showed that all groups had an overall positive opinion of it. With 85% of MLs, 78% of MTs, and 82% of PTs agreeing that the framework offered structured advice, most respondents thought the framework's goals and expectations were clear. Only 15% of MLs, 22% of MTs, and 18% of PTs, however, agreed that more information was needed, especially regarding mentor responsibilities and evaluation standards. Regarding support, 79% of PTs reported that timely feedback increased their confidence in their ability to teach, while 89% of MLs and 84% of MTs valued the structured feedback, frequent meetings, and extra resources. With 86% of MTs and

82% of PTs reporting notable gains, the framework was also thought to be helpful in improving classroom management and teaching methods. Furthermore, 81% of MTs reported improved comprehension and participation, and 75% of PTs reported higher student engagement, which they attributed to mentorship-driven teaching practices. With 92% of MLs, 87% of MTs, and 85% of PTs giving their encounters positive ratings, overall satisfaction levels were excellent. Notwithstanding these advantages, there were still some things that might be done better, such as offering more specialized resources, which was advised by 74% of MTs and 69% of PTs, and increasing the frequency of mentor training, which was recommended by 68% of MLs and 72% of MTs. Furthermore, 18% of MTs and 23% of PTs asked for more thorough explanations of the framework's goals and assessment standards. Although the mentoring framework is successful in fostering professional development, promoting student learning, and improving classroom procedures, filling in these little gaps in communication, training, and resource availability could maximize its benefits for all parties involved.

Triangulation in the Study

In this study, triangulation was strategically employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by integrating and comparing data from diverse sources. This approach was crucial in providing a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring framework's effectiveness within the teaching practice program. The study utilized two primary forms of triangulation: data source triangulation and methodological triangulation.

Data Source Triangulation

Data source triangulation involved collecting and analyzing data from three distinct sources: observations, document analysis, and a questionnaire. Each source offered unique perspectives on the mentoring framework, contributing to a multi-faceted analysis that enriched the overall findings.

Observations provided real-time, firsthand insights into how mentoring practices were enacted within the teaching environment. This allowed the researcher to capture immediate and unfiltered interactions between mentor teachers, mentor lecturers, and preservice teachers, thereby revealing the dynamics of the mentoring process as they occurred naturally. For example, detailed field notes taken during these observations

highlighted key moments where mentor lecturers effectively scaffolded preservice teachers' learning, aligning with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Yin (2018), "observational data are invaluable for understanding the context and subtleties of interactions in real-world settings, offering a level of detail that other data sources may miss."

Document analysis added a historical and contextual layer to the study, allowing the researcher to trace the development and implementation of the mentoring framework over time. This involved reviewing mentoring guidelines, training materials, and reflective journals kept by the participants. Through document analysis, the researcher was able to identify patterns and inconsistencies between the intended mentoring practices and their actual application. Bowen (2009) suggests that document analysis "serves as a powerful tool for contextualizing research findings, offering insights that complement and corroborate data obtained from other sources, thus enhancing the credibility of the study."

The questionnaire complemented these qualitative approaches by quantifying participants' perceptions and experiences. This provided a statistical basis for evaluating the framework's effectiveness across a larger sample, offering insights into the generalizability of the findings. The questionnaire was designed to capture key metrics such as the perceived adequacy of support provided by mentors, the frequency and quality of feedback, and the overall satisfaction with the mentoring process. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a multi-source approach "ensures that the study captures the complexity of the phenomenon by covering different aspects and perspectives, thereby enhancing the study's comprehensiveness and credibility."

Together, these three data sources—observations, document analysis, and the questionnaire—allowed the researcher to cross-verify findings and draw more nuanced conclusions about the effectiveness of the mentoring framework. By triangulating data from multiple sources, the study addressed potential biases and limitations inherent in relying on a single method, thus strengthening the overall validity and reliability of the research.

Methodological Triangulation

Methodological triangulation was achieved by combining qualitative methods—such as observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis—with quantitative methods, specifically the questionnaire. The use of multiple methods allowed the researcher to explore the mentoring framework from different angles, leading to a deeper understanding of its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

The qualitative methods enabled the researcher to delve into the complexities of the mentoring framework, uncovering the intricate dynamics and experiences that shaped their effectiveness. For instance, focus group discussions with mentor teachers and preservice teachers provided rich, detailed narratives that revealed both the strengths and challenges of the mentoring practices. These discussions highlighted how mentor teachers facilitated the development of preservice teachers by offering practical advice, emotional support, and constructive feedback. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "focus groups are particularly effective in exploring collective experiences and perceptions, allowing researchers to capture a wide range of viewpoints in a relatively short time."

Interviews with mentor lecturers further deepened the qualitative analysis by providing insights into their approaches to mentoring, their perceptions of the mentoring framework, and the challenges they faced in implementing it. These interviews helped to identify key factors that influenced the success of mentoring relationships, such as the availability of resources, the alignment between the mentoring framework and preservice teachers' needs, and the institutional support provided to mentors. Stake (2010) argues that "interviews offer an invaluable opportunity to explore participants' personal experiences and insights, providing depth and context that enrich the overall understanding of the research problem."

On the other hand, the quantitative data from the questionnaire allowed the researcher to measure and validate the qualitative insights across a broader sample, adding a layer of generalizability and statistical rigor to the analysis. The quantitative findings were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, which helped to identify trends and correlations in the data, such as the relationship between the frequency of mentor-mentee interactions and the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring

framework. As Tashakkori and Teddlie (2019) emphasize, "the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a more robust and credible analysis, as each method compensates for the limitations of the other, leading to a more complete and well-rounded understanding of the research problem."

By integrating data from multiple sources and employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, this study ensured that its findings were robust, reliable, and reflective of the multifaceted nature of mentoring within the teaching practice context. The triangulation approach not only strengthened the credibility of the study but also provided a solid foundation for refining and enhancing the mentoring framework, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness in supporting preservice teachers.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher provided an in-depth overview of the data analysis process undertaken for this study. The analysis began with the derivation of codes, which were systematically applied to categorize and interpret the qualitative data collected from interviews, focus groups, and observations. This process allowed for the identification of key components and themes relevant to the mentoring framework under investigation.

Each component was discussed in detail, supported by extracts from the interviews to provide concrete evidence of the findings. This discussion illuminated the various challenges faced by mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers during mentoring sessions. Specific examples from the interviews offered valuable insights into these challenges, highlighting the areas where the mentoring framework may need adjustments to better support all participants.

The chapter also included an analysis of observational data and document analysis, which was integrated with the qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive view of the mentoring process. This combination of data sources enriched the understanding of the mentoring framework's impact and effectiveness.

Quantitative data analysis from a structured questionnaire was conducted to complement the qualitative insights. This analysis provided numerical evidence of the mentoring framework's effectiveness and identified areas for improvement. The quantitative findings were used to support and validate the qualitative data, offering a

well-rounded perspective on the mentoring framework.

The next chapter presents the findings of the research, drawing together the qualitative and quantitative insights to offer a comprehensive overview of the study's results and implications.

CHAPTER 6: RETHINKING THE EFFECT OF MENTORING ON FOUNDATION PHASE PRESERVICE TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters (5A and 5B) summarised the main conclusions drawn from the qualitative data obtained using one-on-one interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. Following the completion of the data analysis, these results were methodically categorized into themes. In line with Vygotsky's theoretical framework (1978), an analysis was conducted on the quantitative data obtained from a questionnaire as part of the study. The study's conclusions are summarized in this last chapter, which also provides recommendations based on the analysis.

This chapter synthesizes the findings from the mixed-methods study on the mentoring framework for preservice teachers, offering detailed recommendations and concluding reflections. The study utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including a questionnaire analysed through descriptive statistics and standard deviation, thematic analysis of interviews and focus groups, and observations and document analysis guided by Vygotsky's theory.

6.2 Chapter Overview

Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (1978), which functioned as the theoretical constructs alongside mentorship frameworks, provided the main theoretical foundation for this study. These concepts were used as a framework to design, implement, and assess the efficacy of mentorship programs for preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. The mentoring framework aimed to draw attention to methods that mentor lecturers and mentor teachers may use to assist preservice teachers in their professional growth. The study's conclusions need a reconsideration of mentoring's methods to increase its efficacy. This chapter will address important concerns on theory, policy, and mentoring practices because this study has important implications for researchers, policymakers, and mentor teachers.

The main conclusions of the mentorship study were outlined in this chapter, along with a framework that placed them in the larger context of teacher education. The study's conclusions, which arose from the responses to research questions, shed light on how pertinent mentoring theories and frameworks were developed and made

recommendations for further investigation. Based on the data that was analysed and presented, conclusions were made that were relevant to the study's main objective. Here, it is important to restate the research questions and draw conclusions from the insights gathered from the data analysis.

This study's main aim was to design, implement, and assess a mentorship framework that is sustainable for preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. The main objective of the study, which is to create novel mentoring strategies that aid in preservice teachers' professional development, is reiterated in this chapter. The specific objectives were determined by analysing the data gathered and matching the answers to the research questions of the study. These questions will be addressed in more depth later to assess the success of the objectives.

6.3 Restating Research Questions and Their Findings

The main question and sub-questions guiding this study were:

How is a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed?

Sub-research question

- What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution?
- How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice?
- What are the challenges experienced by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?
- What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions?
- How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed?
- What is the impact of the newly developed mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

6.4 Recapitulation of Purpose and Findings

This study set out to design, implement and assess a mentoring framework for Foundation Phase preservice teachers that will enhance professional growth. Examining how various mentoring approaches affect the development of preservice teachers, the study found numerous important difficulties. It was discovered that although mentors used a variety of tactics, such as supportive scaffolding and direct supervision, some of these methods were less flexible and more inflexible toward the specific requirements of the preservice teachers. For instance, rather of encouraging a deeper understanding, some coaching techniques placed a strong emphasis on procedural chores. This shows that rather than strictly following predetermined strategies, mentors should modify their approaches to better fit the developmental stages of preservice teachers.

Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding as essential for promoting learners' growth first piqued my interest in mentoring methods. The theories of Vygotsky emphasize the necessity of mentoring strategies that expand on prior knowledge and cater to the needs of each individual. Hudson and Hudson (2021) further contend that the ability of mentors to modify their practices to meet the developmental requirements of their mentees is a critical component of effective mentoring, highlighting the need of matching mentoring methods to the changing circumstances of their mentees. The results of this study show that the developmental needs of Foundation Phase preservice teachers and the mentoring strategies used are not in line with each other. This disparity highlights the need for mentoring strategies that better include the requirements particular to individual developmental stages and context-specific needs.

The alignment between past and present contexts suggests that mentors should continue using diverse and interactive approaches that address various learning styles and developmental levels. It is advisable for mentors to integrate their strategies, particularly during the initial stages of the mentoring process, to ensure a smooth transition for preservice teachers. Furthermore, mentors should adapt their practices to match the developmental and readiness levels of preservice teachers, employing a range of methods rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Hudson and Hudson (2016:34) emphasize that "effective mentoring requires an adaptive approach that considers the specific developmental stages and needs of the mentees," underscoring

the importance of flexibility in mentoring practices. Additionally, Ndebele and Legg-Jack (2022) argue that a significant challenge in mentoring is the lack of alignment between mentoring practices and the mentees' evolving needs, highlighting the importance of contextual adaptability in effective mentoring.

Therefore, mentors' techniques need to optimize their impact on the professional growth of preservice teachers. Preservice teachers identified problems during data collection, including the rigorous requirements of the mentorship process and the lack of time for in-depth assistance. This frequently leads to a concentration on finishing assignments fast, which can impair the standard of mentorship and make it difficult for some preservice teachers to stay up to date. Regretfully, this problem may not go away as preservice teachers advance in their professions, which could influence their efficacy as teachers and their capacity to assimilate completely into positions as professionals after training.

A study on mentoring that bears some similarities to this research was conducted by Mphojane (2019), who observed variations in mentoring effectiveness but did not fully clarify the reasons behind these variations. To explore these further, this study employed a framework informed by Vygotsky (1978) to analyze mentoring practices, focusing on scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to understand how mentoring was structured and how mentors influenced the development of preservice teachers. Msila (2012) examined the role of context in mentoring effectiveness, while Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) investigated the impact of mentor-mentee interactions on professional growth. Comparative analysis reveals that while all studies acknowledge the significance of tailored mentoring approaches, variations in practices and outcomes suggest the need for a more nuanced understanding. Integrating insights from these studies with Vygotsky's theoretical framework highlights the importance of adaptive mentoring strategies that align with preservice teachers' developmental stages. Practical recommendations include employing diverse mentoring methods and addressing contextual factors to enhance effectiveness.

This study aimed to examine the dynamic between mentor and preservice teacher encounters, which was a change from the previous focus of the mentoring literature, which examined various aspects of mentor-mentee interactions and their impact on

professional growth. Regarding the mentoring process specifically, this change made it possible to compare various mentoring approaches and their impacts on the professional development of preservice teachers, providing new insight into the procedure. The investigator acknowledged the intricate relationship between the contemporary mentoring milieu and the historical background of mentoring activities. This comprehension underscores the significance of considering both historical and contemporary settings when assessing the efficacy of mentorship. For this reason, it is essential to assess if the mentoring techniques employed are having an impact on preservice teachers' experiences as well as the mentors' practices.

According to a study by Smith and Ingersoll (2019), approximately 45% preservice teachers reported that difficulties frequently surface when they first enter the mentorship phase, especially in the early phases of their training. To promote more seamless transitions, mentors may concentrate on going over basic ideas again and provide more assistance in the early stages of the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers benefit from this method as they adjust and assimilate more easily into their new jobs. Mentors are aware that transitional problems can arise at different points during the mentoring process, and they modify their approaches based on the unique requirements and phases of development of the preservice teachers. This method shows that to be effective, mentoring requires a substantial investment of time and energy to handle transitional issues and modify mentoring techniques to support preservice teachers' professional development during their training.

Despite acknowledging the importance of effective mentoring for professional development, the specific challenges in optimising mentoring frameworks to support foundation phase preservice teachers better have not been thoroughly explored. Existing literature often highlights general issues with mentoring practices and effectiveness. Still, it does not adequately address how to improve mentoring strategies to better align with the developmental needs of foundation phase preservice teachers. Mphojane (2019) and Msila (2012) have noted that variations in mentoring effectiveness can impact preservice teachers' development, indicating a need for more targeted and refined mentoring interventions. Furthermore, Hudson and Hudson (2016) stress the need for adaptive mentoring strategies to address these challenges. This reveals a significant gap in developing a more effective and responsive mentoring framework, highlighting the necessity for a framework that

addresses specific transitional issues and supports preservice teachers' overall professional growth and adaptation throughout their training.

6.5 Theoretical Framework

In the context of the mentoring study, pedagogy is seen through the lens of Vygotsky's theory, which emphasises the role of social interactions and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in learning. According to Vygotsky, effective pedagogy is influenced by the mentor's background and experience, as the mentor guides preservice teachers through their development. This creates a dynamic where the mentor's ability to support and challenge the mentee aligns with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept. The study highlights that mentors must know each preservice teacher's individual learning needs and developmental level, adapting their mentoring approaches accordingly to facilitate growth.

Vygotsky's framework emphasizes that learning is mediated through interactions with more knowledgeable individuals and is influenced by the context in which these interactions occur. The study found that effective mentoring, like effective pedagogy, depends on frequent, meaningful interactions between mentors and preservice teachers. These interactions help guide the mentees within their ZPD, thus supporting their transition and professional growth.

The ecological approach within the study further underscores the importance of the mentor-mentee relationship and the broader mentoring environment. According to Vygotsky, the learner's development is shaped by the bidirectional influences of their environment, including the mentor's practices and the context of their interactions. The study confirms that mentors play a critical role in shaping the learning experience, as their practices and the context they provide significantly impact the preservice teachers' development. Therefore, adapting mentoring practices to align with each mentee's needs and developmental stage is crucial for enhancing their overall growth and facilitating a successful transition through their training.

6.6 Main Findings of the Study

The primary conclusions of this study were arranged according to major themes that arose from the questionnaire responses, focus group and interview insights,

mentoring session observations, and review of relevant literature. These themes addressed both the strengths and weaknesses of the present frameworks and offered a thorough grasp of mentoring methods and their influence on preservice teachers' professional growth.

Question 1: What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution?

The results of the mentoring study showed that preservice teachers' growth is significantly impacted by the mentoring framework employed at the chosen higher education institution. This was clear from the mentoring sessions that were observed as well as from the mentor and preservice teacher interviews. It was discovered that the approach and experience of the mentor influence the mentoring practices, which in turn affects the mentees' outcomes. The study found that because preservice teachers learn about teaching techniques through social interactions with mentors, the mentoring contexts have a significant impact on their professional development. The interviews also revealed weaknesses and difficulties in the current mentorship structure, especially when it comes to consistently assisting preservice teachers in their transition across different stages of the training. This highlights the requirement for a mentorship framework that is more flexible and cohesive and that corresponds with the preservice teachers' developmental requirements.

The mentoring framework at the chosen higher education institution functions within the larger educational framework of South Africa, mirroring many of the same preservice teacher development issues that are prevalent throughout the nation (Gravett & Ramsaroop, 2021; Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). Even though the institution has created its own unique mentoring programs, the problems it faces—like the inconsistency of assistance quality and the challenges in shifting between various mentoring relationships—are representative of the larger national setting. The teacher education system in South Africa is confronted with a multitude of intricate and varied difficulties, such as notable discrepancies in the quality of mentorship, accessibility to mentors, and uniformity of mentoring methodologies. The framework of the institution aims to tackle these problems by developing structured, yet adaptable, mentoring systems that may be tailored to preservice teachers' requirements.

The study's findings showed that preservice teachers at the institution have trouble adjusting to new mentoring settings, frequently because of varying mentorship

methods. Several preservice teachers expressed difficulty adjusting to changes in their mentors, particularly when they went from one mentor who offered intense, tailored support to another who took a more detached approach. The incongruity resulted in gaps in the professional development of preservice teachers. This underscores the wider patterns in South African education, as emphasized by Mphojane (2019) and Msila (2012), wherein the calibre of mentorship is frequently inequitable and heavily contingent on the specific mentor.

Furthermore, the study found that frequent mentoring changes may impede the development of critical teaching abilities and confidence, especially during crucial phases of teacher preparation. Less mentoring from mentors left preservice teachers feeling unprepared for the real-world demands of the classroom. These results highlight the necessity of an adaptable and responsive mentoring framework within the organization that guarantees that mentoring practices are in line with the individual developmental needs of each teacher-in-training in addition to offering preservice teachers ongoing and consistent support.

According to the findings, the institution's mentorship program might also be used as a model to address national concerns about teacher preparation by incorporating more structured mentor training programs that guarantee quality and consistency. One of the main recommendations was for mentors to have a more reflective and collaborative approach to mentoring, wherein they actively participate in professional development and receive training on how to modify their methods to meet the unique requirements of preservice teachers. In addition to improving the mentorship program within the organization, this might support larger initiatives to raise the standard of teacher education throughout South Africa, tackling regional and national issues related to teacher development.

Question 2: How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice?

The chosen higher education institution's present mentorship program has various drawbacks that make it difficult for Foundation Phase preservice teachers to receive the necessary support during their teaching practice. The uneven quality of

mentorship, where foundation phase preservice teachers frequently receive differing degrees of direction and assistance from various mentors, is one of the main problems. In essential early childhood education settings, where preservice teachers need clear, disciplined, and consistent mentoring to develop core teaching abilities, this irregularity makes for a fragmented learning experience. Preservice teachers find it confusing and challenging to apply theoretical information in actual classroom situations because mentors do not follow a common method.

Furthermore, the framework falls short in addressing the special developmental requirements of Foundation Phase preservice teachers. Differentiated instruction and play-based learning are two pedagogical approaches that are specifically needed for early childhood education, but the existing mentoring system often takes a one-size-fits-all approach. Preservice teachers frequently feel unable to handle the intricacies of young learners due to a lack of individualized mentoring, particularly when it comes to managing behaviour, dealing with different classroom environments, and learning issues.

Furthermore, not enough attention is placed on giving quick and useful feedback. Because of its heavy reliance on formal evaluations, the framework frequently overlooks the continuous formative input that is essential to the progressive growth of teaching competencies. Consequently, preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase might pass up chances to evaluate their work and make the required modifications, which would further impede their professional development.

In conclusion, the framework is inefficient in assisting preservice teachers in their development during teaching practice due to its inconsistent application, inadequate formative feedback, and customized assistance for Foundation Phase needs.

Question 3: What are the challenges experienced by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?

During mentoring sessions, mentees and mentor teachers in the Foundation Phase encounter various significant problems. The mismatch in expectations is a major problem, as mentor teachers may expect mentees to be ready at a level they may not yet be, frustrating both parties. These issues are made worse by inadequate support systems, as mentor teachers frequently struggle with excessive workloads and little resources, which affects their capacity to offer insightful advice. Misunderstandings

and disputes may arise from mentor teachers and mentees using different pedagogical approaches, such as conventional versus modern techniques. Ineffective mentoring approaches can also result from mentor teachers' ignorance of the unique developmental needs of young students.

The mentoring process is also hampered by communication impediments, such as imprecise feedback and a lack of opportunity for candid discussion. Another problem presented by the diversity of learning needs in Foundation Phase classrooms is that mentees may find it challenging to apply inclusive teaching practices, and mentors may find it challenging to provide individualized support. For both mentors and mentees, a lack of continued professional development might make it more difficult for them to stay current with best practices. Lastly, the emotional and psychological strain that mentors and mentees endure can exacerbate the mentoring relationship, underscoring the necessity of a strong, encouraging framework to properly handle these problems.

Question 4: What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions?

During mentoring sessions, which are essential for efficient professional growth, mentor teachers and mentees in the Foundation Phase encounter unique obstacles and have demands. Mentor teachers need continual professional development to stay up to date with pedagogical methods and mentoring strategies, as well as clear norms and expectations to guarantee consistency in their mentoring duties. To properly manage their workload, they also require access to sufficient resources and administrative assistance. Mentors can improve their abilities and get support in tackling common issues by participating in networking and collaboration opportunities with other mentors. Structured feedback mechanisms are necessary for mentors to improve their practices. Their commitment and motivation can also be maintained by rewarding and recognising outstanding mentoring efforts.

However, to effectively develop their teaching skills, mentees require customized supervision and assistance that are in line with their unique developmental requirements and learning styles. For them to grasp expectations and transition into their teaching responsibilities with ease, structured orientation and training are essential at the start of their placement. While mentees can examine their

experiences and make required adjustments with regular opportunities for reflection and self-assessment, emotional support plays a crucial role in helping them manage the stress of making the move into teaching. Effective lesson planning and delivery are supported by access to teaching resources tailored to the Foundation Phase. Clear communication with mentors is essential for conveying needs and getting constructive feedback. Completely addressing these demands can strengthen the mentoring relationship for mentees and mentors, resulting in improved teaching practices and professional growth.

Question 5: How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed?

With input from prior mentoring practices and research, the recently created framework for mentoring Foundation Phase preservice students is specifically tailored to meet the requirements and difficulties that have been discovered. This framework places special emphasis on a structured, flexible mentoring strategy that meets the unique needs and developmental phases of preservice teachers.

Design: To meet the specific needs of Foundation Phase preservice teachers, it was determined during the design phase of the recently created mentorship framework that incorporating differentiated instruction and play-based learning methodologies was crucial. Education scholars and seasoned mentors shared their opinions, and they all agreed that mentoring needed to take a flexible, responsive approach that included early childhood education-specific pedagogical strategies. Having precise rules and roles defined made it easier to create a framework that was both theoretically and practically sound. The focus on learner-centered pedagogies and play-based learning was in line with current best practices and the developmental needs of young students.

Implementation: Several significant discoveries were made during this stage. Mentors stated that the materials and training sessions they received were very helpful in understanding and successfully implementing the new framework. Nevertheless, obstacles included the requirement for continuous assistance to completely implement the new procedures and differing degrees of mentor preparedness. The pilot programs made clear how crucial it is to have regular feedback loops and ongoing

professional development to quickly address any concerns. Preservice teachers gave largely positive feedback, pointing out that the focused attention on their developmental needs and the customized support created a more encouraging and productive learning environment. However, the implementation also made clear that a more gradual transition period is required to give mentors and mentees enough time to adjust to the new framework.

Assessment: The evaluation stage yielded important information about the efficacy of the framework. Surveys, interviews, and observational data revealed that the framework greatly enhanced the instructional practices of preservice teachers and their general satisfaction with the mentoring process. Notable key performance metrics included preservice instructors' elevated confidence and improved pedagogical skills. The evaluation also identified areas in which work needs to be done, such as providing mentors with more specialized support and more resources to address certain issues that arise during the mentoring process. According to the comments, the framework supported preservice teachers in most cases, but it needed to be continuously improved upon to meet new demands and maintain its efficacy.

Question 6: What is the impact of the newly developed mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

Preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase have shown to benefit greatly from the recently created mentorship structure as they practice teaching. Through its emphasis on varied instruction and play-based learning, the framework successfully matched the pedagogical requirements of early childhood education. Preservice instructors were able to establish more inclusive and responsive learning environments for their students by designing more interesting and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for them thanks to this alignment.

The addition of diversified instructional practices within the framework greatly enhanced the capacity of preservice instructors to meaningfully engage young learners. With the ability to create and carry out activities that addressed a variety of learning requirements, preservice instructors were able to encourage engaged and productive learning. Better classroom procedures and more creative lesson plans were clearly indicative of this, as they were regularly noted during teaching practice.

The framework's organized support and useful feedback led preservice teachers to report feeling more competent and confident. Preservice teachers were able to improve their instructional strategies and get a more sophisticated grasp of excellent teaching methods with the support of frequent mentorship sessions and explicit coaching. Their improved capacity to oversee classroom operations and cater to the diverse requirements of their pupils reflected their heightened confidence.

The framework's focus on responsiveness and adaptation gave preservice teachers the tools they needed to manage a variety of classroom situations. Preservice instructors gained increased skill at adjusting their teaching strategies in real time to better meet the needs of individual students by being encouraged to make changes in response to feedback. This flexibility was essential in establishing an accommodating and encouraging learning environment.

By using structured and adaptable mentoring techniques, the framework's implementation promoted stronger interactions between mentors and mentees. The framework facilitated candid dialogue and group problem-solving, which improved the mentoring relationship and aided in the professional development of preservice teachers. Preservice teachers felt more engaged and supported during their training, and mentors were better equipped to offer focused support.

The assessment phase revealed a few areas that needed improvement despite the overall efficacy of the system. A few preservice teachers and mentors found it challenging to completely incorporate the framework within the confines and institutional processes that were already in place. Aligning the framework with institutional needs and resolving implementation-related logistical concerns were two specific hurdles. In order to overcome these obstacles and guarantee that the framework can be properly and successfully incorporated into teaching practice, recommendations include offering more training and resources.

The framework has demonstrated potential in fostering sustained professional growth by imparting fundamental abilities and practices that preservice teachers can utilize in their future employment. The framework's encouragement of reflective practices and ongoing assistance contributes to the development of a solid basis for the teaching profession's ongoing evolution and flexibility.

Preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase have made tremendous progress in their growth because to the recently created mentoring framework, which has improved

their pedagogical abilities, self-assurance, flexibility, and mentoring connections. It is advised to make ongoing modifications and provide more assistance in order to handle integration issues and optimize the framework's influence on the professional development of preservice teachers.

6.7 Restate the Methodology

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study used qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies to assess the mentorship framework's efficacy in teacher education from all angles. Semi-structured interviews with mentor lecturers, focus groups with preservice teachers and mentor teachers, and document analysis of reports from mentoring sessions were the methods used to gather qualitative data. These techniques gave participants detailed insights into their perceptions, feelings, and difficulties during the mentoring process. Structured questionnaires were utilized to collect quantitative data from preservice teachers and mentor teachers. This allowed for a statistical assessment of the mentoring framework, with particular attention paid to aspects like professional development outcomes, role clarity, and mentor feedback (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ivankova, 2021).

The utilization of mixed-methods technique was selected due to its capacity to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data, so guaranteeing a thorough evaluation of the mentoring framework. This strategy fits with the research questions, which are intended to investigate the effects of mentoring on the development of preservice teachers and the "how" (process) and "why" (underlying factors) of mentoring efficacy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2020). By cross-referencing results from many data sources, methodological triangulation increased the validity of the conclusions. While quantitative data confirmed that 45% of preservice teachers reported facing significant difficulties during the initial mentorship phase, qualitative insights from focus group discussions with preservice teachers and mentor teachers revealed common challenges, such as managing conflicting expectations and adjusting to classroom dynamics (Smith & Ingersoll, 2019).

Focus groups with mentor teachers were very beneficial because they offered different viewpoints on the mentoring process, including the experiences, responsibilities, and assistance mentors give to aspiring teachers (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The

incorporation of varied viewpoints guaranteed that the research tackled the intricacies of mentoring from various aspects, providing an exhaustive assessment of the mentoring framework's efficacy. According to contemporary literature on mixed-methods research (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019; Morgan, 2019), the mixed-methods design thus offered a strong foundation for responding to the study's primary research objectives.

Because the mixed-methods approach addresses both the "how" and "why" of the mentoring framework's efficacy, it effectively aligns with the research questions of this study. In-depth insights into the complex dynamics of the mentoring process and the unique challenges and successes that preservice teachers and mentor teachers perceive are provided by the qualitative component, which includes semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and document analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This thorough investigation contributes to the resolution of inquiries concerning the usefulness of mentoring and the fundamental causes of participants' experiences. However, the quantitative component, which uses the structured questionnaires, offers a more comprehensive and objective assessment of the mentoring framework's influence, answering concerns regarding the general efficacy and uniformity of the mentoring procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through the combination of various methods, the study guarantees a thorough assessment of the mentoring framework, capturing both specific individual insights and broadly applicable patterns. By offering a comprehensive analysis of how mentoring methods impact preservice teachers' development and the reasons why some elements of the framework might require revision, this integration supports the research questions.

6.7.1 Evaluation of Methodology

The study's mixed-methods methodology is strong in its ability to offer a thorough grasp of the mentoring framework's efficacy. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data, which provides both depth and breadth in analysis, is one noteworthy strength. A sophisticated knowledge of the mentoring process is possible thanks to the rich and thorough insights into participants' experiences that qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, offer (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This level of detail is essential for delving into the intricate dynamics of mentoring and pinpointing challenges and achievements. Conversely, quantitative

techniques, such structured surveys, allow for the evaluation of patterns and trends over a wider sample, yielding results that may be generalized and used to validate and put qualitative findings in context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Nevertheless, there are some significant limitations to the mixed method study's approach. Qualitative data, which includes information from focus groups and interviews, may be labor- and time-intensive to obtain and analyze. Because qualitative data are subjective, the researcher's viewpoints and prejudices may impact how well the responses are interpreted, which may have an impact on the validity of the results. There is still a chance that the researcher will interpret participant responses biasedly, even with measures to assure validity and consistency such as member checking and triangulation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2020). Similarly, whereas quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaire provide insightful information on broad trends and patterns related to the mentoring framework, it might not go deep enough to fully comprehend the underlying causes of these trends. Although the numerical statistics provide a broad picture, Bryman (2020) argues that qualitative methods are a better means of capturing the rich and nuanced experiences of preservice teachers and mentors. While the quantitative analysis offers a useful gauge of efficacy and consistency, it leaves out important contextual elements and rich nuances of the mentoring process that are necessary for a thorough comprehension. These constraints can be addressed by combining qualitative and quantitative data, but it's crucial to take these biases and limits into account when evaluating the study's findings.

6.7.2 Outlining Implementation and Execution

Using an exploratory sequential design, the mixed-methods technique was implemented in this study in a methodical and organized manner. With this design, the collection and analysis of qualitative data came before the collection of quantitative data in a phased manner. Initially, focus groups with preservice teachers and mentor teachers, semi-structured interviews with mentor lecturers, and document analysis of mentoring reports were used to collect qualitative data. These qualitative techniques were carefully used to record the richness of the experiences of the participants and the subtleties of their interactions throughout the mentoring process, providing a thorough grasp of the influence of the mentoring framework.

To gather quantitative data, a structured questionnaire was created and distributed after the qualitative phase, which provided guidance for the creation of the research instruments. This survey was designed to evaluate elements of the mentoring framework, including professional development outcomes, role clarity, and the caliber of mentor input. To guarantee consistency and dependability, the quantitative data collection was carried out methodically. It also helped to confirm and enhance the qualitative findings.

Two separate stages of data analysis were carried out: first, a comprehensive narrative of the mentoring experiences was produced by transcription and thematic analysis of the qualitative data to find recurrent themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The quantitative questionnaire was developed with input from this qualitative study. The qualitative findings were then supported by an overview of trends and correlations provided by descriptive statistics analysis of the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the mentorship framework was made possible by the exploratory sequential design, which guaranteed a rigorous and comprehensive methodology (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019).

6.7.3 Justifying Necessary Changes

To ensure that the technique adequately addressed the research questions and produced accurate, dependable data, several improvements were made throughout the course of the study. Certain questions in the questionnaire included ambiguities that may have been misinterpreted or resulted in untrustworthy answers, according to the results of early pilot testing. These problems were addressed by rewriting the questionnaire to make it clearer and more consistent with the study's goals. Every question was also changed to ensure that it correctly gathered the intended data. Furthermore, comments from initial focus group discussions indicated that certain questions were either too general or not specific enough to elicit comprehensive answers. The focus group questions were improved to more closely target certain topics in response, which increased the breadth and value of the information gathered. Furthermore, to delve further into participants' responses and address any misunderstandings, follow-up questions were included to focus group discussions and interview questions. This method produced richer, more in-depth qualitative data by

enabling a more nuanced understanding of the viewpoints and experiences of the participants. The study's validity was strengthened by the ability to investigate settings and underlying causes that may not have been fully addressed by the first questions by using follow-up questions (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019). These adjustments were essential for enhancing the data's overall quality and guaranteeing that the methodology was reliable and sensitive to the intricate nature of the study concerns.

6.7.4 Covering Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The data collection techniques used in the study were carefully planned to offer a thorough assessment of the mentorship framework. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which were selected for their capacity to fully convey the nuance and complexity of participants' experiences, were used to gather qualitative data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), semi-structured interviews promoted open-ended talks that enabled participants to give in-depth explanations of their experiences and opinions. This supports the claim that this technique is useful for thoroughly examining participants' points of view. However, Morgan (2019) emphasizes that focus groups fostered dynamic interactions between members, which are essential for eliciting a range of viewpoints and producing deep, contextualized insights through group discussions. Thematic analysis, a technique suggested by Braun and Clarke (2023) for finding and analysing patterns within qualitative data, was used to examine the qualitative data. This method entails the methodical categorization of data and the creation of themes that represent recurrent themes in the responses of the participants. Through iterative coding and theme refining, researchers may assure the trustworthiness of the findings and capture the subtleties of participants' experiences through flexible and deep interpretation of the data provided by thematic analysis, as highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2023).

A standardized questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data, making it easier to gather numerical data in an organized manner on a variety of mentoring framework components, including professional growth outcomes, role clarity, and the caliber of mentor input. Structured questionnaires are useful for obtaining quantitative information that may be statistically evaluated to find patterns and correlations, claim Creswell & Creswell (2018). These data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, which included determining the frequencies, means, and standard

deviations. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this method offers a quantitative evaluation of the mentoring framework's efficacy by giving a wide overview of patterns and trends.

A thorough and reliable evaluation was made possible by the integration of qualitative and quantitative data collecting and analysis methodologies. According to Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2019), incorporating these techniques improved the overall validity and dependability of the study's conclusions by offering a well-rounded assessment that combines statistical data with in-depth narrative insights.

6.7.5 Reflecting on Biases and Reliability

Upon reflection of the study's biases and dependability, several important points come to light, especially in light of the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Because semi-structured interviews and focus groups are interpretive techniques, they are vulnerable to researcher bias in the gathering of qualitative data. Creswell & Creswell (2018) point out that biases may be introduced into the subjective perception of participants' responses, which emphasizes the significance of using techniques to increase trustworthiness. To reduce individual biases and guarantee consistency in the data interpretation, this study employed several coders and a thorough thematic analysis procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

Moreover, social desirability bias affected focus groups and interviews, where participants may have changed their answers to conform to expectations (Morgan, 2019). To address this, more questions were included to the questionnaire to go further into answers and resolve any ambiguities. This improved the authenticity and depth of the qualitative data (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019).

To find patterns and relationships, quantitative data collected via structured questionnaires were examined using descriptive statistics. Bryman (2020) points out that although this method offers a wide picture, it may oversimplify complicated occurrences and might miss underlying causes and contextual information. To provide a more detailed view, qualitative insights were added to the quantitative data used in the study to measure features of the mentorship framework.

To increase the validity and trustworthiness of the results, methodological triangulation, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data was used to cross-

verify results from several sources (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019). Despite these efforts, a thorough analysis of the study's findings still requires recognizing and resolving the inherent biases and limits of each approach.

6.7.6 Providing recommendations for future research

Several recommendations for further research are made considering the limits and findings of this study. First off, adding longitudinal research may offer more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts of mentorship frameworks on the professional growth and career paths of preservice teachers. Longitudinal research methods are useful for documenting changes over time and comprehending the long-term effects of educational interventions, claims Bryman (2020). To improve the contextual understanding of mentoring practices, future research may also benefit from using mixed methods approaches with a wider variety of data gathering techniques, such as ethnographic observations or case studies.

To make sure the findings are inclusive and representative, it is also advised to investigate the viewpoints of a larger sample of stakeholders, including preservice students from various backgrounds and environments. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), it's critical to incorporate a range of viewpoints to fully understand educational phenomena. Finally, the trustworthiness of quantitative results can be strengthened by increasing methodological rigor through sophisticated statistical approaches and additional validation measures. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2020) recommend using robust statistical methods to solve potential constraints and produce more reliable mentoring framework assessments. These suggestions are meant to propel the field of teacher education forward by providing more accurate and nuanced perspectives on successful mentoring strategies.

6.7.7 Suggesting Improvements or Alternative Methods

Several modifications and other approaches could be taken into consideration to increase the robustness of further research on mentorship frameworks. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), deeper, more contextualized insights into the mentoring process may be obtained by incorporating more sophisticated qualitative methodologies, such as ethnographic observations. Through real-time observation of

interactions and behaviours, ethnography provides a more complex insight of mentorship dynamics beyond what can be obtained from focus groups and interviews alone. Further validating results could also be achieved by utilizing mixed methods designs with a sequential explanatory approach, which entails first collecting quantitative data and then using qualitative data to analyze and explain the latter (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Furthermore, expanding the sample size and diversity in subsequent research endeavors may improve the findings' capacity for generalization and inclusivity. Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2019) claim that a more extensive and heterogeneous sample size offers a more comprehensive viewpoint, which is crucial for comprehending the varying experiences of preservice teachers in various settings. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), integrating sophisticated statistical methods like multivariate analysis has the potential to enhance quantitative evaluations and reveal more intricate connections among the information. Future studies can provide more thorough and broadly applicable insights into the efficacy of mentoring frameworks by addressing these factors, which will ultimately lead to the creation of more potent teacher development techniques.

6.8 South Africa's Challenge

The mentorship of preservice teachers in South Africa's educational system is fraught with difficulties, especially during the Foundation Phase. The inconsistent mentorship procedures among various institutions and geographical areas present a significant difficulty. This discrepancy causes preservice teachers to have various experiences, affecting their growth and preparedness for the workforce. There are disparities in the quality of support that preservice teachers receive since mentoring practices are not standardised, with some preservice teachers gaining more from more successful mentoring than others. This variance frequently results from variations in the resources, mentor training, and experience different institutions offer.

Furthermore, the South African mentorship system sometimes finds it challenging to meet the unique requirements of preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. Many frameworks now in use take a broad approach that is insufficient to meet the special needs of early childhood education. Mentoring approaches, for example, do not often incorporate pedagogical tools that are critical for young learners, such as varied

instruction and play-based learning. There is a mismatch between preservice teachers' education and what they require to support young learners as a result of this neglect properly.

Preservice teachers and their mentors confront additional logistical and contextual problems, such as institutional restraints and scarce resources. These limitations may make it more difficult to put good mentoring methods into practice and lessen the overall influence of mentoring initiatives.

Several significant findings regarding these difficulties were found in the study on the recently created mentoring framework for Foundation Phase preservice teachers. First, although intended to offer structured support, the framework's application was discovered to be uneven throughout mentor-mentee couples. This discrepancy indicates a larger problem in South Africa: preservice teachers have unequal development opportunities due to differences in mentoring techniques and quality.

The study also showed how pedagogical techniques unique to early childhood education are frequently left out of the current framework and not fully integrated. The overall approach of the framework is sometimes insufficient to accommodate the specific developmental needs of young learners, even with its best efforts to incorporate features of differentiated instruction and play-based learning. Because of this misalignment, preservice teachers are sometimes not given the tools they need to provide early childhood education.

Implementation difficulties were yet another important discovery. The study found that institutional and resource restrictions affect how well the mentoring framework is implemented. These difficulties include inadequate mentor training, restricted access to learning resources, and logistical problems that make it difficult to carry out mentoring activities efficiently.

The study's overall findings highlight the need for a more customised and flexible mentoring structure that considers the unique requirements of Foundation Phase schooling as well as the contextual realities of South Africa's educational system. The results indicate that improving the framework to incorporate early childhood educational practices and resolving implementation issues more effectively may greatly increase preservice teachers' support and, in turn, their preparedness for professional practice.

6.9 Relationship Between the Findings and Previous Research

The findings concur with current studies on the difficulties encountered during preservice teachers' development. The study confirms Gravett and Van Der Merwe's (2023) findings, which show a decrease in preservice teachers' efficacy because of insufficient assistance as they move between training phases. Similarly, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) draw attention to a decline in preservice teachers' motivation, which is supported by the results of the mentoring study, which show that reduced passion and involvement in teaching practice are caused by uneven and inadequate mentoring support. Rusznyak (2022) addresses the challenges preservice teachers have adjusting to new pedagogical contexts and expectations. This problem is like what the study found when preservice teachers are switching between different mentorship situations. The need for a mentorship structure that is more adaptable and responsive is highlighted by the challenge of managing change. The mentoring study supports Ntshangase and Nkosi's (2022) assertion that there is a mismatch between preservice teachers' unique needs and mentoring methods. It does this by emphasizing how current frameworks do not consider the unique developmental needs of mentees. This imbalance exacerbates the difficulties that preservice teachers have during their practical training.

The findings from the study challenge the conventional view that mentoring challenges are solely due to individual deficiencies in mentors or mentees. Instead, the study reveals that external factors and the quality of the mentoring framework significantly impact the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Recent research supports this shift in focus. Gravett, Petersen and Ramsaroop (2019) emphasizes that effective mentoring is contingent upon a supportive framework that adapts to the needs of both mentors and mentees, rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all approach. Similarly, Rusznyak (2022) argues that successful mentoring hinges on the quality of interactions and the responsiveness of mentoring practices to the specific needs of preservice teachers. This study aligns with these perspectives by highlighting how contextual factors and the quality of the mentoring framework play a crucial role in shaping the mentoring experience, rather than attributing challenges solely to the characteristics of individual mentors or mentees.

The mentoring study's results may not agree with all previous research, but they do agree with it in several important areas. First, the study shows that problems with mentoring are more often the result of poor communication and assistance within the mentoring framework than they are of personal failings on the part of the mentor or mentee. This research lends credence to the idea that problems might arise from ineffective communication and engagement during transitions, rather than the transitions themselves being the main source of trouble. According to the study, Foundation Phase mentors frequently employ mentoring strategies that balance direct and indirect types of assistance. The study highlights that effective mentoring approaches balance different forms of support, fostering better development for preservice teachers. This balance in mentoring practices mirrors how adaptable and responsive approaches in other educational contexts enhance learning and development.

Thirdly, the research shows that the mentoring strategies used in the later phases of the mentoring process may cause mentors and preservice teachers to become less connected, much like how relationships between instructors and students in upper grades may grow more strained. This gap may impact the level of development and assistance that mentees receive. According to the study, some mentoring strategies may force mentees to mature too quickly and assume increasingly independent, adult-like expectations. A less encouraging learning environment may result from this change, which may be marked by a more abstract lecturing style and be detrimental to successful mentoring. These observations align with worries over the possible adverse effects of requiring more independence from mentees before they are prepared.

This study sheds light on the substantial workload that mentor teachers endure, which negatively affects their capacity to assist preservice teachers meaningfully. Mentors frequently struggle to find time and energy for meaningful interactions with their mentees because they are juggling administrative work, teaching responsibilities, and other professional obligations. The quality of mentoring is compromised by this excessive workload since mentors find it challenging to provide tailored feedback and attend to everyone's developmental requirements. The study emphasises how crucial it is to create a mentoring system that lessens these responsibilities so that mentors can commit time and funds to effectively assist preservice teachers. Resolving this

issue is essential to raising the standard of mentoring and advancing preservice teachers' professional development.

This chapter looked at how mentor instructors and lecturers applied the new mentoring framework to their classrooms and how that affected their mentoring sessions to turn study findings into useful information. Knowing how much of an impact mentor instructors had and what tactics they used as teachers to improve the success of mentoring were the main points of emphasis. Based on their varying degrees of experience and heavy workloads, mentor teachers found it difficult to regularly adopt the new framework, even if it offered an organized approach. The growth of preservice teachers was greatly aided using effective mentoring techniques, which included frequent, positive contacts and tailored feedback. However, the burden of their extensive administrative and instructional duties frequently prevented mentors from making the most of the framework. Overall, the results show that although the framework has potential, lowering mentor workloads and offering sufficient assistance are critical to its successful implementation to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentoring sessions.

It's possible that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) isn't doing enough to make sure that programs for teaching practice are well matched with current trends in education and business requirements. There are multiple ways in which this misalignment shows up in the Foundation Phase preservice teachers' mentorship system. For example, the study shows that the pedagogical approaches—like individualized instruction—that are necessary for successful early childhood education are frequently not sufficiently addressed by the mentorship practices that are in place today. Preservice teachers are trained in techniques and approaches that could not adequately prepare them for the realities of the classroom because of this alignment gap.

The study shows that mentoring sessions frequently reveal a gap between the theoretical information that is taught during training and the practical abilities that are required in real teaching contexts. This mismatch creates difficulties for both mentors and mentees, which can result in inadequate mentorship and inadequate preparation for the intricacies of teaching in the real world. These problems are made worse by the DHET's neglect of teaching practice program alignment with changing industry standards and educational objectives, which leaves preservice teachers ill-prepared

to handle the wide range of needs of their prospective pupils. The essential necessity for the DHET to update and modify teaching practice guidelines to better reflect contemporary teaching methods and industry expectations is highlighted by this discrepancy.

A focus group participant noted, "There seems to be a significant gap between what we learn in our training and what is actually needed in the classroom. The methods we are taught don't always translate well into practice, leaving us unprepared for real teaching challenges."

The findings from the observations and interviews indicate that preservice teachers face notable obstacles in their teaching practice, which draw attention to the discrepancies between the mentorship framework and the real-world demands of the classroom. Using non-standard spelling as an example, a mentor displayed student work that had serious problems, indicating that the kid was not meeting the expectations for basic reading. This circumstance begs the question of how preservice instructors handle these kinds of differences in the classroom.

A mentor was asked in an interview,

"When encountering issues like this, where a student's performance significantly deviates from the expected grade-level standards, how do you, as a mentor, guide preservice teachers in addressing and managing these challenges?"

In response, the mentor said, "We first advise preservice teachers to carry out an extensive assessment to identify the underlying reasons behind the students' challenges. To address each student's unique needs, they must use differentiated education, which may involve one-on-one or small-group instruction. We also suggest that they speak with the head of department to address the matter and, if necessary, look into getting more resources or assistance."

This conversation highlights a more significant difficulty for the mentoring framework: mentors must address systemic factors affecting students' growth in addition to instructional strategies. It emphasises how crucial it is to match mentorship strategies with actual classroom difficulties so that preservice teachers are sufficiently equipped to deal with and overcome these real-world obstacles. According to the findings,

modifying the current mentoring programs could be required to better prepare incoming teachers for the challenges they will encounter, such as addressing sizable learning gaps and supporting the need for interventions.

The mentoring study in question immediately benefits from the findings of Gravett and Cilliers (2022) addressing inadequate evaluation and feedback mechanisms in mentoring programs. This study has shown that because of the mentoring framework's shortcomings, mentor and preservice teachers confront serious difficulties. These difficulties are made worse by the existing framework's deficiency in thorough evaluation and feedback, making it more difficult to identify and address problems that impact the mentoring process. This critique, taken in the context of the mentoring study, emphasizes that the mentoring practices in the investigated institution may not be sufficiently improved or modified in the absence of efficient evaluation systems. This deficiency may result in long-term problems including mismatches between the practical demands of preservice teachers and mentorship support. For instance, the lack of organized feedback and evaluation made it difficult for mentors to address notable differences in preservice teachers' approaches to education and classroom management, as the study found.

The study's findings, which show that the mentoring framework's evaluation flaws prevent it from effectively supporting preservice teachers, are consistent with Gravett and Cilliers' findings. This link highlights how important it is to put in place thorough feedback systems to improve the mentorship process, guarantee ongoing development, and more effectively handle the real-world challenges preservice teachers face when they are teaching.

This study aimed to design, implement, and assess a novel mentorship framework for preservice teachers. To achieve this goal, the researcher reviewed the literature to see whether the problems with preservice teachers' mentorship frameworks are still present and whether any new study has been done.

The study found that although the new framework attempted to fill in the gaps seen in earlier mentoring procedures, several issues still exist. Recent research findings that emphasised the need for more efficient and contextually appropriate mentoring methodologies were considered during the design phase. The implementation phase did reveal, however, that mentors and preservice teachers continued to confront

challenges, such as inadequate alignment with the demands of the classroom and the continuous need for customised support.

The evaluation of the newly created framework revealed that substantial problems still exist even if there were improvements in several areas, such as improved structured feedback and greater alignment with theoretical ideas. Among these are the persistent challenges in properly modifying the framework for varied classroom environments and the absence of strong systems for continuous assessment and enhancement.

The new mentoring framework showed promise in resolving some of the important problems found in earlier studies, but it also made clear that more work needed to be done in this area. The study demonstrates that difficulties in mentoring preservice teachers still exist despite advancements, emphasizing the need for ongoing improvement and modification of mentoring techniques to satisfy changing learning objectives.

This study conducted in South Africa has shown that one of the most important factors impacting the difficulties preservice teachers confront throughout their transition periods is the efficacy of mentorship frameworks. According to the research, preservice teachers' capacity to adjust to and succeed in their teaching responsibilities is greatly impacted by the calibres and consistency of mentoring procedures (Mphojane, 2019; Gravett and Cilliers, 2022; Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022; Rusznyak, 2022). The study specifically emphasizes how mentorship programs' inadequacies and inconsistencies add to the challenges preservice teachers face as they advance through their teaching practice experiences. The results highlight the need for a mentorship structure that is more responsive and cohesive to better assist preservice teachers in overcoming these obstacles and advancing their professional growth.

Consequently, preservice teachers have voiced concerns about the mismatch between their developmental needs and the focus of mentoring sessions. For instance, one preservice teacher expressed:

"It often feels like both my mentor lecturer and mentor teacher focus on what they think I should be learning, like specific teaching strategies or classroom management techniques. But sometimes I have questions or concerns about different areas, like how to engage certain learners or balance the workload, and those needs aren't really addressed."

Another foundation phase preservice teacher shared a similar experience:

"The mentoring sessions are structured around what the mentors believe is important, but what I actually need help with might be something else entirely, like lesson planning or dealing with anxiety before teaching a lesson. I don't always get the support I need in those areas."

Most of the research has not examined the factors that contribute to mentorship frameworks' effectiveness in supporting preservice teachers as they start their teaching careers (Mphojane, 2019). The focus of mentoring programs has often been on individual components rather than a comprehensive analysis of how different components, such as mentor consistency, compatibility with teaching standards, and feedback assimilation, affect the overall performance of mentoring programs. According to Gravett and Cilliers (2022), inadequate evaluation obstructs progress, which is why strong feedback channels are crucial in mentoring programs. The alignment of mentoring methods with the needs of real-world teaching is another area where Mphojane (2019) finds gaps. She points out that inconsistent mentoring approaches can impede the professional growth of preservice teachers. Rusznyak (2022) and Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) also point out that it's common to ignore how well mentoring frameworks integrate with the demands of the curriculum.

A debate arose about whether the emphasis should be more on the prescriptive aspects of mentorship programs or on a flexible, adaptable strategy that considers the needs of certain preservice teachers. While some contend that standardizing mentoring procedures could result in evaluations that are consistent and equitable (Gravett and Cilliers, 2022), others think that strict frameworks might not adequately take into consideration the variety of difficulties preservice teachers encounter in

various classroom settings (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). The study highlights the significance of this discussion and contends that in order to promote preservice teachers' development and the efficacy of mentoring, a balance between rigidity and flexibility is required. A significant query arose after the debate's outcome: "Given the current mentorship frameworks, are preservice teachers genuinely well-prepared for the complexities of the teaching world?" This inquiry questions the efficacy of the current mentorship programs and asks whether preservice teachers are getting the help, real-world experience, and flexibility they need to succeed in classroom settings. In response to this question, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) contend that although mentorship frameworks offer fundamental assistance, a lot of preservice teachers still have trouble managing the classroom and implementing effective teaching techniques, pointing to a disconnect between classroom instruction and preparation. Similarly, mentorship programs frequently lack flexibility and fail to take into consideration the variety of obstacles that instructors encounter in a range of educational situations, as highlighted by Rusznyak (2022).

The "gap between theory and practice" in teacher education is a recurrent theme that addresses this problem. The researchers (Rusznyak, 2022 and Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022) stress that although mentorship frameworks have advantages, preservice teachers are frequently ill-prepared for the dynamic and frequently unpredictable character of real classrooms.

After examining the mentorship framework and its impact on preservice teachers, a significant theme emerged. It was found that preservice instructors often struggle to address the specific needs of their students and tend to rely on generalized lecture-based approaches. This finding highlights a critical issue in current mentoring practices. Effective mentoring should ideally prepare preservice teachers to handle diverse classroom dynamics and address individual student needs. However, the study suggests that many mentoring programs fail to provide this level of support. Research by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) and Rusznyak (2022) supports this observation, indicating that mentoring frameworks often overlook the need for tailored guidance that aligns with real-world teaching challenges. The results underscore the importance of addressing this gap in mentoring programs.

Additionally, the study found that a major obstacle appears when preservice teachers meet a gap between the more strict, less participatory approaches they are

accustomed to using in the classroom and their familiar teaching methods. It has been demonstrated that learners' academic growth is adversely affected by this transition from dynamic, motivating learning environments to ones that are strong in framing and classification and discourage interaction. This research emphasizes the necessity of mentoring frameworks to help preservice teachers successfully bridge the gap between various instructional modalities.

Study participants frequently mentioned how inadequately technology is integrated into mentoring procedures. They underlined that their capacity to use modern teaching techniques and provide efficient training is hampered by a lack of technology resources and equipment. The feedback provided indicates a significant deficiency in the existing mentorship structure. It highlights the need to integrate technological innovations and provide preservice teachers with assistance in utilizing these tools to improve their efficacy and flexibility as teachers in contemporary educational environments.

A thorough perspective for examining the intricate relationships and environmental elements affecting preservice teachers' development is provided by viewing mentoring through the prism of activity theory. Activity Theory emphasizes the dynamic and linked nature of these components as it investigates how technologies and social interactions mediate activities within situations. Applying Activity Theory to the study's context demonstrates that preservice teachers' and mentors' interactions with the classroom and each other have a significant impact on the mentoring framework's efficacy.

The application of this theory to preservice teacher mentoring highlights the reality that mentoring is a multifaceted process that is impacted by several mediating elements, including the institutional framework, the resources that are available, feedback systems, and the changing role of technology. The study supports the claim that the effectiveness of mentoring frameworks depends on how well they incorporate social interactions and real-world teaching experiences by approaching mentorship through the lens of Activity Theory. According to the study, flaws in the mentoring strategy made it more difficult for preservice teachers to convert their theoretical knowledge into successful classroom practices.

This is consistent with the idea of Activity Theory, which holds that learning is a socially mediated process and that professional development is greatly influenced by tools like digital resources, mentor feedback, and lesson planning strategies. The study also reveals a significant discrepancy between mentorship models and preservice teachers' real classroom experiences. According to activity theory, conflicts that impede learning occur when components of an activity system—like instructor preparation and real-world application—are not coordinated. These inconsistencies were apparent in the way preservice teachers expressed that they had trouble modifying their teaching methods since they were not given contextualized support.

Although mentorship programs offered direction, the criticism was frequently generic and unrelated to the unique difficulties faced in varied classroom settings.

This research emphasizes the necessity of mentorship models that provide ongoing adaptation and reflection to guarantee that preservice teachers receive timely, pertinent, and responsive assistance to their changing requirements. Furthermore, the study shows that, despite its potential to close the gap between theory and practice, technological integration in mentoring is still underutilized. According to Activity Theory, digital tools can improve the mentorship process by enabling reflective practice through digital teaching portfolios and recorded lesson observations, facilitating peer cooperation, and offering real-time feedback. Therefore, one aspect that urgently needs improvement is the mentorship frameworks' absence of systematic technological inclusion.

To improve preservice teachers' readiness for contemporary classrooms, Engeström (2001) expanded Activity Theory to emphasize the transformative power of networks and digital tools in forming learning experiences. This suggests that an updated mentorship model should incorporate digital assessment tools, virtual lesson modelling and online coaching.

The findings highlight the necessity of dynamic, context-sensitive mentoring that is in line with the demands of actual teaching. Using Activity Theory, the study offers a methodical viewpoint on how contextualized learning, increased feedback mechanism alignment, and the use of digital resources can all enhance mentoring. The study's suggestions for a more flexible and responsive mentorship structure that successfully

gets preservice teachers ready for the challenges of the teaching profession are supported by this theoretical foundation.

Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) provided a fundamental framework for comprehending the developmental and interaction elements of mentoring in this study. The theory of Vygotsky highlights the need of social interaction and scaffolding in the learning process, offering insightful advice on how mentors might assist preservice teachers in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Though Vygotsky's theory provides an in-depth comprehension of cognitive development and the dynamics of individual learning, it might not be sufficient to address more extensive systemic and contextual issues that affect mentoring practices. Activity Theory is introduced to supplement Vygotsky's theory and offer a more thorough perspective. By investigating how systemic tools, community practices, and contextual factors affect the efficacy of mentorship frameworks, Activity Theory (1978) broadens the scope of inquiry beyond individual encounters.

Activity Theory emphasizes the value of a well-coordinated and contextually appropriate mentoring strategy by concentrating on the interactions between mentors, preservice teachers, and their educational environment. This viewpoint highlights that in order for mentorship to have a genuine impact, it must take into account not just the academic components of teaching but also the contextual and practical factors that influence the professional development of preservice teachers.

The study demonstrates that, building on the findings from Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1987), the alignment of preservice teachers' practices with the contextual needs of the educational environment has a considerable impact on the success of mentorship frameworks for them. Activity Theory emphasizes the significance of social relationships, instruments, and environmental elements in forming educational practices. It is a systemic approach to understanding human activities through the interaction of numerous components.

The study discovered that preservice teachers frequently face difficulties in their growth when there are differences between the mentorship framework and the real-world demands of classroom settings. The interactions between mentors and preservice teachers, the tools and resources offered, and the overall educational objectives, for example, are all important factors in deciding how well the mentoring process goes. The results show that the mentoring process may not be able to

adequately meet the needs of preservice teachers when these components are not well-aligned or when the contextual and systemic factors influencing teaching practice are not considered.

The study shows that an important viewpoint for comprehending the intricacies of mentoring is provided by activity theory's emphasis on the connections between elements within an educational system. It implies that by ensuring that mentorship frameworks are more effectively integrated with the practical and contextual realities of teaching, a more nuanced approach that considers the larger activity system could increase their efficacy. Preservice teachers may benefit from stronger support systems because of this strategy, which will enhance their readiness and flexibility in actual classroom settings. This method contributes to our understanding of how to enhance mentoring practices for preservice teachers by illuminating other aspects of the intricacies of mentoring and how it aligns with real-world difficulties.

For several reasons, researchers contend that mentoring preservice teachers during the Foundation Phase is essential. First and foremost, good mentorship gives preservice teachers the encouragement and direction they need to make the shift from academic study to real-world instruction. With this assistance, they are better able to handle the challenges of lesson planning, classroom management, and student involvement. Second, mentoring is crucial in assisting preservice teachers in honing their pedagogical abilities and customizing their lesson plans to fit the wide range of requirements of young students. Additionally, it ensures that preservice teachers are better prepared to face obstacles in the real world of teaching by bridging the gap between academic preparation and practical application.

6.10 Projected Contributions

6.10.1 Policy Contribution

The study provides insightful information for future policy formulation and identifies several crucial shortcomings in the current mentorship programs that compromise their efficacy. First, the study shows that mentors are not receiving enough assistance or training, which leads to uneven mentoring experiences and inadequate direction for preservice teachers. Comprehensive assistance and professional development for mentors are essential for successful mentoring, according to Patel and Lee (2024).

The study also shows that current policies frequently fall short of meeting the varying demands of preservice teachers, so obstructing the chance to offer specialized assistance that considers their various experiences and teaching environments. According to Yoon et al. (2024), for mentoring programs to be truly effective, they must be flexible enough to meet the needs of everyone. The lack of detailed and thorough instructions for putting mentoring frameworks into practice and assessing them is another important gap that contributes to practice inconsistency. Wilson and Wiggins (2024) stress that clear standards are necessary to guarantee uniformity and excellence in mentoring initiatives. Lastly, the study highlights the fact that a lot of policies simply consider the first stages of mentorship, ignoring long-term career advancement and professional development, which is crucial for improving teacher effectiveness and retention (Sachs, 2024). The thesis fills up these gaps by offering policymakers practical suggestions on how to create mentoring frameworks that are more responsive and stronger. By ensuring that mentoring programs are well-supported, flexible enough to meet a range of needs, consistently executed, and centered around long-term professional development, these recommendations seek to improve the quality of mentoring programs. This all-encompassing strategy will aid in the creation of regulations that enhance preservice teachers' support and enhance academic results.

6.10.2 Practice Contribution

This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the field of mentoring frameworks for preservice teachers by providing new approaches and substantiating those that already exist. The study offers an in-depth analysis of existing mentoring practices and points out areas that could be improved, which will result in the creation of an improved mentoring framework. Enhanced professional development for mentors guarantees that they are equipped to provide constructive criticism and support (Timperley, 2023); more precise guidelines and standards for mentoring practices guarantee uniformity and quality across programs (Latham & Whelan, 2024); customized support for the various needs of preservice teachers encourages more responsive and effective mentoring (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2024); and an emphasis on long-term development to support ongoing professional growth and career progression, thereby increasing the efficacy and retention of teachers (Sachs, 2024). Through the

incorporation of these insights, the thesis ensures that the mentoring framework is both theoretically sound and practically applicable by providing practical improvements as well as validating effective techniques. This all-encompassing strategy improves teaching methods and helps to foster more efficient teacher preparation and professional development.

6.10.3 Professional Development

It is crucial to build mentor professional development programs on a systematic, evidence-based methodology that considers the needs of preservice teachers as well as mentors. Research-driven techniques aimed at improving mentors' abilities and expertise serve as a useful foundation for these kinds of initiatives. Timperley (2023) contends that the foundations of evidence-based practices and continual learning should form the basis of professional development. This means that mentoring programs should be created to give mentors current information about mentoring and teaching best practices in addition to useful application tools.

Making sure that professional development programs are specifically designed to address the requirements and issues that are always being recognized through evaluations and feedback is another essential element. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2024), professional development must be adaptable to the changing requirements of teachers, including ongoing assessments and modifications predicated on mentor input and mentoring results. This methodology guarantees the training's continued relevance and efficacy.

Effective professional development should also give mentors the chance to participate in group reflection and learning. Latham and Whelan's (2024) research emphasize the need of collaborative professional growth, where mentors can exchange experiences, talk about problems, and work together to find answers. This cooperative method not only improves mentors' individual abilities but also cultivates a positive mentor community.

Finally, it is critical that professional development programs incorporate components of long-term growth and career development. Sachs (2024) highlights that the efficacy of mentoring programs is largely dependent on the provision of continuous assistance and avenues for career advancement. As a result, mentors should have access to

career advancement opportunities as part of professional development programs to guarantee ongoing engagement and progress. These components can be included into professional development programs to give mentors the tools, resources, and support they need to successfully mentor preservice teachers. This will raise the standard of mentoring and teacher preparation in general.

6.10.4 Curriculum Contribution

By providing practical advice for improving the incorporation of mentoring frameworks into teacher education programs, this thesis advances curricular design. The creation of a customized mentoring framework that fills in some of the study's identified shortcomings is one important contribution. For instance, the study discovered that during their first placements, preservice teachers frequently lacked role clarification and support. Educational programs can offer targeted support to resolve these challenges by integrating a structured mentoring framework into the curriculum, such as through clearly defined responsibilities and regular feedback sessions (Darling-Hammond, 2023).

The significance of coordinating curriculum content with practical teaching methods is also emphasized by the study. For example, the study found that preservice teachers profited from realistic, scenario-based instruction that mimicked the difficulties they would encounter in the classrooms. Preservice teachers can acquire real-world experience and problem-solving abilities that are applicable to their future responsibilities by incorporating case studies and simulation exercises into the curriculum, as the study's approach to mentor-led workshops demonstrates (Yoon et al., 2024).

The research also emphasizes the importance of feedback mechanisms in good curriculum design. The use of iterative feedback loops in the study, where mentors and preservice teachers provide ongoing assessments and modifications, showed how crucial it is to include regular chances for reflection in the curriculum. This strategy guarantees that the curriculum stays relevant to the needs of preservice teachers while also being in line with best practices in education (Latham & Whelan, 2024).

The report also backs the inclusion of chances for collaborative learning in the curriculum. For instance, collaborative problem-solving and peer interactions

improved the mentoring process, according to focus group talks with mentors and preservice teachers. A supportive learning environment can be created, and mentoring's overall efficacy can be increased by incorporating group projects, collaborative assignments, and peer review sessions within the curriculum (Sachs, 2024).

Educational programs can better support the development of preservice teachers by incorporating these study-based ideas and examples into curriculum design. This will ensure that teachers are well-prepared for their teaching positions and can effectively contribute to the educational community.

6.11 Conclusions Based on Findings

This study provides important new insights into mentoring Foundation Phase preservice teachers in the South African educational system. The findings underscore the necessity of a well-structured and adaptable mentorship program to equip preservice teachers with the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills required to navigate real-world teaching challenges effectively.

A key finding of the study highlights the discrepancy between preservice teachers' preparation and their actual classroom experiences. This misalignment suggests that existing mentorship frameworks must be refined to reflect the evolving expectations and trends in modern education. This aligns with the study's objective of investigating the mentoring program utilized by Foundation Phase preservice teachers at a particular university. The study also reveals gaps in mentoring techniques, specifically the absence of consistent and constructive feedback. The lack of a robust feedback system hampers preservice teachers' professional development by limiting their ability to design effective lesson plans and manage classroom challenges successfully. This finding supports the study's goal of identifying flaws in the current mentorship structure that hinder the growth of Foundation Phase preservice teachers.

Additionally, the study highlights that mentorship programs fail to integrate technology effectively. Despite its potential to enhance teaching and learning, its minimal application in mentorship frameworks presents a critical gap requiring urgent attention. Addressing this issue will better equip preservice teachers to teach in contemporary classrooms and seamlessly incorporate technology into their lesson plans. This

directly relates to the study's aim of exploring the best ways to apply a newly developed mentoring framework, identifying elements that support its effectiveness and sustainability in a particular higher education setting.

The study also identifies common concerns among mentor teachers, mentor lecturers, and preservice teachers regarding the alignment of mentoring frameworks with real-world teaching demands. The absence of adequate support systems and feedback mechanisms was a shared concern, as these deficiencies hinder effective mentoring and professional growth. Moreover, all stakeholders acknowledged that mentorship programs' inadequate use of technology underscores the necessity of modernization to properly prepare preservice teachers for today's classroom environments. These shared perspectives highlight the pressing need to enhance and update mentorship frameworks to improve teacher preparation. This directly supports the study's objective of determining the unique needs of preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers to enhance mentorship effectiveness, as well as examining the unique challenges these individuals face during teaching practice.

The findings also illustrate that various mentoring approaches, each with distinct advantages and limitations, are employed across different institutional settings. Inconsistencies in mentorship practices arise due to the diverse approaches adopted by mentor lecturers and mentor teachers, which are influenced by their experiences and institutional contexts. While this variability allows for some flexibility, a more standardized and integrated mentoring approach is necessary to address core challenges such as inadequate feedback systems, failure to align with real-world teaching demands, and insufficient technological integration in mentoring. This aligns with the study's purpose of assessing the impact of the mentoring framework on the professional growth of Foundation Phase preservice teachers during teaching practice.

The study's findings align with previous research. Gravett and Cilliers (2022) and Rusznyak (2022) emphasize the importance of strong feedback systems and aligning mentoring techniques with real-world teaching challenges. Furthermore, to meet the evolving demands of the education sector, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) advocate for mentorship programs that incorporate both technological advancements and practical teaching approaches. These findings collectively highlight the need for a dynamic and

comprehensive mentorship system that addresses existing gaps and strengthens preservice teachers' preparation.

The foundational stages of teacher development play a pivotal role in shaping the performance of preservice teachers in their future careers and determining the effectiveness of mentorship programs. Weak implementation of mentorship strategies during these formative years can create substantial barriers to professional growth and teaching effectiveness. Strong mentoring foundations are crucial for preservice teachers to develop the skills and strategies needed to address the complexities of teaching. Without this foundation, they may struggle to adapt to classroom dynamics, which could negatively impact both their performance and the quality of education they provide.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on mentorship and teacher preparation in South Africa by addressing these concerns in its discussion and findings. The results provide a compelling argument for modernizing mentorship frameworks to be more structured, feedback-driven, technologically integrated, and aligned with contemporary educational realities. Implementing these changes has the potential to significantly enhance preservice teachers' professional readiness and strengthen the overall quality of teacher education programs.

Ultimately, these findings underscore the urgency of reforming mentorship practices to create a more coherent, responsive, and effective system that not only prepares preservice teachers for immediate classroom challenges but also equips them with lifelong professional skills. By embracing structured feedback mechanisms, integrating technology, and standardizing mentoring practices, teacher education programs can ensure that preservice teachers are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to South Africa's education system.

6.12 Critical examination of how this research shifts current paradigms in the field

By drawing attention to the discrepancies between formal mentorship programs and the realities of classroom teaching, this study questions established methods of guiding aspiring educators. Traditional mentorship programs frequently function under the presumption that preservice teachers are adequately prepared for practical

application by theoretical preparation alone. However, the results of this study show that the contextual intricacies of varied teaching situations are not adequately addressed by a strict, one-size-fits-all mentoring paradigm. This necessitates a paradigm change toward mentorship techniques that are more responsive, flexible, and adaptive and that put practical application ahead of prescriptive advice. Additionally, rather than using a top-down, directive approach, the study expands the conversation about mentoring as a dynamic, interactive process. Preservice teachers are frequently left in a passive learning position by traditional mentorship models, which tend to position mentor lecturers and mentor instructors as authoritative information providers. However, this study emphasizes the value of collaborative mentoring, in which preservice teachers actively participate in the process of co-constructing their professional knowledge through practical learning, reflective practice, and iterative feedback. In doing so, it promotes a mentorship model that is more dialogical and participative, which is consistent with modern educational theories that place an emphasis on scaffolded, learner-centered growth.

By showing how digital technologies may improve feedback mechanisms, enable remote mentoring, and offer real-time, context-sensitive help, the study also addresses the underutilization of technology in mentoring.

The sparse use of technology in current mentorship models points to an antiquated dependence on in-person interactions, which isn't always in line with how teacher education is developing. This study reflects the needs of 21st-century education by supporting a mentorship framework that is digitally integrated and adds to a larger movement toward technology-enhanced teacher preparation.

By placing mentoring in a larger sociocultural and institutional framework, the study highlights that systemic support, policy alignment, and institutional commitment are necessary for effective mentoring and that individual mentors are not the only ones responsible for it. This contends that mentorship should be integrated into an ecosystem of professional learning communities, institutional collaboration, and systematic policy interventions, challenging the widely held beliefs that mentorship effectiveness is only based on the competencies of individual mentors.

By promoting a more comprehensive, adaptable, and digitally integrated mentoring

framework, this research promotes the field of teacher education by challenging these preconceptions. To better prepare preservice teachers for the complexity of modern classrooms, it advocates for a shift away from static, prescriptive mentorship and toward a dynamic, context-driven model. The quality of teacher preparation and professional development will ultimately be impacted by this contribution, which has important ramifications for how teacher education institutions plan, carry out, and evaluate mentorship programs.

6.13 Implications of the Findings

By emphasizing the significance of matching mentoring approaches with the contextual realities of teaching, this study has a substantial impact on pedagogical practices. It has been demonstrated that successful mentorship strikes a balance between academic understanding and real-world application, ensuring that preservice teachers are equipped to handle the challenges of the classroom. The study emphasizes that mentoring needs to take place in certain educational environments because it is fundamentally a social activity. One important conclusion is that the type of the mentoring framework and how well it fits the needs of the classroom have an impact on how effective mentoring is. As a result, the study promotes evidence-based changes like using interactive mentorship strategies and appreciating the unique qualities of every preservice teacher. These recommendations are meant to improve the overall standard of mentorship and better equip aspiring teachers for the demands of classroom instruction.

Preservice teachers must be successful, and this requires adjusting expectations in mentoring partnerships. Preservice teachers' growth and educational experiences are greatly impacted by the calibre of these mentoring connections, claims Mphojane (2019). It can be difficult for preservice teachers to adjust from a more one-on-one, supportive mentorship model to one with several mentors or a variety of pedagogical approaches if these approaches don't match their expectations and developmental requirements.

The results of the study align with Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which highlights the significance of customising mentoring techniques to the developmental stage at which preservice teachers are now at.

According to Vygotsky's theory, for mentoring to be effective, it must match the preservice teachers' developmental requirements with the right kind of support to foster their growth. To guarantee that mentoring approaches are successful in addressing the unique difficulties preservice teachers have, this alignment is crucial. Including Activity Theory in the research also adds more understanding of the dynamics of mentorship. Engestrom (1987) established Activity Theory, which looks at how people interact with and adjust to their social and learning situations. It emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend how preservice teachers engage with their mentors and the larger educational environment. Activity Theory states that the degree to which these exchanges and the surrounding environment meet the preservice teachers' demands for professional development and growth is what determines the success of mentoring.

According to the study, mentoring techniques must be participatory and sensitive to the developmental stages of aspiring teachers. Furthermore, to effectively handle transitional difficulties, mentoring frameworks need to be flexible, which may include experimenting with various mentoring models. To further promote preservice teachers' professional development and adaptation, mentoring methodologies and numbers should be adjusted to better suit their developmental stages and contextual needs.

6.13.1 Preservice Teacher-Pedagogy

The results of this study have significant ramifications for mentoring techniques when it comes to preservice teachers. Based on observations, individuals with more affluent backgrounds and familiarity with sophisticated instructional protocols may benefit from the fast-paced methodology frequently used in classroom settings. This circumstance draws attention to a discrepancy since many preservice teachers have varied socioeconomic backgrounds, affecting their preparedness for and capacity for adapting to various learning situations. To guarantee equitable support, Mphojane (2019) and Gravett & Cilliers (2022) stress that successful mentoring should take these varied origins and developmental requirements into account.

The study emphasizes how crucial it is to match mentoring strategies to the cognitive and developmental phases of preservice teachers. Mphojane (2019) highlights that for mentoring to effectively support preservice teachers' professional progress, it must

consider their varying preparedness levels. Gravett and Cilliers (2022) corroborate this, arguing that mentorship frameworks ought to be adaptable and sensitive to the unique requirements of preservice teachers, especially when it comes to adjusting to various teaching situations and resolving personal difficulties.

Several cutting-edge strategies were integrated into the new mentoring framework's execution to increase its efficacy. Plans for individualized mentoring were created, considering the special requirements, experiences, and stages of development of preservice teachers. This strategy made sure that objectives, available resources, and available channels of assistance matched each person's unique difficulties and assets. Using digital tools for virtual observations and real-time feedback, mentors and preservice teachers were able to communicate and assist one another better thanks to technology. A system of peer mentorship was instituted, whereby seasoned preservice teachers advise their more junior counterparts, thereby cultivating a cooperative learning atmosphere and offering supplementary assistance. To support continual progress, pedagogical tactics were modified to meet a variety of requirements and included with regular reflection and feedback procedures.

To make sure the framework remained up to date and dynamic, other features incorporated were evidence-based practices, collaborative learning communities, and workshops for professional development. These cutting-edge methods were created to meet the multifaceted requirements of preservice teachers and greatly improve their readiness for the teaching profession.

Overall, the findings highlight the necessity of flexible mentorship frameworks that consider the different developmental needs and preparation levels of preservice teachers. Mentoring can more effectively tackle the difficulties preservice teachers encounter and further their professional growth if mentoring procedures are customized to accommodate a range of backgrounds and cognitive abilities.

6.13.2 Policy

The study's policy implications highlight the necessity of completely reworking mentorship systems to provide preservice teachers with better support. To effectively meet a variety of demands, policies should concentrate on creating and implementing cutting-edge mentoring strategies, such as customized mentoring plans and

technologically advanced feedback systems. Mentors' professional development needs to be given top priority in order to make sure they are knowledgeable about the various histories of preservice teachers and have the newest methods at their disposal. To continuously improve mentoring practices, rules should also require thorough evaluation and feedback mechanisms and encourage adaptive mentoring methods that consider varying developmental stages and learning preferences. Mentoring frameworks can become more relevant and responsive when educational institutions and stakeholders collaborate, and adequate budget allocation is important to provide the required tools and support systems. Lastly, policies ought to prioritize evidence-based approaches to guarantee that mentoring tactics are supported by research and successfully aid in preparing aspiring teachers for the demands of the classroom.

6.14 Recommendations Drawn from The Results of the Study

The results of the study highlight how important it is to improve mentorship frameworks to provide preservice teachers with better support throughout their careers. One of the recommendations is to improve mentorship frameworks through the integration of diverse and adaptable teaching methodologies that accommodate different learning requirements and styles. More chances for professional development should be made available to preservice teachers so they can keep up with the latest pedagogical practices and trends in education. Co-teaching and joint planning sessions are two examples of collaborative teaching practices that must be used to give preservice teachers the opportunity to learn from and receive practical experience from experienced educators. Furthermore, mentoring programs ought to prioritize flexibility and reactivity, equipping aspiring educators to modify their approaches to suit the requirements of heterogeneous student bodies. Given the difficulties involved in making the move to become a teacher, mentorship programs ought to offer focused assistance with handling classroom dynamics and modifying pedagogical strategies for various educational settings.

Establishing regular evaluation and feedback methods is advised to increase the effectiveness of mentoring activities. This will allow for continual improvement based on current requirements and experiences. Strong professional ties can have a big impact on preservice teachers' confidence and development, thus mentoring

frameworks should also emphasize this. Incorporating cutting-edge strategies and technology into mentoring practices might also present fresh chances for interaction and education. The overall goal of these suggestions is to establish a strong and encouraging mentorship program that successfully equips aspiring teachers for rewarding careers in the teaching profession.

6.15 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study has several noteworthy advantages and disadvantages. Its thorough methodology, which combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to produce a well-rounded analysis of mentoring practices, is one of its strong points. Utilizing a variety of data sources, such as focus groups, observations, interviews, and document analysis, improves the findings' validity and dependability. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding, applied in this study, provide a strong theoretical framework that places the findings in the context of accepted educational theory. Furthermore, the study's actionable suggestions can be immediately implemented to enhance mentoring practices and offer insightful information about how to make mentoring frameworks more successful.

But there are also limitations on the study. Because the research was done inside the mentoring program of a specific university, it's possible that the conclusions can't be applied as broadly to other situations or establishments. Because of the small sample size and the restricted number of participants, the results may not be fully generalizable to a wide range of educational environments. The emphasis on learning environments might not take into consideration the differences in mentoring styles among various schools or areas. It is more difficult to evaluate the long-term effects of mentoring on the professional growth and advancement of preservice teachers in the absence of longitudinal data. Moreover, the study does not go into detail on how technology is used in mentoring practices, which is a topic that might yield more information. Finally, biases in self-reported data from focus groups and interviews could potentially compromise the validity of the results. Future research addressing these shortcomings may improve the study's conclusions' robustness and applicability.

6.16 Contributions

In conclusion, the study adds to the body of knowledge on mentoring methods from a theoretical and practical standpoint. It has contributed three noteworthy things: First, by concentrating on teacher-related characteristics rather than learner inadequacies, it offers a comprehensive understanding of the variations in pedagogical techniques between mentor lecturers and mentor instructors. This change in emphasis improves our understanding of how mentoring practices can help or impede the growth of preservice teachers. The study provides insights on the function of mentorship in teacher training, with a particular focus on the necessity of matching mentorship methods to preservice teachers' developmental needs. Thirdly, it contributes to the corpus of knowledge regarding the efficacy of mentorship frameworks, especially regarding higher education establishments.

The results of this study underscore the need for more research on the effects of mentoring methods on the performance and preparedness of preservice teachers in the classroom. It recommends that to make sure mentoring programs satisfy the goals of preservice teachers for professional development, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) think about assessing the efficacy and quality of mentoring programs. Furthermore, examining mentoring results in various educational contexts and contrasting them with those from establishments with less developed mentoring frameworks may yield insightful information. The results of this study highlight how mentoring can encourage creative teaching methods and lessen the pressures of entering the teaching field. In the end, it suggests reassessing mentorship strategies to support better teacher preparation and constructive modifications to instructional methods.

6.17 Direction for Future Research

Possible areas for further investigation include comparative studies analyzing various mentoring methodologies and their efficacy would be highly beneficial for future research on preservice teacher mentoring. A study comparing various mentorship models could be one way to go to determine which strategies best assist the professional development of preservice teachers. To find out which mentoring strategies produce the best results in terms of preservice teachers' professional

development and classroom preparedness could entail contrasting conventional mentoring with creative or technologically enhanced mentoring techniques.

The use of technology in mentoring could be a further subject of interest. Subsequent research endeavours could investigate the ways in which digital tools and platforms can be incorporated into mentoring practices to augment communication, feedback, and resource exchanges between preservice teachers and mentors.

Additionally, longitudinal studies should be considered to monitor the long-term effects of various mentoring strategies on the professional growth and efficacy of preservice teachers in the classroom. Mentoring frameworks can benefit greatly from an understanding of how early mentoring experiences affect long-term teaching outcomes.

6.18 Concluding Remarks

This study's main goal was to create, put into practice, and evaluate a mentoring framework that would improve the effectiveness of mentor lecturers and mentor instructors in assisting aspiring teachers. Based on the findings of Gravett and Cilliers (2022), the research explained how mentoring frameworks a substantial impact on preservice teachers' development by can have filling in gaps and improving the caliber of teacher preparation when they are well planned and implemented. The results confirm what Gravett and Cilliers (2022) have said, namely that mentoring strategies must be tailored to the developmental requirements of preservice teachers. Specifically, adaptive and responsive mentoring approaches are critical.

The contributions of this study are found in both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it unifies Activity Theory with Vygotsky's scaffolding notion to provide a sophisticated understanding of how mentoring might be set up to give preservice teachers the support they need within their zone of proximal development. By applying these theories, mentoring methods can better meet the developmental needs of preservice teachers and help them become more prepared for the teaching profession.

The study's conclusions support the adoption of a mentoring paradigm that is more adaptable and dynamic in practice. The available data indicates that mentorship programs ought to be customized to meet the unique needs of preservice teachers,

such as their requirement for more individualized assistance and the incorporation of cutting-edge techniques. This is in line with the advice given by Gravett and Cilliers (2022), who contend that to be effective, mentoring involves a thorough awareness of the mentee's situation and the capacity to modify methods as necessary.

The report also suggests several topics for additional investigation. To better help preservice teachers in a variety of educational environments, mentorship frameworks need to be enhanced. This will require further research and analysis. Furthermore, studies ought to concentrate on assessing the long-term effects of mentorship on the professional growth and efficacy of preservice teachers.

To summarise, the research offers an all-encompassing structure for augmenting the mentorship procedure, presenting theoretical and practical perspectives that are essential for strengthening teacher training. Educational institutions can create more fruitful mentoring relationships and better prepare preservice teachers for the demands of the teaching profession by addressing the gaps that have been discovered and putting the suggested techniques into practice.

As a PhD student, I have had a pleasant and hard path that has been characterized by a strong dedication to expanding my knowledge of mentorship and educational techniques. I accepted the demanding nature of research right on, devoting myself to thorough literature readings and experimenting with a range of approaches. I have had the opportunity to investigate the intricacies of teacher preparation in South Africa thanks to my work on creating a framework for mentorship that is sustainable for preservice teachers. Along the way, I have collaborated with mentors and peers, fostering enriching discussions that have shaped my perspective. This journey has not only enhanced my academic skills but also ignited a passion for contributing to the future of education. Each step has brought me closer to my goal of effecting meaningful change in the education field.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance from UFS (Qualitative data collection)



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

Registration Number: REC-112922-058

18-Jun-2024

Dear Ms Lindiwe Jiyane

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Developing a sustainable framework for preservice teachers' mentorship in a higher education institution in South Africa

Ethical Clearance number:

UFSHSD2023/2631

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during your study/research project be submitted via an Amendment on RIMS to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit a Final Report on RIMS for your study/research project to the ethics office once the project has concluded. Should you require more time than the allotted 12 months to complete this research, please apply for an extension by submitting a Continuation/Report on RIMS. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance. We wish you success with your research.

Yours

sincerely,

Dr Adri

Duplessis

Ethical clearance from UMP

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Research Office. C/o R40 & D725. Private Bag X11283. Riverside Mbombela South Africa 1200.

Website: www.ump.ac.za □ Tel: (013) 002 0482 □ Email: Elizabeth.Mahloko@ump.ac.za

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Ref: UFS/JiyaneLJN/ PhD in Early Childhood Development and Learning /2024/01 **Date:** 18 May 2024

Name of Principal Researcher: Lindiwe Juvile Nolutsha Jiyane

Name of Supervisor: Dr B Ndlovu

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA FOR THE STUDY:

Developing a sustainable framework for preservice teachers' mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa

Dear Prof Stroebel (DVC-RII)

Reference is made to the above application.

As Chair of the UMP Research Ethics Committee for Human and Social Sciences (REC-HSS), I recommend approval of the request to include UMP staff as part of the above-mentioned study.

This recommendation is subject to the following stipulations:

1. Any alteration/s to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation.
2. The applicant adheres to the UMP Code of Conduct for Research (see document attached).
3. If the applicant intends to publish any data obtained from this research study, he/she must apply again for ethical clearance. This ethical clearance only applies for conducting the research for degree purposes.
4. The name of the university should not be indicated. The university should be referred to as a Higher Education Institution in South Africa.
5. It is the researcher's responsibility to liaise with Ms Elizabeth Mahloko (Ethics Admin Officer: Research Office) to get access to students and/or staff to participate in the research.
6. The applicant adheres to the following research ethics principles:
 - No harm (physically or emotionally) to participants.
 - Participation should be voluntary. The participant has the freedom to decide whether he / she wants to participate in the research.
 - Researchers should at all times be faithful and not deceive participants or breach confidentiality.

- Participants have the right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them and what the risks and benefits are. The participants should then sign an informed consent form, which indicates that they understand what was said to them.
- Anonymity: The participants do not indicate their names on the questionnaires they have to complete. The researcher can therefore not link the participant to his / her responses.
- Participants must be given the assurance that they are free to discontinue their participation at any time without being required to offer an explanation.



DATE:

 18/05/2024
Prof. Estelle Boshoff

CHAIR: UMP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (REC-HSS)

Recommended	X	Amend		Not Recommended	
COMMENTS:					



DATE:

 22/05/2024
Prof Aldo Stroebe**DVC (RII): RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION**

Approved	X	Amend		Not Approved	
COMMENTS:					

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: 

Ethical clearance from MD



education

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ikhamanga Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga
Province

Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.

Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo
Departement van OndenNys Ndzawulo ya
Dyondzo

Lindiwe Jiyane

University of The Free State

Tell: 0713824753

E-mail: 2023762764@ufs41ife.ac.za

RE: "DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PRESERVICE
TEACHERS' MENTORSHIP IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH
AFRICA".

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your research project reads: "Developing A Sustainable Framework for Preservice

Teachers' Mentorship in A Higher Education Institution in South Africa, Schools in Mpumalanga Province". I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available



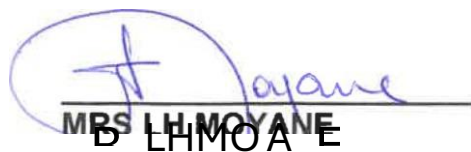
in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants and schools' regulations be observed. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments' annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5015 / 5124 Or

c.maphanga@mpuedu.gov.za

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.



MRS L. H. MOYANE

HEAD: EDUCATION

23/05/2024

DATE

MPUMALANGA THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN

APPENDIX B: Letter to the School Governing Body

University of Free State

Research Office: Ethics

Bloemfontein

Tel +27514012639

March 2024

The school governing body

Mavuba Primary School

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL

I am Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Philosophy student at the University of Free State.

I hereby seek permission to conduct research in your school. My research study topic is: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Preservice Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

Sir, may you kindly fill in the attached declaration and consent form which acknowledges the permission granted to undertake the study in your school. I also guarantee that the information gathered through research will only be used for the purposes of this research.

For further information on this research, you may contact my supervisor, Blanche Ndlovu, NdlovuBN@ufs.ac.za as well as Lindiwe Jiyane, 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za / 0713824753.

Your cooperation to this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

.....

DECLARATION

As the principal of the school Mavuba Primary School, I understand that I am not being forced to grant Lindiwe Jiyane the permission to undertake her research in my school.

.....

Signature

.....

Letter to school (Mavuba)**Letter to the school principal**

University of Free State

Research Office: Ethics

Bloemfontein

Tel +27514012639

March 2024

The principal

Mavuba Primary School

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL

I am Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Philosophy student at the University of Free State.

I hereby seek permission to conduct research in your school. My research study topic is: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Preservice Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

Sir, may you kindly fill in the attached declaration and consent form which acknowledges the permission granted to undertake the study in your school. I also guarantee that the information gathered through research will only be used for the purposes of this research.

For further information on this research, you may contact my supervisor, Blanche Ndlovu, NdlovuBN@ufs.ac.za as well as Lindiwe Jiyane, 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za / 0713824753.

Your cooperation to this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

.....

DECLARATION

As the principal of the school Mavuba Primary School, I understand that I am not being forced to grant Lindiwe Jiyane the permission to undertake her research in my school.

.....

Signature

.....

APPENDIX C: Consent letters for MT

Letter to the research-participants mentor teachers/lecturers

University of Free State

Research Office: Ethics

Bloemfontein

Tel +27514012639

April 2024

Dear Participant/Mentor Teacher/Lecturer

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

My name is Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Early Childhood student at the University of Free State.

I hereby seek permission from you to be part of my study. My research study topic is: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Pre-service Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

If you kindly agree to participate in this study, the following will occur:

- Each participant/mentor teacher/lecturer will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview, this interview will take place at the time convenient for each participant.
- Each participant/ mentor teacher/lecturer will be observed whilst teaching Mathematics in the classroom, which could take 20-30 minutes.
- I will also ask to see each participant's file / journal that includes all the documents mentor teachers use during mentoring sessions.
- Lastly, I would like to see the work done by the preservice student teachers after the classroom observations and presentations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. I will not reveal any participants names (anonymity). As I have given your school a pseudo-name, I will also give participants a code name to protect you and your school. The audiotapes from the semi-structured interviews will be transcribed and summarised for this study using those code-names. All this information from this research will be kept safe by the University for about five years for purposes of publishing journal articles in accredited journals before they are discarded. I will come back with the transcript to verify exactly the things you said and the way you said them whilst giving you an opportunity to suggest changes if there any. Remember that participation in this study is free and voluntary, you are allowed to withdraw at any time you feel you no longer want to participate in the study. A letter of consent will be given to you to append your signature.

For further information on this research, you may contact my supervisor, Blanche Ndlovu, NdlovuBN@ufs.ac.za as well as Lindiwe Jiyane, 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za / 0713824753.

Your cooperation to this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Consent letter to ML

Letter to the research-participants mentor teachers/lecturers

University of Free State

Research Office: Ethics

Bloemfontein

Tel +27514012639

April 2024

Dear Participant/Mentor Teacher/Lecturer

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

My name is Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Early Childhood student at the University of Free State.

I hereby seek permission from you to be part of my study. My research study topic is: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Pre-service Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

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- I will also ask to see each participant's file / journal that includes all the documents mentor teachers use during mentoring sessions.
- Lastly, I would like to see the work done by the preservice student teachers after the classroom observations and presentations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. I will not reveal any participants names (anonymity). As I have given your school a pseudo-name, I will also give participants a code name to protect you and your school. The audiotapes from the semi-structured interviews will be transcribed and summarised for this study using those code-names. All this information from this research will be kept safe by the University for about five years for purposes of publishing journal articles in accredited journals before they are discarded. I will come back with the transcript to verify exactly the things you said and the way you said them whilst giving you an opportunity to suggest changes if there any. Remember that participation in this study is free and voluntary, you are allowed to withdraw at any time you feel you no longer want to participate in the study. A letter of consent will be given to you to append your signature.

For further information on this research, you may contact my supervisor, Blanche Ndlovu, NdlovuBN@ufs.ac.za as well as Lindiwe Jiyane, 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za / 0713824753.

Your cooperation to this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Consent letter to PT

Letter to the research-participants- preservice student teachers

University of Free State

Research Office: Ethics

Bloemfontein

Tel +27514012639

April 2024

Dear Participant/Preservice student teachers

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

My name is Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Philosophy student at the University of Free State.

I hereby seek permission from you to be part of my study. My research study topic is: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Pre-service Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

If you kindly agree to participate in this study, the following will occur:

- Each participant/ preservice student teacher will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview, this interview will take place at the time convenient for each participant.
- Each participant/preservice student teacher will be observed whilst having mentoring sessions, which could take 20-30 minutes.
- I will also ask to see each participant's file / journal that includes all the documents preservice student teacher use during mentoring sessions.
- Lastly, I would like to see the work done by the preservice student teachers after the classroom observations and presentations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. I will not reveal any participants names. As I have given your school a pseudo-name, I will also give you a code name to protect you and your school. The audiotapes from the semi-structured interviews will be transcribed and summarised for this study using those code-names. All this information from this research will be kept safe by the University for about five years then discarded. I will come back with the transcript to verify exactly the things you said and the way you said them whilst giving you an opportunity to suggest changes if there any. Remember that participation in this study is free and voluntary, you are allowed to withdraw at any time you feel you no longer want to participate in the study. A letter of consent will be given to you to append your signature.

For further information on this research, you may contact my supervisor, Blanche Ndlovu, NdlovuBN@ufs.ac.za as well as Lindiwe Jiyane, 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za / 0713824753.

Your cooperation to this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

.....

CONSENT FORM/LETTER FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

I..... agree to take part in the research study topic: "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Pre-service Teachers' Mentorship in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa." done by Lindiwe Jiyane a Doctor of Philosophy student at the University of Free State.

APPENDIX D: Invitation Letter to PT

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research on Pre-service Teacher Mentorship

Dear Third year students,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Lindiwe Jiyane a doctoral student at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. I am currently conducting research on developing a sustainable framework for pre-service teacher mentorship within higher education institutions, particularly focusing on South Africa's context.

I am excited to invite you to participate in this important research initiative as a third-year pre-service teacher. Your insights and experiences are invaluable in shaping the framework and enhancing mentorship opportunities for future educators.

The purpose of our research is to:

Explore the current mentorship experiences of pre-service teachers in South Africa.

Identify challenges and opportunities in the existing mentorship programs.

Develop recommendations for a sustainable mentorship framework that aligns with the needs of pre-service teachers and supports their professional development.

Your participation in this research will involve:

Participating in a focus group discussion, where you will have the opportunity to share your perspectives and insights on pre-service teacher mentorship.

Completing a brief questionnaire to gather information about the proposed mentorship framework.

Providing feedback on the proposed framework for mentorship in higher education institutions.

Your involvement will not only contribute to advancing our understanding of pre-service teacher mentorship but also empower future educators to thrive in their professional journey.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions about the research, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za or 0713824753. Your participation will be strictly confidential, and all data collected will be used for research purposes only.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of this invitation and look forward to your valuable contribution to our research endeavors.

Warm regards,

Lindiwe Jiyane

Doctoral student at UFS

University of Free State

2023762764@ufs4life.ac.za/0713824753

APPENDIX E: Interview Schedule

Q1: What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution?

- What is your understanding of a mentoring framework?
- Have you ever used a mentoring framework for mentoring preservice students? If yes, what was your experience like?
- How do you assist the student teachers in linking the content knowledge to practical knowledge?
- In which areas of the teaching practice do you support the experienced classroom mentors?
- How do you relate with the preservice teachers during teaching practice?
- How often do you engage with the preservice teachers during teaching practice?

Q2: How effective is the framework used in the development of preservice students during teaching practice?

- What specific components of the framework have you found to be most beneficial in the preservice teachers teaching practice?
- In your view what needs to be improved during the mentoring sessions?
- What is not working in the way that you conduct mentoring sessions?
- Do you think that mentees benefit from the mentoring sessions?

Q3: What are the challenges experienced by mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions?

- Mention the challenges that you meet when conducting mentoring sessions?
- Mentoring sessions may sometimes reveal gaps in the mentee's knowledge or skills. How do you address these gaps sensitively and constructively?
- Reflecting on your experiences as a mentor, what do you consider to be the most significant challenges you face, and how do you continuously work to overcome them?

Q4: What are the needs of mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions?

- What skills and knowledge do you expect the student teachers to acquire from the teaching practice?
- What are you perceiving as experiences from preservice teachers during teaching practice?
- How important are the experiences that student teachers acquire through teaching practice?
- What do you think are your roles in teaching practice experiences of preservice teachers?
- What do you think is expected of you from each placement of preservice teachers for teaching practice?
- What are the impacts of those experiences in qualifying the preservice teachers to teach/ and become professionals?

Q 5 How is the framework for mentoring preservice designed, implemented, and assessed?

- What factors were considered when designing the framework that you use?
- How are mentors selected and trained to support preservice teachers effectively?
- What steps are involved in implementing the mentoring framework for preservice teachers?
- How does the framework address the needs and challenges of preservice teachers?
- Can you discuss any challenges encountered during the implementation process and how they were addressed?

Q6 What is the impact of the mentoring framework on preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

- How do you assess the effectiveness of the mentoring framework for preservice teachers?

- What criteria or indicators are used to evaluate the outcomes of the mentoring process?
- Do you collect any data from your mentoring sessions? If yes, what type of data do you collect?
- Can you describe any data collection methods or instruments used for assessment purposes?
- How does the data collected inform the design of the mentorship framework?
- Have there been any adjustments or improvements made to the framework based on assessment findings?

APPENDIX F: Observation Tool

Mentorship Observation Tool (Before the newly developed mentoring framework)

Date: [Date of Observation]

Observer: [Name of Observer]

1. General Information:

Observer's Name: [Name of Observer]

Date of Observation: [Date]

Location: [Where the mentorship interaction took place]

Participants: [Names and roles of individuals involved]

2. Contextual Information:

Program/Subject: [Name of the program or subject being taught]

Objective of Mentorship Session: [Purpose of the mentorship interaction]

Duration of Observation: [Length of time observed]

3. Mentorship Interaction:

A. Mentor's Behaviours:

Active Listening: [Scale: 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent]

Providing Constructive Feedback: [Scale: 1-5]

Encouraging Reflection: [Scale: 1-5]

Demonstrating Supportiveness: [Scale: 1-5]

Facilitating Goal Setting: [Scale: 1-5]

B. Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviours:

Engagement Level: [Scale: 1-5]

Receptiveness to Feedback: [Scale: 1-5]

Ability to Reflect: [Scale: 1-5]

Initiative in Setting Goals: [Scale: 1-5]

Demonstration of Growth/Improvement: [Scale: 1-5]

4. Observations and Notes:

[Detailed notes on specific behaviours, interactions, challenges, or successes observed during the mentorship session]

5. Strengths:

[Identify strengths observed in the mentorship interaction]

6. Areas for Improvement:

[Identify areas where improvement or additional support may be needed]

7. Overall Assessment:

Effectiveness of Mentorship Interaction: [Scale: 1-5, with 1 being ineffective and 5 being highly effective]

Recommendations for Follow-Up: [Suggestions for future mentorship sessions or actions]

8. Additional Comments:

[Any additional comments or insights regarding the mentorship interaction]

APPENDIX G : Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MENTOR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is invaluable for assessing the effectiveness of our mentoring framework for preservice teachers. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions honestly and thoughtfully. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Section 1: Demographic Information

What is your role in the mentoring program? (Please select one)

Preservice Teacher

Mentor Teacher

Program Coordinator/Administrator

Other (please specify)

.....

How many years of experience do you have in education?

.....

.....

What subject or grade level do you primarily teach or mentor?

.....

.....

.....

Section 2: Perceptions of the Mentoring Framework

How would you rate the clarity of the mentoring framework's objectives and expectations currently used? (Select one)

Very clear

Clear

Neutral

Unclear

Very unclear

To what extent do you feel that the mentoring framework has supported your professional growth and development? (Select one)

Strongly supported.

Supported

Neutral

Not supported

Strongly not supported.

What aspects of the mentoring framework do you find most beneficial? (Open-ended)

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.....

Section 3: Impact on Teaching Practices

How has participation in the mentoring program influenced your teaching practices?

Significantly improved.

Improved

No significant change

Declined

I don't know/Not applicable.

Can you provide specific examples of how the mentoring framework has influenced your teaching strategies or classroom management techniques? (Open-ended)

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Section 4: Impact on Preservice Student Teachers Learning

In your opinion, how has the mentoring program impacted preservice student teachers learning outcomes in your classroom?

Improved significantly.

Improved

No significant change

Declined

I don't know/Not applicable.

Have you noticed any changes in preservice student teachers' engagement since participating in the mentoring program? Please explain. (Open-ended)

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Section 5: Overall Satisfaction and Recommendations

On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with the mentoring framework overall? (1 being very dissatisfied, 10 being very satisfied)

.....

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.....

What suggestions or recommendations do you have for improving the mentoring program in the future? (Open-ended)

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.....

Conclusion:

Thank you for completing this survey. Your feedback will help us enhance the effectiveness of our mentoring framework for preservice teachers. If you have any additional comments or concerns, please feel free to share them below.

APPENDIX H: Editing Letter



To Whom It May Concern

Rinnie Matlou: (BA Social Sciences, UL; Certificate in Advanced Proofreading and Editing Training, TA; Editing principles and practice UP; Certificate in Computer Literacy, WITS

Re: Language & Technical Editing

This letter serves to inform you that the Doctoral thesis for Ms Lindiwe JN Jiyane, title **“DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PRESERVICE TEACHERS’ MENTORSHIP IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA”**, was technically edited, formatted, and the language was edited for clarity and accuracy.

Regard
Rinnie Matlou

26 February 2025

APPENDIX I: Permission letter from school

Mavuba Primary School

Siyabuswa

0001

April 2024

Ms LJN Jiyane

University of the Free State

Dear Ms Jiyane

Subject: Permission to Conduct Research

We are pleased to inform you that Mavuba Primary School grants you permission to conduct your research titled "Developing a Sustainable Framework for Preservice Teachers' Mentorship in the Foundation Phase at a Higher Education Institution in South Africa."

We acknowledge the importance of your study in enhancing the mentoring framework for preservice teachers and appreciate your commitment to improving educational practices.

Please ensure that you comply with all ethical guidelines and protocols, particularly regarding participant consent and confidentiality. We expect you to communicate openly with our staff and maintain a collaborative relationship throughout your research process.

If you require any further assistance or resources, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We wish you all the best in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,

Mr CS Mhlanga

Principal

Mavuba Primary School

APPENDIX J: Turn It in Report



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Developing a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase teaching practice students at a higher education institution in South Africa

Jiyane Lindiwe

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to design, implement, and assess a mentoring program that is sustainable and may improve the teaching practices of preservice teachers in a South African higher education institution during the Foundation phase.

By concentrating on the topics to be discussed, this chapter serves as an introduction and background to the research. The study's goals and overall purpose are emphasized in this chapter. Additionally, the research questions emphasized.

The operational idea description and the preliminary literature review is emphasized as well. The study's research methods and ethical considerations are highlighted.

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Developing a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase teaching practice students at a higher education institution in South Africa

" Jiyane Lindiwe CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION The purpose of this study is to design , implement, and assess a mentoring program that is sustainable and may improve the teaching practices of preservice teachers in a South African higher education institution during the Foundation phase. By concentrating on the topics to be discussed, this chapter serves as an introduction and background to the research. The study's goals and overall purpose are emphasized in this chapter. Additionally, the research questions emphasized. The operational idea description and the preliminary literature review is emphasized as well. The study's research methods and ethical considerations are highlighted. Lastly, a synopsis of each chapter and the chapter's conclusion are given. 1.1 Background to the Study Globally, pre-service teacher education is a hot topic (Mentz et al., 2020). The following measures are taken in Finland to guarantee the production of well-prepared

pre-service teachers into the teaching profession : ? Creating strict requirements for enrolment in programs that prepare teachers ? Make sure pre-service teachers have adequate subject-matter expertise before assigning them to the classroom. ? Make practice teaching programs explicitly address the instructional adjustments needed to meet university and career readiness standards. Asserting responsibility for the caliber of mentors produced by the Faculty of Education (Mentz et al., 2020). In South Africa, universities or teacher training institutions are responsible for preparing students for the Foundation phase of education. A four-year

Bachelor of preparation (B.Ed.) degree is one of the foundation phase teacher preparation programs offered by institutions. Pre-service

teachers visit schools as part of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) to

watch and provide multiple lessons that have been agreed upon with mentor teachers, who also serve as mentors to the students. According to Ambrosetti, Knight, and Dekkers (2018), a pre-service teacher is a student pursuing an education degree but not yet certified to teach. Pre-service teachers are defined by the researcher as university students who are undergoing training as part of this study. Since the early 1990s, South Africa's teacher training programs have experienced "frequent transformation and change" (Fraser, 2018). The prerequisites for teacher education qualifications were standardized by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Republic of South Africa (RSA), in 2015, following the merger of regional teacher training colleges and universities (Jansen, 2002). The above is also supported by the study (Mentz et al., 2020) that looked at the expanded divergent possibilities due to information access and educational programs. Fraser, Wotring, Green, and Eady (2022) claim that the WIL period has an impact on pre-service teachers' readiness for the teaching profession. During the WIL period, university lecturers oversee mentoring and evaluating pre-service teachers in addition to the mentor teachers. Many students are forced to finish WIL in schools because of the present surge in the number of student teachers at universities (Fraser, 2018). According to Fraser (2018) and Fraser et al. (2022), the increased numbers of students requiring accommodations have an equal impact on mentor instructors at schools where pre-service teachers participate in teaching practice activities. WIL is described as "structured, supervised, integrated into the learning program, spread across the learning program, and it must be formally assessed" (DHET, RSA, 2015) in the Revised policy on the basic standards for teacher education credentials. With very few possibilities for self-regulated learning or mentoring, pre-service teachers are now prepared for the workplace through the conventional benchmark of "monitoring and supervision" (Fraser, 2018). The issue of teacher development has been identified as a significant barrier to the South African education system (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Most of this obstacle is related to the competences and abilities that teachers need to carry out their jobs. It has been established that the

"most critical challenge for teacher education in South Africa" is the limited conceptual knowledge of many instructors (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Unbearably high learner dropout rates, persistent inequality, and poor teaching quality are the bane of the South African education system (SACE, 2018). A few of the issues surrounding the low caliber of teachers can be traced back to their pre-service education. It is clear from the above that there are issues with the competence and caliber of instructors generated by the South African educational system. There is a claim that certain educators lack the ability to apply their academic knowledge to the demands of the modern classroom (Botha & Rens, 2018). According to a South African study by Botha and Rens (2018), student instructors go through a reality check when they realize they are not prepared to deal with students in the classroom without losing their positive teaching attitude. The study's findings indicate that teachers' ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships with their pupils is severely hampered by problems with classroom management, motivation, pedagogical application, and a lack of understanding of education (Botha & Rens, 2018). According to Jita and Munje (2022), some student instructors are not prepared to teach because they do not possess the pedagogical subject knowledge that is required; this has a significant impact on the success of students. Similarly, Jiyane and Gravett (2019) discovered that student instructors had issues with classroom management and pedagogical expertise. These results suggest that student teachers are not prepared to face the realities of a classroom setting. Pre-service teachers can be effectively groomed by in-service/mentor teachers in a real-world classroom setting when mentoring is an essential part of work-based placement. Mentz et al. (2020) contend that a crucial part of pre-service teacher education is teaching practice. There is a knowledge gap about pre-service teacher development through mentoring, as evidenced by the evaluated studies (Jita and Munje, 2022; Mentz et al., 2020; Jiyane and Gravett, 2019; Ndebele and Leff-Jack, 2022; Botha and Rens, 2018; Mphojane, 2019). The research under evaluation focused on final-year student teachers (Jiyane & Gravett, 2019), foundation phase teachers (Mafugu, 2022), and student teachers (Botha & Rens, 2018). To increase the confidence of subject mentors and pre-service teachers alike, a doctoral study on the preparedness of pre-service teachers to teach third year level student teachers (Mkhasibe, 2018) found that the higher education institution must review the pre-service teachers' curriculum and include the partner schools in the redesign process. A PhD project led by Mphojane (2019) sought to create a structure for formal mentoring of new teachers that works well. The results

indicated that a mandatory mentoring program outlining the protocols was required. The results additionally indicated that a mentorship program had to cater to the requirements of mentees and incorporate details about laws, policies, and norms pertaining to teachers, along with recommendations for a teacher's clothes and appearance. In KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) carried out research on successful mentoring. The study's conclusions demonstrated that not all pre-service teachers

received adequate mentoring throughout their teaching

practice with the aim of preparing them for full professional development in the future. The research demonstrates that a lack of understanding of what mentoring involves leads to inadequate mentoring. Additionally emphasized is the value of mentorship in the development of preservice teachers. I have not come across any study that employs a mentoring framework, which offers a set of standards and principles to help

with the learning process during the mentoring sessions between

preservice teachers and mentor teachers during teaching practice. In their study on effective mentoring, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) proposed that a mentoring framework or seminars be designed so that all mentor teachers know what is expected of them during teaching practice. The results of the previous study indicate that for mentoring to be successful, a mentoring framework is necessary. By designing, implementing, and putting into practice a mentoring framework targeted at

the development of pre-service teachers at a South African university ,

this research seeks to close the gap regarding the needs of

mentor teachers and preservice teachers in a rural context. Numerous studies have demonstrated that student teachers' teaching skills significantly improve because of their teaching experience (Mukeredzi, 2021 and Galamay-Cachola, 2018). Internationally, an American study on English

as a Foreign Language and pre-service teachers' pedagogical competency based on an instructional strategy was carried out by Sumani and Arifin (2018). The study's findings demonstrated the pre-service teachers' proficiency in group and individual instruction, classroom management, instructional flexibility, and assessment. But they were not questioned or given support. In a Kuwaiti study, Al-Hashem (2022) examined the effects of teacher preparation programs on aspiring educators. The outcome demonstrated that they were more self-aware and confident in their skills and knowledge because of the training. Regarding teacher practice programs, a Turkish study by Kacar and Baltaci (2023) discovered that pre-service teacher programs significantly improved pre-service teachers' English proficiency. The state oversees teacher education. Pre-service education loses its intended purpose if the state fails to fulfill this obligation (Adigun, 2021). For example, Nigerian institutions claim in Albakri et al. (2021) that their schools of education oversee their teacher education programs, which has led to the low caliber of graduate teachers being produced in the continent of Africa. According to the authors, there are controversial questions regarding the quality of training being offered by

such faculties in light of the low number of teachers being produced (Albakri et al., 2021). The author (Albakri et al., 2021) is unsure if the lecturers, who carry out the program, are the problem or the curriculum itself. The authors also question if education faculties are appropriately in charge of teacher education programs to prepare and create highly qualified teachers (Albakri et al., 2021). The studies conducted in Malawi by Adigun (2021) and Nigeria by Albakri (2021) shed light on a few of the factors that contribute to the low caliber of instructors that are produced by certain universities. They draw

attention to the fact that not all pre-service teachers choose to

become teachers. Since the stringent standards for such jobs have prevented them from pursuing their ideal careers, they have chosen to become teachers. 1.2 Problem Statement There appears to be an issue with the way mentor teachers conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice. When preservice teachers are mentored in their teaching practice, they are also faced with hurdles. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers demonstrate an inadequate understanding of the standards set for them during instructional practice. According to Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), mentoring is an excellent way to introduce preservice teachers to the teaching area, but only if a framework is devised and executed during mentoring sessions. Teachers in the foundation phase are considered agents of social transformation since they are crucial to the process of constructing a nation (Menz & Associates, 2020). Finding qualified educators who have received the necessary training to address the changing demands and problems of the developing nation is a priority in South Africa (SACE, 2018).

It follows that there is a need for pre-service teachers to be properly

mentored because there is a gap between theory and practice. Several studies have identified obstacles facing student teachers, including those pertaining to educational expertise, classroom and time management, as

well as administrative chores (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). The

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) (2003) states that student teachers

are tasked with a variety of novel responsibilities, such as mastering new curricula and managing classroom management, technology, customizing courses for students, organizing extracurricular activities, and maintaining accountability to the different education stakeholders. It is evident from the research mentioned above that mentorship is thus crucial. The framework supported collaborative learning and was co-created by mentor teachers and preservice teachers. The framework is used to guide mentoring sessions. According to Mphojane (2019), mentoring sessions have the potential to improve preservice teachers holistically; however, this requires a mentoring program. 1.3 Rationale for the Study The suggested

study's original justification stemmed from the researcher's interaction

and informal conversations with a few Foundation phase mentor teachers she met during teaching practice at partnering schools. During these conversations, mentor teachers indicate that they were frustrated and faced uncertainty about how to conduct mentoring with foundation phase

student teachers. In addition, the researcher encountered Foundation phase student teachers who attended teaching practice at the same partnering schools who voiced their frustrations about not knowing what to expect during teaching practice mentoring. Based on these encounters the

researcher started investigating the literature available in this regard

but soon realized that although there was literature available on this topic, there was a lack of literature that was conducted with an aim of addressing gaps in practice, structure, support, mentee learning, and developing a context-specific mentoring framework that will provide guidance to the Foundation phase mentor teachers and student teachers. According to the claims, there is a need and a chance for a mentorship structure to be created. This project intends to fill the gap by designing, implementing, and evaluating a mentorship framework that is sustainable for

Foundation phase pre-service teachers and improves their teaching

practices in a South African higher education institution . 1.4 The

Study's Objective The proposed study aims to design, implement, and assess a mentorship framework that is sustainable for pre-service teachers in the Foundation phase. 1.4.1 Specific Objectives Following from

the primary objective of the research study are the following research objectives: ? To explore the mentoring framework of Foundation phase preservice teachers that is used in the selected Higher Education Institution. ? To determine the issues with the current mentoring framework in developing Foundation phase preservice teachers. ? To explore the specific challenges of Foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers on teaching practice. ? To explore the specific needs of Foundation phase preservice teachers, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers on teaching practice. ? To explore how a newly developed mentoring framework can be effectively implemented to determine the factors that enable the response to be effective and sustainable in a selected higher

education institution. ? To determine the impact of the mentoring

framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice? 1.5 Main Research Question The study was

led by the following primary research question , which considers the demands of mentor teachers and student teachers throughout the Foundation phase during teaching practice: How is a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed? Sub-Research Questions ? What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution? ? How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice? ? What are the challenges experienced by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? ? What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions? ? How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed? ? What is the impact of the mentoring framework on Foundation

phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice? 1.6 Scope of the Study This study aims to design and implement a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers during teaching practice. The concept of mentoring is not new; however, it has become an important means of developing an individual (Rusznyak, 2021). Mentoring is often used to support individuals as they make transitions at key moments in their educational and career journeys and as they prepare to enter the world of work (Deacon, 2020; Krause and Moore, 2022). For graduate students, mentoring aims to contribute to their academic, professional, and personal development (Mafugu, 2022). A mentoring program can also help Foundation phase preservice teachers develop a wider network through engagement with alumni and industry practitioners (Jackson and Bridgstock, 2020). Indeed, engaging in effective mentoring relationships is often put forward as a reason why individuals have been well-prepared for their careers and made positive strides early on (Sellers et al., 2021). Because of this, mentor teachers in the Foundation phase and preservice teachers must be knowledgeable about mentoring and appreciate its benefits. It is crucial to consider the expectations of mentor teachers and

preservice teachers during teaching practice , as this study

investigates and creates a mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers. The following are deemed significant characteristics of

such mentor teachers . Gonser (2022) highlights the four mentor qualities that are important: communicating hope and enthusiasm, being skilled at providing instructional support, modelling continuous learning, committed to the role of mentoring. The literature (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022; Mphojane, 2019, and Mkhasimbe, 2018) shown that preservice

teachers and mentor teachers struggle to comprehend the necessary mentoring structure and subject expertise to discuss effective mentoring. These are crucial questions to answer to identify the pertinent mentoring techniques that this study will investigate. 1.7 Significance (Value) of the Study The aim of the project is to further national and international discussions on mentoring strategies for preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the Foundation phase during their teaching practice. Numerous research studies (Mukeredzi, 2022; Ambrosetti, 2019) have been carried out to investigate why mentorship programs fail to adequately

prepare preservice teachers for the workforce. According to

Ambrosetti (2019), the key to productive mentoring sessions is having the right mentor. Nonetheless, the education system faces difficulties in locating the right mentor teacher who can close the knowledge gap between

theory and practice. This study contributes to: ? the improvement of the quality of mentoring sessions, and practices of the teaching

practice program at HEIs. ? Ensuring that mentoring sessions are delivered through a sustainable mentoring framework. 1.8 Definition of Operational Concepts Figure 1.1: Illustration by Ronel Jordaan, Lorrie Maffey (2018) This section explains the main ideas that were employed in the

research. Given that a given term may mean different things to different individuals in different settings, the goal of doing this is to provide the reader with precise meanings as well as a clear understanding of the concepts. Because a clearer and deeper knowledge of concepts is provided before diving into the next chapters, misconceptions and misinterpretations of concepts have been explained in this way. The order in which the topics are explained emphasize the significance of correlation, connectivity, and interlinking. Mentor teachers, pre-service teachers, mentoring, mentoring program/framework, teaching practice, and Foundation phase are among the topics that have been clarified. For clarity, understanding, and alignment with the study, the following topics are discussed. 1.8.1 Mentoring The process of mentoring involves the mentor outlining for the mentee the professional values, abilities, and information that the mentee must possess to display competence in their work (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Thus, mentoring occurs when a more seasoned colleague takes on the task of molding and enhancing a less seasoned colleague's disposition and skill set regarding the tasks they are given. A mentor is an in-service teacher who

takes on the role of guiding and supporting a student teacher to help them achieve both professional and personal growth. Mentoring is a popular and extensively used professional development strategy, according

to Pennanen et al. (2020). Liaqat et al. (2020), who claim that

mentoring has recently been accepted in several

organizations as an authorized procedure and an essential

component of professionalization in a variety of academic fields, including the social sciences, education, law, and architecture, among others

, support this point of view. Indigenous knowledge, as it pertains to this study, defines mentoring as an essential component of teaching practice that makes space for student teachers to receive successful mentorship from in-service teachers in a real classroom or school setting. 1.8.2 Mentor Teacher Mentor teachers are educators with significant experience in the field who can motivate students to perform well, conduct lessons in an excellent manner without interfering, and alter their plans mid-lesson to capitalize on unanticipated opportunities to improve students' learning (Ndebele and Legg-Jack, 2022). Mentor teachers can take on the role of team leader when creating lesson plans, selecting instructional materials, maintaining control, and providing planning guidance (Wexler, 2019). According to Mafugu's (2022) conceptualization, experienced teachers in this study are those who

have been in the system for a long time and therefore know the ins and outs of teaching; they are skilled at upholding appropriate learner discipline, lesson planning, content knowledge, and its application. Indigenous knowledge defines mentor teachers as individuals who have been teaching for more than three years and have substantial and relevant job experience, based on the descriptions provided and for the objectives of this study. Because they are subject matter experts and possess a thorough understanding of the material, they also assist in the creation and revision of curriculum programs. Mentor instructors maintain order and serve as supervisors, motivators, leaders, and space keepers. The average school

performance and the professional well-being of student teachers are mostly dependent on the professional and personal assistance provided by mentor teachers. 1.8.3 Mentees as Pre-Service Teachers A college or university student pursuing a degree in education who works as a pre-service teacher is one who teaches under the direction of a certified teacher. Additionally, pre-service teachers and this word are used interchangeably. A student who completes coursework and training offered by higher education institutions before to beginning any kind of teaching is known as a pre-service teacher

(Png, 2020). According to Hudson and Hudson (2021) and

Mukeredzi and Manwa (2019), a pre-service teacher is a student who is

enrolled in a school to build pedagogical knowledge and other traits and practices. Indigenous knowledge, as it pertains to this study, defines a student teacher as an individual who is not yet certified to teach but is still undergoing training. They are placed in a school and paired with a mentor teacher who will help them develop their pedagogical knowledge, classroom management skills, and teaching practices. 1.8.4 Mentoring Program/Framework Figure 1.2: Illustration by Jim Rohn (2020) A well-thought-out plan outlining the execution of mentoring in accordance with the established professional objectives is called a mentoring program. The program has the full backing of the entire institution and is an official professional activity. The organization establishes a framework and sets rules that specify how mentoring relationships should develop from start to finish as well as how they should be preserved and enhanced (Allen and Eby, 2021). The official organizational mentoring program frequently aims to solve certain organizational problems or needs, including student teacher development. A formal program often has defined short- and long-term goals, together with the necessary capital and human resources to help achieve the goals (Rodrigues, Matos, de Carvalho, Barbosa, Assaf, Nóbrega, and de Sousa, 2021). In addition to providing participants with support, an official mentorship program is monitored continuously to guarantee that the desired results are attained. The purpose of mentoring programs is to give employees more direction and advice than what their management chain can supply (Cardoso, 2021). Indigenous knowledge, as used in this study, refers to a mentoring program as a framework that schools utilize to determine how best to support student teachers so they can perform at their best. 1.8.5 Teaching Practice According to Work Integrated Learning, teaching practice is a practical technique in which pre-service teachers work in the

field to demonstrate the application of the theoretical knowledge they have learned in the classroom. A vital component of teacher preparation programs, according to Harrison, Meyer, Rawstorne, Razee, Chitkara, Mears, and Balasooriya (2022), is this activity. According to Deacon (2020), teaching practice is an opportunity for pre-service teachers

to participate in a process of learning about the philosophies, techniques, abilities, and attitudes of professional instructors through observation and experimentation. Pre-service teacher education must include teaching experience, claim Lederman and Lederman (2019). In support of this, Baartman (2020) contended that this strategy gives pre-service

teachers the chance to apply theory to practice to

acquire the abilities and proficiencies needed to work as instructors. Indigenous knowledge, as used in this study, defines teaching practice as an experience that student instructors have with actual classroom and school procedures. It is the setting in which students are given the chance to put pedagogy into practice, honing both their content knowledge and teaching abilities. 1.8.6 Foundation Phase Early Childhood Development (ECD) or the Foundation Phase (FP) is the period of a child's learning and

development from birth to approximately nine years of age. During this time, the child develops and flourishes on a variety of levels, including social, moral, emotional, mental, and spiritual (South Africa, Department of

Education [DoE] 2001b). For teachers working with students in this

age range, continuing professional development is essential to making the most of this crucial period in a child's development. A kid's brain grows to 90% of its adult weight by the age of five, according to the ECD South

African White Paper 5 (DoE 2001b: 8), and it has reached 50% of its adult weight by the time the child is two years old. It is reasonable to speculate that a child's growing brain mass has a direct bearing on how well

it functions. Because of this, Kunniyah-Ruttu (2020) asserts that the FP

is essential for building a solid foundation for kids' future

growth and education. Children are especially prepared to learn during this time (Govender and Hugo, 2018). Such opportunities for learning readiness must not be wasted, as one of the goals of education is not to

impart knowledge from pre- selected course studies, but rather to

foster a child's innate desire to learn through the application of

diverse approaches, activities, content, and resources (Montessori 1966

). Teachers' professional development often results in these qualities to deeply engage children, support the development of their creativity, and aid

in understanding. The mentor teachers investigated in this inquiry are

qualified FP teachers employed in specific schools in the

Mpumalanga (MP) Province of South Africa . The sample of

preservice teachers investigated consists of students pursuing their

Bachelor of Education in the Foundation phase. Early Childhood

Education specialists in the Education faculty make up the sample mentor lecturers under investigation. By looking into them, it is possible to examine topics that are related to the larger discussions about mentoring of

preservice teachers in the Foundation phase. It became necessary to concentrate local efforts in this regard since the phenomena of preservice teachers mentoring has gained international attention. Due to philosophical orientations, presumptions, and sample size limitations, these samples do

not fully represent all FP mentor teachers , preservice teachers, and

mentor lecturers ; however, they do represent mentor teachers ,

preservice teachers, and mentor lecturers who engage in mentoring in FP contexts. By concentrating on the Foundation Phase environment, this study aims to highlight the potential and challenges in this field and emphasizes the need for specialized mentorship framework to assist future educators in their development throughout this crucial educational period.

1.9 Preliminary literature review 1.9.1 Introduction A literature

review can help determine whether a subject or problem is worthwhile to investigate further and can offer guidance on how to focus the researcher's efforts on a particular area of study (Creswell, 2017). A literature review, according to Creswell (2017), offers a framework for judging a study's relevance and serves as a benchmark for comparing

study findings. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from the

literature sources examined for this study will serve as a basis for the discussions that follow, with certain situations involving comparisons. To

make an informed decision about policy, practice, research

direction, and resource allocation, a literature review is a process of

obtaining up-to-date information (Wong, 2021). It comprises conducting a critical analysis and synthesis of earlier research to find out what has been written about a certain topic (Wong, 2021). The reader will understand from the review process's output the present level of knowledge regarding a particular topic as well as the advantages and disadvantages of

the underlying research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, it offers a framework for judging the study's importance and a benchmark for

contrasting the results with those of other studies (Creswell, 2017). To obtain a thorough understanding, an examination of recent texts, articles, and other sources was conducted. Conceptualization Greek mythology is where the term "mentoring" first appeared (Bynum, 2015). In the 3000-year-old Homer's *Odyssey*, a mentor is a figure who is portrayed as a wise and devoted advisor tasked with caring for *Odyssey's* son

Telemachus during the Trojan War. This mentorship archetype

highlights the significance of positive relationships. Nonetheless, the mentoring process has evolved over time (Nju, 2023) from enlisting the help of an experienced individual to guide a younger person through their path to a more mutually beneficial connection between the

mentor and the mentee. The term "mentoring" describes difficult interactions between two persons when the novice party's development is the primary goal (Carrera, 2022). It entails sharing information, best practices, skills, and methods for obtaining data. A mentor is a person who supervises another person's education and upbringing and is currently thought to be able to help the mentee advance their career (Mafugu, 2022). Mentoring is defined as a form of assistance provided by one individual to another to accomplish a specific goal throughout time (Jita and Munje, 2022). Additionally, it is recognized as a method by which leaders establish fruitful connections to empower others via cooperative learning (Venktaramana et al., 2023). According to the definitions provided,

mentorship is a relationship between two individuals in which the more experienced party is committed to assisting the less experienced party in developing their career. Mentoring is defined as a reciprocal interaction between mentor instructors and pre-service student teachers

during teaching practice for the purposes of this study . 1.9.2 Mentoring and Its Purpose This study contextualizes mentoring specifically

for pre-service student teachers and mentor teachers , focusing on

how mentoring affects their growth while they work as teachers. By offering personal and professional support, development, and well-being

to a less experienced pre-service student teacher in preparation for the teaching profession in a school setting, mentoring is defined as a process or activity that fosters an ongoing interdependent

relationship between the two parties (Voskamp et al., 2020). Without a collaborative inquiry between more seasoned in-service teachers and less seasoned pre-service teachers to explore cutting edge ideas for teaching practice, mentoring cannot occur (Walter & Verner, 2019). Pre-service teachers' lived experiences are frequently influenced by their sense of self and the professional goals of in-service educators, who can share their insights with less experienced future educators regarding the dynamic nature

of education (Ekiz- Kiran et al., 2021). Pre-service student teachers'

sense of self and their professional growth are not limited to their interactions with mentors and other staff members; rather, they are intricately linked to the school's educational ethos and the federal education mandate (Walter and Verner, 2019). Therefore, during their teaching

practice, pre-service teachers should be able to go from self -

identity to development within the framework of the larger environment. Without appropriate mentorship from seasoned in-service educators who have encountered every scenario encountered in the teaching profession, both inside and outside of the classroom, they will not be able to

accomplish this. 1.9.3 Advantages of Mentoring Formal mentoring programs are widely regarded as a viable strategy for pre-service student teachers as well as mentor teachers, based on the literature in South Africa (Hinojosa, 2022). The management of educational institutions, departments, and schools will benefit greatly from this discovery. Role participants should be aware that the system that enables pre-service student teachers to collaborate with seasoned mentor teachers will benefit not only the mentee but also the education department and the entire school community (Nel and Ramsaroop, 2020). When pre-service teachers are paired with more experienced mentor instructors, their confidence levels rise. According to (Gudyanga and Jita, 2019), mentors may experience personal fulfillment, companionship, professional stimulation, collaboration, drive to stay current in their industry, and networking opportunities. Hinojosa (2022) adds that mentors can learn from the novices' use of other technical tools they bring with them. They learn about modern instructional practices and acquire fresh perspectives. Mentoring programs are also advantageous to seasoned professors who advance their careers through the position. It nudges individuals to reevaluate their habits and convictions. 1.9.4 The Mentees and Mentor-Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities In teacher education, mentoring is defined by Moosa and Rembach (2020) as complex social connections

that mentor teachers and student teachers develop and negotiate for a

range of professional reasons and in reaction to the contextual factors they experience. Mentoring is also referred to as both a relationship and a process (Kaur, Singh and Omar, 2018) and as "an intense interpersonal relationship" (Prasangani, 2019). However, Hudson and Hudson (2018) provide a summary of mentoring by highlighting three components: relational, developmental, and contextual characteristics that when combined form a holistic mentoring relationship. The relational

component focuses on the interactions between mentors and mentees.

The developmental component is the personal and professional development of mentors and mentees as they work toward set goals. The contextual component's emphasis is on the cultural and situational aspects of the placement environment. These three elements influence a mentoring relationship's success, according to Venktaramana et al. (2023). She continues, saying that each of the three components has equal importance. According to the literature, mentoring is helpful to both mentors and mentees, despite its complexity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Saidi, 2020). Increased practice reflection, professional development, contribution to the profession, and sharing the craft with future teachers are all advantages of mentoring pre-service teachers (Hudson and Hudson, 2018; Prasangani, 2019). The advantages for mentees include learning about specific professional abilities, exchanging professional experiences, receiving helpful criticism on their professional development, and establishing reflective habits (Kaur, Singh, and Omar, 2018). Mentoring has historically been seen as a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor has more experience than the mentee, according to (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020;

Navidinia et al., 2020; Omar and Kussin, 2017; WagiAlla, 2020;

Yamirudeng and Osman, 2019). Nonetheless, current research

indicates that mentoring is a relationship in which the mentee and the mentor both have something to learn and contribute (Albakri, Ismail, Hartono, and Tahir, 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). It is common to describe the roles of mentors and mentees in general terms. According to Sathappan and Gurusamy (2019), terms like guide, advisor, counsellor, teacher, sharer, supporter, and encouraging are often used to describe the role of a mentor. However, mentoring entails more responsibility. As to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), a mentor's role is to facilitate the mentee's growth by building a rapport. In addition, mentors use their interpersonal skills to model conduct and pedagogy for teachers and to demonstrate empathy for the mentee (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). 1.9.5 The Mentor

Teacher's Role in the Pre-Service Teacher's Overall Development The

failure of in-service teachers to mentor pre-service teachers in a

way that fosters their mentees' holistic development impedes their achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In this article, "holistic development" refers to mentoring that fosters mastery of the subject matter as well as the development of personal adaptability skills in a variety of contexts. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), the majority of in-service instructors lack the pedagogical topic understanding and interpersonal skills necessary to help their mentees endure the challenging situational setting. Some mentors do not develop into the pillars of strength that are constantly present to impart hope, optimism, and lessons for life when pre-service teachers are depressed, perplexed, and doubting themselves (Comparcini et al., 2020). According to Walter & Verner (2019),

mentor teachers play a crucial role in mentees' personal and

professional development, which extends beyond pedagogical and subject-matter expertise to encompass emotional and psychological benefits. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), mentor instructors who provide

guidance and advice on pedagogic topics, such as planning,

teaching skills, knowledge and organization of content and resources,

and classroom management, will ensure that pre-service teachers have

guaranteed emotional and psychological gains. According to Ekiz-Kiran et al. (2021), mentorship becomes unsatisfactory if the mentors do not model behaviour for their mentees and if there is a lack of empathy in the relationship. Mentors need to be aware of the impact they have on mentees. Three aspects of mentoring person-oriented, practice-oriented, and technique-oriented skills are shown by research by Liu, Chan, Hamilton, and Harris (2022). Mentor teachers typically overlook the personal aspect and prioritize practice- and technology-oriented methods that develop teaching abilities, interpersonal relationships, and job competitiveness (Liu, Chan, Hamilton, and Harris, 2022). The pre-service teachers are thereby left emotionally and psychologically exposed. As a result, mentors ought to think about employing mentoring strategies that emphasize their mentees' overall

growth. 1.9.6 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: South African Studies

Despite the lack of institutional mentorship for pre-service teachers in

South Africa, the significance of this practice has been brought to light by several recent research studies (Deacon, 2020). Schools currently rely on IQMS for the professional development of both novice and seasoned instructors. Support for inexperienced teachers is typically started by the district or the school governing body (SGB), according to Deacon (2020). Hinojosa (2022) highlights that in situations where schools use SGBs to give mentoring and induction, the SGBs raise money for these kinds of programs. Because they are still unable to get the necessities, other schools especially those in impoverished areas are unable to support their new instructors. In both African and foreign nations, pre-service teachers must receive formal mentoring; this will improve the quality of education in schools. Different countries employ different levels and techniques of mentoring. It is evident from this contrast of African and international nations that few have started formally offering mentorship. In most of the mentioned nations, formal mentorship is organized and managed at the district level. Based on the

needs of the school and the areas in which the teachers need to grow, the SMTs and SGBs implement it at the school level at their discretion. It is evident from examining the mentoring practices of the nations that are emphasized that pre-service teacher mentorship takes many different forms and happens at different speeds. Additionally, there is a disparity amongst schools in the same regions of the nation. Most mentoring initiatives are unfunded and unplanned. Since there are no clear guidelines on how to go about it, mentors act on impulse, which means that pre-service teachers' particular needs are rarely met. 1.9.7 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: African Studies Very few nations in Africa have started offering official mentorship (Mukeredzi, 2021). Some pre-service teachers are allocated to in-service training to advance professionally. Carvalho and Santos (2021) state that in nations like Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, and Namibia, pre-service teachers receive some kind of orientation and induction to the field. For instance, staff members from teacher training institutions monitor pre-

service teachers' progress in their schools, or pre-service teachers

are expected to visit schools and receive assistance from inspectors and supervisors. Moreover, business experts support aspiring educators by planning and providing in-service education (Shanyengana, 2023). As per Maundeni and Kahaka (2022), Botswana is devoid of a formal mentorship program to assist newly hired educators. Most of the classroom experience is spent in TP, and although mentoring is important to preservice teachers, there is no document that explains to class teachers what their expected obligations as mentor teachers are. However, the mentor's experiences with the preservice teachers have a long-lasting effect on their attitudes and views on the teaching profession (Ndhlovu, Nkhata, Chipindi, Kalinde, Kaluba, Malama, Mambwe, 2021). In Botswana, teachers serve a two-year probationary period. Rebecca and Musisi (2022) contend that this is a disorganized process since there is no oversight and decisions are made

based on the needs of the school and the School Management Team's discretion. Ghana has not implemented a clear mentoring program for pre-service teachers, as have most developing nations (Buckler, 2020).

Stutchbury, Buckler, Kasule, Cullen, and Kaije (2021); Matiba (2023). in agreement that Ghana does not have a formalized or structured mentorship program for novice or inexperienced teachers. They continue by stating that in certain other developing nations, like Ghana, the process of introducing pre-service teachers consists mostly of trying out various approaches and picking up lessons from failures until an answer is found. Effective mentorship programs are therefore necessary to support pre-service teachers and raise teacher retention rates in the field. 1.9.8 Mentoring of Pre-Service Teachers: International Studies Formal mentoring programs have not been widely implemented, especially in developing nations, even though mentoring is crucial for helping pre-service teachers make it through their first year of teaching (Bjorklund et al., 2020). This also includes South Africa. However, in industrialized nations, other than the US. Recognizing the value of formal mentoring of pre-service teachers, the United States of

America (USA), the United Kingdom, Australia, and other nations like Switzerland, France, New Zealand, Japan, and China have established well-funded, well-supervised mentorship programs that support all pre-service teachers for a minimum of three years. Pre-service teachers in New Zealand receive their first year of instruction as an extension of their first training. This is what Kenrick (2019) refers to as the collegiate education. The New Zealand Teachers Council (2020) states that at least two years of classroom experience are required before a teacher can be eligible to be registered. Pre-service teachers receive instructional resources and guidance during their first two years of teaching. and are also observed by academics with expertise. In Australia, most schools volunteer to mentor newly hired teachers. Education authorities have their own set of guidelines and protocols for acclimating recently qualified educators to the field. Unfortunately, due to major differences in the goals of application and new teacher support, these policies are not being appropriately implemented across Australia (Kurti, 2023). In Australia, especially in rural and isolated locations, school principals have the authority to design and operate institution-based mentorship programs, and websites related to these programs are the primary source of support for aspiring teachers (James, Hudson, and Lascik, 2022). There is a clear need for recently qualified teachers to be placed in remote and metropolitan regions. Research carried out in Kosovo by Nopriyeni et al. (2019) showed the need of providing a mentorship strategy, especially to help prospective teachers improve their pedagogical skills. The least common mentoring element utilized by mentors was system requirements mentoring, per (Albakri et al., 2021; Munijita, 2021; Virtič et al., 2021). This implies that many final-year pre-service

teachers may not have been aware of the objectives, curricula, or policies related to elementary education before beginning their careers. Studies highlight the issues and challenges surrounding mentor feedback in the teaching practicum now. (Beck & Butz, 2021; Byars-Winston et al., 2019) 1.9.9 Theoretical Framework Social learning theories of Vygotsky serve as the foundation for this study. The expert other must eventually accompany the novice on the journey until assistance is no longer needed and the novice can complete tasks as best they can on their own, according to Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory. Collaborative learning, or social learning, refers to methods applied by individuals who want to solve a shared issue. It emphasizes social learning, or learning from one another, which takes place in a group environment (Geddes, 2016). Theories of social

learning explain how people learn, including novice teachers. 1.9.10
 Vygotsky Social Learning Theory Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–

1934) developed the Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which defined learning as a social process that is essential to the growth of cognition.

According to Vygotsky, everything is decided upon twice: first, through social contact, and secondly, it is assimilated into the mental

structure of the individual. SCT (Vygotsky, 1986) holds that people acquire increasingly complex cognitive capacities through language and communication. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that education is a social program supported by some people who possess greater knowledge and expertise. Mafugu (2022) claims that the zone of proximal development

(ZPD) concept and Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist viewpoint may both be used to explain the relationship between mentors and their mentees. Zone of Proximal Development According to Gudyanga (2020), mentoring is based on Vygotsky's (1978) idea of learning by construction, wherein a highly qualified instructor (mentor) supports the expert-level learning of a mentee (mentee) through scaffolding. According to Mafugu (2022), Vygotsky's social interactions change the way that learning occurs because of the way that experiences from day-to-day life influence the knowledge that is gradually acquired through interactions with mentors. Mentors and mentees should collaborate to help the mentees with planning, teaching, and observing. According to Vygotskian theory, knowledge production originates from social interaction between experienced and beginner individuals rather than solely from the mind (Gudyanga, 2020). The

mentor teachers at the participating schools are seen in this

study as the more experienced individuals who teach preservice teachers. Scaffolding Figure 1.3: Illustration of mentees in practice and mentor breaking down skills (Manderson, 2018) Preservice student instructors face a challenging task in connecting pre-service education theory to real-world classroom activities. Scaffolding is necessary because this is an upsetting and complicated process. Sharma (2020) defines scaffolding as the process by which educators go above and beyond to ensure that students' progress academically because of the subjects they are taught and the resources they are provided to learn them. Preservice student teachers need to be guided in crossing the line by someone with more experience and the ability to socialize them into the work environment because they are inexperienced and need help adjusting to a new environment. This is especially true when they don't fully understand the rules or the new situation. According to Pattisson (2020), scaffolding is a makeshift framework used figuratively during building projects since it offers temporary assistance for students' educational needs. In the context of education, scaffolding is assistance that is customized to the needs of the students (Sharma, 2020). Accordingly, scaffolding is a method where students obtain assistance from a qualified teacher who then progressively removes that assistance, just as scaffolding is removed after the project is finished. In this study, the preservice student teacher is anticipated to be mentored by a more experienced and skilled teacher until the mentee can manage independently without the mentor teacher's help. The social constructivism

theory of Vygotsky is used to analyze data, especially with regard to socially created knowledge. The zone of proximal development offers the researcher a chance to assess the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' degree of mentoring proficiency. The goal of the project is to create a sustainable mentoring framework using the knowledge of mentor teachers and preservice teachers' mentoring skills level. The primary research question, "What are the key components and strategies needed to develop a sustainable mentoring framework that effectively supports teaching practice of preservice teachers in a higher education institution?" is addressed by the mentor teachers and the preservice teachers' level of mentoring skills. The researcher is able to identify the elements and tactics required for creating a mentoring framework once they are aware of the mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' level of mentoring proficiency. Preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers can push their mentoring abilities to the limit and learn from the researcher's advice and assistance.

Throughout the research process, feedback and reflection are made possible by the zone of proximal development. This makes it easier for the researcher to comprehend the advancements made by preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers and point out areas that still want assistance. The instrument utilized to support the learning process and scaffold their learning within the zone of proximal development is the mentoring framework that has been designed.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Introduction

This section offers a comprehensive summary of the research methodology employed in this investigation. The constructivist paradigm, which contends that knowledge is socially created, is used in this study. The researcher used the mixed method approach. Given that the goal of the study is to create and execute a mentorship framework, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data offers the greatest chance to address research issues by integrating two sets of advantages and correcting for the shortcomings of each approach (Creswell and Clarke, 2018). We'll use the explanatory sequential design. The intervention was selected as the research type because it allowed for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform. Numerical statistics yielded quantifiable and comprehensible facts through the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; and Creswell & Clarke, 2018) The intended research methods for this study are introduced in this part. These methods include sample strategies,

data collection, data processing, and data verification techniques. 1.10.2 Research Paradigm Assumptions made at the outset of the study must align with the approach, techniques for collecting data, and analysis used (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). According to Coates (2021), a paradigm is a worldview, or a framework for understanding and interpreting the complexity of the outside world. Guba (2018) and Lincoln (2018) define a paradigm as a set of attitudes and convictions about the world and how it ought to be comprehended and investigated. Philosophical presumptions concerning the nature of truth or reality regarding a phenomenon (ontology), the attitude or stance of the researchers in comprehending that truth or reality (epistemology), and the values that the researchers may attach to the entire study process (axiology) all inform a paradigm. These include positivism, pragmatism, critical realism, participative, and post-positivism (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I have opted to use the pragmatic paradigm for this study. This sociological study easily fits into the pragmatism paradigm because its goal is to create a mentoring framework for pre-service teachers while they are in the classroom. The paradigm of pragmatism encourages researchers to gather data that supports the rational creation of the reality in which study participants are situated (Wilkinson & Staley, 2019). The pragmatic paradigm, according to Dawadi (2020), is based on the notion that reality is the outcome of interactions between people and the outside world. It is based on the idea that as people interact with their natural surroundings, they are actively creating new information. To attain effective outcomes, this paradigm promotes experimentation, flexibility, and change based on the observed results. It disproves the idea that knowledge can only be produced through a single process and that several approaches must be taken to it. I chose this study paradigm because it allows me to collect detailed data on the day-to-day interactions that preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers have when they utilized mentoring as a teaching approach in the classroom. I gave practical effectiveness priority while creating a mentoring framework based on the pragmatic paradigm, considering the following pragmatist principles as stated by Sharma, Devi, and Kumari (2018): Flexibility and adaptation: as the researcher I allowed flexibility when designing the mentoring framework by recognizing that mentees, mentor teacher and mentor lecturers have unique needs and learning styles. This allowed adaptation of the mentorship framework as the mentees, mentor teachers as well as mentor lecturers' progress. Action-orientation approach: The researcher encourages tangible actions and application of knowledge. Mentees, mentor teachers and mentor lecturers emphasize practical application of skills in their daily encounters to ensure that mentorship has a tangible impact. Learn from experience: The researcher can leverage past experiences within the mentorship by allowing the mentor teachers and mentor lecturers to share practical insights and lessons learned. Iterative development: The mentorship is viewed as an iterative process. The framework may be improved and modified by the researcher in response to the changing requirements of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and mentees. By incorporating these principles, the researcher has the opportunity of creating a mentoring framework that aligns with the pragmatist paradigm, emphasizing practicality, adaptability and a focus on achieving tangible outcomes in real world. 1.10.3 Research Approach According to Tashakori, Johnson, and Teddlie (2021), the study's mixed methodology suggests that it enables the researcher to expand their investigation to a suitable depth and scope. For this reason, a mixed-methods strategy, which balances the shortcomings of each method, has the

best chance of addressing research issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are integrated and combined into a single study using mixed methods research. To learn more about a phenomenon and find answers to research questions, it comprises obtaining and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Maree, 2020). Combining the two approaches yields a more comprehensive picture and permits a wider range of opposing or complementary points of view. These are valuable perspectives because they not only encourage further thought and deepen our comprehension of a phenomenon, but they also pave the way for more research in the future (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Additionally, the results of mixed-methods research offer a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as well as additional insights into its various components, which can help create meaningful theories (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). Stated differently, the goal of qualitative research is to understand, analyze, and provide an explanation for specific phenomena by means of the experiences and/or perspectives of the participants, especially in relation to areas of educational theory and practice. As stated by Creswell & Clarke (2018) and Maree (2020), mixed method research aims to compare the outcomes of one methodology with the other, increase the breadth of the information acquired, and boost the validity of the study findings. The development of a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers throughout their teaching practice was the focus of this study's research. The study explained the events that occurred inside the participants' native context—a rural higher education institution—using the qualitative approach. To better comprehend and capture the significance that participants attach to the phenomenon under research, the behaviour and experiences of the participants were recorded as the occurrences took place. The utilization of quantitative technique expanded the scope of the investigation by helping the researcher collect data from several sources regarding different aspects of a phenomena. 1.10.4 Design of the Study According to Van Wyk & Taole (2021), the research design is the road map that directs a researcher in choosing how to conduct their study strategy. As such, it was an exact description of how a researcher did their work. To make sure that the study's conclusions adequately answer the research questions, research designs are plans for connecting the data to be gathered, the data to be analysed, and the research questions. (2020, Babbie). The type of research topic under investigation, the target audience for the study, and the specific objectives of the research project all influence the research design, in my opinion. Sequential design with

exploration is the design used. A constructivist technique is used in a three-phase study known as an exploratory sequential design. In the first step, a researcher conducted a thorough investigation of the issue; in the second part, the variable and statistical trend are identified and measured (Creswell

& Plano Clark, 2018). According to this design , testing and

collection of quantitative data come after the analysis and gathering of qualitative data (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Dawadi, 2020). The

first step in this strategy is the gathering and examination of qualitative data. Finally, a researcher quantitatively evaluates the variable they have

identified and interprets the quantitative data in terms of how it

generalizes and extends the qualitative findings (Creswell and Plano

Clark, 2018). These steps build on the qualitative findings and lead to the development of quantitative measures or instruments

(Maree, 2020). The exploratory sequential design is helpful when

the researcher and the research topic are more qualitatively

oriented and when the researcher is interested in the transferability

or generalizability of the phenomena (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Researchers claim that this architecture enables the construction of a new instrument at any point during the study process (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The proposed study's objective is to create, put into practice, and evaluate a mentoring program for pre-service teachers that will improve

their teaching practices in a South African higher education institution.

Using a staged strategy, the study will utilize the exploratory

sequential design. The gathering and analysis of qualitative data

comes first in this design, followed by that of quantitative

data . This is how the study was carried out: Phase of Qualitative Analysis: Structured interviews with purposively selected participants would

be used to gather data. The analysis of qualitative data was done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis. Phase of Quantitative Analysis: Using the prepared questionnaire, the variable found in the phase of qualitative analysis was assessed quantitatively. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends and linkages. The mentorship framework in this study is developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it is objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings. Research Type An intervention study is used in this

investigation. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are

being used to gather data on the HEI's mentorship program. Interventions can be investigated using both quantitative and qualitative

research methods, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). This study, which is an instrumental intervention study, use triangulated mixed methods to concentrate on gaining a comprehensive picture of how much mentoring is done during teaching practice by preservice teachers and mentor teachers. The intervention type was selected because it allows for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform. To investigate the causal relationship between mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers, a questionnaire derived from the qualitative findings is created by the researcher. Additionally, it offers a chance to comprehend how the mentoring framework affects the participants. In this study the intervention is employed by introducing the newly developed mentoring framework which is developed through the participants needs which is identified through the interviews. The mentoring framework is implemented during mentoring sessions that take place between mentees and mentor teachers and between mentor lecturers and mentees. A questionnaire is developed and given to the participants, so that the researcher can gauge the impact of the mentoring framework. Numerical statistics yield measurable and comprehensible data using quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). 1.10.5 Study Site The environmental context in which the study is conducted, and the data is gathered is known as the research setting (Yin, 2018; Maree, 2020). The research environment was chosen to be HEI in South Africa and a few public schools that collaborated with HEI on instructional initiatives. 1.10.6 Participant Selection The process of choosing participants from a whole population is known as a sampling technique, which is what this study aims to investigate (Maree, 2020). Purposive sampling must be used in order to pick the participants for the

teaching practice program due to the nature of the research project.

Purposive sampling is a suitable technique for qualitative research because it enables the researcher to select individuals who are both easily accessible and possess pertinent data. Lewin (2019) states that purposeful sampling comprises selecting people, groups, or institutions (like schools) who possess a wealth of knowledge that may be utilized to solve the research questions. Participants are chosen carefully and thoughtfully, with the process taking place in the HEI. Purposive sampling is used in order to include the mentor instructors as participants. Twenty preservice teachers, or third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree, five

mentor lecturers in the field of early childhood development, and five

mentor teachers in the Foundation phase are included in the

sample. Students pursuing a Bachelor of Education in Foundation phase

, currently in their third year of study, comprise the twenty preservice teachers. To find the right subjects, the researcher sent an email outlining

the goal of the study and extending an invitation to those who are interested in taking part to third-year B.Ed. Foundation phase students. Because they take part in several mentoring sessions with preservice teachers, the mentor teachers are chosen because they possess the greatest amount of information. Consequently, it was anticipated that they have amassed significant knowledge that might be converted into relevant data. Because they follow course and module outlines, the mentor lecturers are included. Due in large part to their curriculum methods emphasizing subject integration, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. The informal encounters that resulted in observations that these five mentor lecturers would provide the most valuable data are what make them the most knowledgeable. They showed that they owned a great deal of mentoring information that they were willing to share. Year three preservice teachers at the research site are allocated to

mentor lecturers and mentor teachers , who are responsible for

evaluating them, therefore quantitative data from them is gathered. The study questions that aim to gauge the effectiveness of the mentorship framework that has been put in place is addressed with quantitative data.

The respondents are selected by stratified sampling . Using stratified

sampling, a sampling approach, the population is divided into subgroups or strata according to attributes that are pertinent to the study. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Maree, 2020). Therefore, preservice teachers, mentor

lecturers, and mentor teachers who are participating in

teaching practice at the higher institution are welcome to participate in the inquiry of this study. The participants are categorized into strata according to attributes including the mentees' experience level with mentor professors, the mentor lecturers' mentoring skills, and the mentees' status as third-year students pursuing the B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Using stratified sampling, five mentor lecturers—out of a possible ten mentor lecturers—are assigned to third-year preservice teachers, who are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Out of the fifteen partner schools where preservice teachers participate in teaching practice, five mentor teachers are involved.

1.10.7 Instruments for Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected using measuring

tools and descriptive information-gathering techniques that are typical of exploratory research. After authorization has been given, information will be gathered for data collecting. Additionally, it entails choosing the data recording method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative Data Collection

The project utilizes qualitative data collection methods such as

document analysis, structured interviews, and mentoring session observations. The mentor instructors and mentor lecturers provide feedback to the participants as part of their observations in practice. The Theoretical Framework—Vygotsky's social constructivist theory— which established the framework for this research project and attempted to address the research issue, serve as the basis for the selection of questions for the semi-

structured interviews. To address the research sub-questions and

achieve the study's objectives, a carefully crafted set of interview questions are used to determine the extent to which constructivist mentoring tactics are implemented. These questions highlight important strategies for

mentoring preservice teachers during their teaching practice , and their

substance is based on a thorough review of the research. As a result, the information identified in the reviewed literature serve as the basis for the questions measuring the degree of mentoring expertise and knowledge. 1.10.8 Semi-Structured Interviews The interview follows a semi-structured format. Data gathering is the main reason for using interviews in research, and in this instance, doing semi-structured interviews requires a lot of resources. The participants are interviewed one-on-one and in focus groups. Interviews with mentor teachers and mentees take place through focus groups. Mentor lecturers are interviewed one-on-one. We use a mix of semi-structured interviews, which allow for extensive responses and

questioning on many elements of mentoring, and open-ended interview

questions , which allow for the investigation of issues from the

participants' viewpoints. I am able to ask pre-planned follow-up questions throughout the semi-structured interviews; many of these questions are based on the responses from each participant. Every comment made by a participant is carefully examined. Semi-structured interviews, according to Creswell & Clarke (2018), make it possible to collect

unstructured, first-hand information by watching people at a research

location. He continues by saying that close attention to visual

details is necessary for observation. My goal is to gain a deeper comprehension of the mentor teacher's viewpoint regarding their duty. Interviewing is a technique for learning more about people's experiences and the significance they place on them, claim Creswell & Creswell (2018). Therefore, in addition to being friendly and non-threatening, the interview questions are made to answer the goal of my research (Yin, 2018). Focus groups are used to interview the mentees and mentor teachers for this study, and mentor lecturers are interviewed individually. 1.10.9 Observations To watch what and how mentors and mentees conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice, observation was selected as the study's methodology. Direct observation will take place in the schools' classrooms and at any time the participants get together, like during teaching practice mentorship sessions. The researcher reviews existing research documents, minutes of participant meetings, materials created for the participants, and documents about mentoring. Using an exploratory approach, the second stage of the study entails creating a new tool called the mentorship framework with the intention of expanding on the understandings obtained from the qualitative results. Participants interact with this new tool during mentoring sessions to assess its efficacy. To answer the study questions centered on the effects of the created framework,

quantitative data collection is necessary. The study attempts to expand on the qualitative findings and give a more thorough understanding of the mentoring framework's possible ramifications by collecting quantitative data. This enables insights into how the mentoring framework effects different outcomes. Finding out how well participants apply the developed framework and expanding on the qualitative findings are the goals of employing observations. 1.10.10 Document Analysis Documentary evidence is one of the methods or strategies for data production that will be used in this investigation. Documentary evidence is essential to give further data for triangulation because research cannot be only dependent on the statements of research participants. This method is important since it offers data that would have been hard to come by otherwise. Records of events, actions, and procedures made by people or organizations are referred to as documentary evidence (Maree, 2020). Many documents govern instruction and are necessary for implementing policies in higher education institutions (Cohen, 2021). Journals, a teaching practice study guide, mentee portfolios, a mentoring brochure, the Department of Higher Education, and training

standards on teaching practice are used as documentary evidence in this study. The ensuing materials serve as manuals for instructive activities: Cohen's (2021) guide to teaching practice, Minimum Requirements

for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), was released in

2015 by the Department Of Higher Education in South Africa. I concentrated on document analysis for data analysis because I want to see if the mentor's written reflections can reveal anything about how she views her function as a mentor and the manner in which mentoring sessions are run. Quantitative data collection The respondents, who are preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers, filled out closed-ended questionnaires to provide quantitative data. The questionnaire is said to be the greatest instrument since it can gather data quickly and with little bias, preserving the validity and reliability of the research tool (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The forthcoming chapters will contain more information on the mentorship structure that this study creates. The respondent must supply personal information without revealing their identify in the mentorship framework's first component, known as "Section A." Statements intended to provoke replies is included in the second portion, titled "Section B," to gauge preservice teachers' level of familiarity with mentoring and teaching techniques. Statements that determine the degree to which a respondent would have developed pro-mentoring attitudes are found in the third section, referred to as "Section C." A thorough proofreading is done on the mentorship structure that is created for this investigation. A pretest on the mentoring framework is required of a carefully chosen candidate. A member

of the academic staff at the school administered this pre-test to get clarification on certain phrasing, spelling, and grammar issues as well as to solicit suggestions for potential instrument enhancements and corrections. All the mentorship framework's sections have closed-ended questions with predefined answers for respondents to select from. The closed-ended questions are scaled, but the values on each response scale is not disclosed. 1.10.11 Data Trustworthiness Measures of trustworthiness In research, reliability is defined as the accuracy with which the results match the data that was gathered, as well as the integrity and application of the selected

methodologies (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Statistics Solutions, 2020). The (UFS)Research Ethics Code of Conduct's ethical guidelines will serve as the foundation for these techniques (UFS, 2019). The ways that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies offer assessments of trustworthiness varies. Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), trustworthiness in qualitative research is characterized by factors such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. ?

Credibility Credibility, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018), is the degree of confidence that is put in the accuracy of research findings to guarantee that the conclusions represent legitimate data that is correctly deduced from the data that was first collected from the study area. This study concentrated on a few of the issues brought up in the literature that indicated areas of knowledge that required further investigation. In this study, appropriate questions were formulated with the help of the evaluated literature to elicit appropriate answers. ? **Transferability** How successfully the results of qualitative research may be used in different contexts is referred to as transferability (Maree, 2020). To ensure that the study findings are elaborated and corroborated in a way that makes the combined results applicable in other contexts, an exploratory sequential design was selected. This allows for a thorough analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data

from each participant. The methodology described by Korstjens and Moser (2018) is applied in this study in order to facilitate potential users' perception of the value of the findings by offering contextual information during the observation and interpretation of social meaning during qualitative research. ? **Dependability** Dependability is the ability of results to remain consistent across time (Mandal, 2018). Achieving this consistency can be facilitated by ensuring that a research technique is logical, thoroughly recorded, and suitably audited (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Therefore, a thorough description of the full research project will be created and securely maintained throughout the inquiry to guarantee the validity of this study. The stability of these results is ensured by ensuring that all interpretations and suggestions of the study are founded on the real data obtained from the study field. On electronic devices, passwords are used to protect the original data. Together with the electronic data that has been backed up, any print-formatted data is also be kept on e-storage devices. ? **Confirmability** The

degree to which a research study's findings may be

independently corroborated by other researchers is known as

confirmability. The researcher in this study impartially evaluates the entire investigation to ensure that the conclusions and interpretations are backed up by data. Documenting the research process and the results are necessary to reduce and eliminate individual biases, preferences, and predispositions that could negatively affect how a researcher assesses the descriptive data obtained from participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018

). It also calls for the researcher to approach the

investigation with objectivity and neutrality. As a result, the qualitative

component of the study is employ the process of data gathering,

analysis, and interpretation . ? Validity and Dependability of Data

from Quantitative Research In quantitative research, validity and reliability are measured to determine the research's trustworthiness or rigor, which effectively refers to the degree to which researchers strive to improve the quality of their study

(Smit, 2021; Leech, 2021). According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell & Creswell (2018), validity is the degree to which a reality is precisely assessed, and reliability is the accuracy of measuring that directly influences a measure's consistency levels. It was crucial to make sure that every statement in Sections B and C addressed the appropriate material on mentoring to guarantee that the framework used in this study appropriately assessed the knowledge levels of mentoring among preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the Foundation phase, as well as the prevalence of pre-mentoring attitudes. Content validity was guaranteed by the meticulous selection of the assertions (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Carefully crafting quantifiable statements that can be added up to create a summation that measures the realities ensure construct validity, which is the capacity to draw conclusions about numerical data collected in this study

relating to the knowledge of preservice teachers and mentor teachers and the prevalence of pro-mentoring attitudes. By giving the mentorship framework to a group of carefully chosen people, the researcher employed test-retest-reliability testing to make sure the framework utilized in the study will be accurate. 1.10.12 Data Analysis Procedures Qualitative data analysis Deductive and inductive reasoning will be employed to conduct a thematic analysis of the gathered data using the methodology developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). A researcher employs a framework of procedures known as data analysis to elucidate

facts, identify patterns, and offer information on the data generated to

obtain answers to the study questions (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). According to Braun and Clarke (2023), thematic analysis is a

sort of qualitative analysis that is used to analyze classifications and provide themes, or patterns, that are related to the data . While inductive analysis selects codes and categories based on the data, deductive analysis uses a theoretical or conceptual framework to structure the study in the examination of the data

(Braun and Clarke, 2023). The process of coding is used in theme analysis to identify distinct, meaningful patterns. This procedure entails the

following steps: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating the first codes, searching the codes for themes, evaluating the themes, characterizing and identifying the themes, and generating the final report. It is necessary to read and reread the data that was gathered from the participants' reflections to become comfortable with it. The first step in constructing the codes is to identify

recurring patterns in the data set and arrange the patterns according to the study themes. The data is thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that only relevant information is used. The researcher, first clearly identifies and categorize any emergent themes from the data before searching for patterns in the codes. These themes are next be rigorously researched and studied in order to obtain relevant information. The themes are identified and given names by the theoretical frameworks (Vygotsky's) to validate the emerging categories. Ultimately, the investigator constructs themes that provide relevant information to address the study inquiries. These ultimately develop into the primary subjects that form the structure for the research findings' presentation and interpretation. Quantitative data analysis Descriptive statistics is used for the quantitative data analysis. Methods for computing, characterizing, and summarizing collected research data in a logical, understandable, and effective way are known as descriptive statistics (Maree, 2020). In the paper, descriptive statistics are shown graphically in the figures or quantitatively in the text and/or tables. Large numbers of observations are reduced into indices by the research using percentages and other methods, which is then explained and utilized to characterize the data

that was gathered using particular factors. IBM SPSS version 28.0, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program, is used to compute the results of the second analysis of the quantitative data

that will be gathered using the inferential test of relationships. 1.11 Ethical Considerations To discuss topics including permission to enter, participant rights, informed consent, privacy, and pro vulnerability. injury, obtaining confidentiality, upholding professionalism, and the susceptibility of participants. The creation of legitimate and trustworthy research studies

requires careful consideration of ethical issues. The researcher

adheres to the following ethical guidelines (Korstjens & Moser, 2018):

- Confidentiality The respondents' privacy is appropriately safeguarded. Respondents are advised not to submit any private information, including their name or address. Confidentiality is maintained since reporting won't reveal any private information about study participants.
- Seeking Consent Participants in the study are not coerced or induced into taking part. Prior to the data being gathered, written consent is required.
- Reporting the Findings The study's results are presented honestly, without

editing or manipulation. 1.12 Chapter Summary The research problem that

this study was intended to address is highlighted throughout the chapter along with an introduction to the subject of study. Along with the

goal of the research study and the research methodology used in

the investigation, the problem statement was also explored.

The research study's relevance and the procedures for gathering data were also covered in this chapter. A description of the ethical principles that

guides the study come next. 1.13 Organisation of Chapters The study's outline and background information on the setting is included in Chapter 1. The second chapter discusses the literature that is reviewed from various studies that have been done on the phenomena. It includes an analysis of previous research, including its methodology and conclusions. Finally, a reflection on how this study close the gap created by earlier research is provided. The study's theoretical framework, social constructivism, is covered in Chapter 3. The former is covered in relation to Vygotsky's (1978) theory. The research methods that are used are described

in depth in Chapter Four. The primary focus is on the choices that are

made on the research methodologies that must be employed

in order to generate data within the parameters of the research

questions posed by this study. A detailed explanation of how these techniques were implemented to fit the research is also provided. Every choice has an obvious rationale. Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the

data collected through observations and documented evidence, together with the information that is gained through semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 6 includes a summary of the study's creation of a sustainable mentoring framework, suggestions, and findings. 1.14 Timeline The proposed timeline follows. Research Activity Timeline Defend proposal September 2023 Chapter 1 –Introduction and Orientation September 2023 Ethics Application September 2023 Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Theoretical Framework Data Collection March 2024 July 2024 Chapter 3 –

Theoretical Framework May 2024 Chapter 4 – Methodology August

2024 Transcribe data September 2024 Chapter 5 – Data

Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation October 2024 Chapter 6

– Conclusions, Evaluation, and November 2024 Recommendations Technical / Language editing November 2024 Final draft November 2024

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 2.1 Introduction The study was

presented in the preceding chapter along with an overview of the

topic being studied. It described the goals, parameters, questions to be answered, and intended technique of the study. In addition, the discussion of the relevant literature for the study is the focus of this chapter. Following will be an analysis of the theories of learning and development, the roles and

responsibilities of mentor teachers and preservice teachers (mentees), and mentoring programs in resolving preservice teachers' issues. It draws on contemporary literature and various sources such as scholarly journal articles, academic texts, theses, and dissertations (both published and unpublished), as well as online databases and search engines. This chapter aims to acquire a thorough grasp of the concept of mentoring. The literature

review plays a crucial role in determining the worthiness of

researching a topic and in refining the focus of an investigation. It helps in evaluating the significance of a study and serves as a benchmark for comparing findings with existing research (Wong, 2021). By analysing prior studies, researchers gain insights into current knowledge, strengths, and limitations in a particular field (Newman & Gough, 2020). This review process informs discussions and findings for this study and may involve comparisons with other research outcomes. Literature reviews involve synthesizing existing literature to inform decisions regarding policy, practice, research direction, and resource allocation (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). They give a summary of the status of knowledge today, outlining theoretical stances and difficulties encountered (Terrell, 2022; Squires, 2019; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; and Law, Hales and Busenbark, 2020). Building upon the foundation laid by the literature review, this study delves into the nuanced realm of mentoring, a dynamic process integral to personal and professional development. Conceptualizing mentoring involves more than just defining it; it requires understanding its multifaceted nature, exploring its various forms, and dissecting its underlying mechanisms. By conceptualizing mentoring, we aim to not only explain its role in fostering growth and learning but also to provide insights that can inform effective mentoring practices in diverse contexts. 2.2. Conceptualizing mentoring The concept of mentoring traces its roots back to Greek mythology, as noted by Bynum (2015). In Homer's *Odyssey*, written around 3000 years ago, the character Mentor is portrayed as a wise and faithful guide assigned to care for Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, during the Trojan War (Bynum, 2015). This ancient archetype underscores the importance of nurturing relationships in mentoring. However, over the years, the mentoring process has evolved, as highlighted by Nju (2023), shifting from a traditional model where an experienced individual guides a younger counterpart on their journey to a more reciprocal

relationship between mentor and mentee. The concept of

mentoring involves the interaction between two individuals aimed at fostering the development of the less experienced party (Carrera, 2022). It encompasses the sharing of knowledge, exemplary behaviour, expertise, and strategies for acquiring information. A mentor is someone who guides and supports the other person, often facilitating career advancements for the mentee (Mafugu, 2022). Mentoring is defined as a type of long-term support given to accomplish particular objectives (Jita and Munje, 2022). It is also considered a process by which leaders build significant relationships to enable others via cooperative learning (Venktaramana et al., 2023). All these

definitions highlight the fact that mentoring is an experienced person assisting a less experienced person in developing their career. In the educational setting, mentoring involves fostering a relationship between an

experienced and trusted individual and a less experienced one, aimed at supporting the development of the novice's abilities (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). This relationship relies heavily on connectedness during conversations, with the mentor guiding and managing the mentee's growth and skill development (Ambrosetti, Dekkers, and Knight, 2017). Typically, in schools, mentoring occurs between a seasoned teacher and a newcomer, with a focus on collectively advancing toward career goals and objectives. Often informal, these interactions complement existing organizational

frameworks, such as the Individual Quality Management System (IQMS)

and support educators' professional development as well as classroom management (Mantshiu & Odeku, 2020). Mentoring is essential for keeping educators in the profession, increasing classroom management, and eventually raising student achievement. According to Hudson and Hudson (2018), mentoring helps mentees navigate extracurricular and co-curricular activities, comprehend organizational dynamics, and carry out their teaching duties. Increased productivity and academic success are clear results of mentoring. While the importance of informality in mentoring interactions is highlighted above, it's crucial to delve into the potential challenges and limitations within a school setting. The incompatibility of mentors and mentees can pose a barrier to the efficacy of the mentoring relationship. It is possible for certain pairings to fail owing to mismatched personalities, communication styles, or ambitions. Thus, to guarantee compatibility, schools must be very careful when matching mentors and mentees. Another issue that role ambiguity presents is that mentors and mentees may find it difficult to grasp one other's roles in the mentoring process in the absence of explicit rules or expectations. This ambiguity can lead to frustration, confusion, and ultimately, a lack of progress. These factors could have distinct impacts on the effectiveness of mentoring programs. In addition, Saidi (2020) shares the conventional viewpoint on mentoring, viewing it more as a one-way procedure than as a partnership that is jointly agreed upon. The idea of a 'one-way process' is further supported by Ambrosetti et al. (2017), who contend that one-on-one, person-to-person mentoring is the most successful approach and highlight the significance of customization and individualization in the mentoring process. In a similar vein, Hakwendenda

and Njobvu (2019) define mentoring as a dyadic relationship in which a

more experienced or talented person serves as a role model for a less experienced person, offering guidance, support, advocacy, counsel, and friendship in an effort to promote both professional and personal growth. Dominguez and Kochan (2020) contest the idea that formal duties should be the only criteria used to define mentoring, arguing that relationships and the roles they play should be the main factors considered. They support the idea that mentoring is an interactive connection between a mentor and mentee that is defined by a sequence of planned social encounters. In a similar vein, in order to promote learning, Levinson (1978) highlights the significance of striking a balance between challenges and support in the mentor-mentee relationship. A mentor takes on several responsibilities in this interactive

dynamic, including advisor, friend, teacher, and counsellor. Nghaamwa (2017), argues that “implementing an effective formal mentoring program benefits inexperienced teachers by addressing their lack of preparation and reducing resignation rates”. Nghaamwa argues that human beings inherently desire connection, making programs like mentoring essential as they foster interaction and contribute to job satisfaction. Furthermore, ensuring that mentees receive sufficient supervision and assistance guarantees the retention of highly qualified, proficient, informed, and professional educators in the field. Mentoring helps new teachers become part of the school community and build good human interactions in the classroom (Nghaamwa, 2017). Drawing from my personal experience as a teaching practice coordinator at a higher education institution and a former teacher at Legora Primary School in Mamelodi, Gauteng, I note that mentoring holds significant importance in providing support and guidance to mentees. However, I acknowledge that the effectiveness of mentoring can differ based on whether it follows a formal or informal structure, which in turn can influence the anticipated results. The literature study emphasizes the value of mentoring to advance professional development for both mentors and mentees (Dominguez and Kochan, 2020). Nonetheless, the implementation of

mentorship models in South African schools has been erratic (Gravett & Kroon, 2023). There is still a disconnect between policy intentions and actual implementation, even with the government's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa

2011– 2025 (Department of Education, 2011) placing a strong emphasis on mentoring. While the framework advocates for mentoring throughout all stages of teacher education, a comprehensive rollout has yet to be realized (Department of Education, 2011). This highlights the pressing need for studies such as this one to address and fill this identified gap in the implementation and effectiveness of mentoring programs within teacher education. 2.3 Mentoring and its Purpose This study explores how mentoring is contextualized, with a particular emphasis on how it affects mentor teachers and pre-service student teachers at different stages of their careers. A less-experienced pre-service student teacher and an experienced in-service teacher (mentor) can develop a long-lasting, mutually beneficial connection through the dynamic process or activity known as mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). To prepare for the teaching profession in a school context, this connection seeks to foster development, support well-being, and offer individualized and professional assistance (Voskamp et al., 2020). According to Walter and Verner (2019), the foundation of successful mentoring is the joint investigation of cutting-edge teaching strategies by seasoned in-service educators and less experienced pre-service educators. While in-service teachers can use their personal experiences to share insights about the dynamic nature of teaching, pre-service teachers' life experiences are greatly impacted by their sense of self and the professional goals of in-service teachers (Ekiz-Kiran et al., 2021). Moreover, the

development of pre-service student teachers' personal identities

and professional identities is closely linked to the school's educational philosophy, national educational priorities, and their interactions with staff and students (Walter & Verner, 2019). As a result, throughout

their teaching practice, pre-service teachers have to manage the shift from self-identity to professional development within the larger educational framework (Newman & Gough, 2020). Effective mentorship from seasoned in-service educators is necessary to facilitate this transition since they have extensive expertise with all aspects of teaching, both inside and outside of the classroom. Effective mentoring becomes crucial for assisting pre-service teachers in navigating their transition into the teaching profession because it acknowledges the interconnectedness of professional development, personal self-identity, and larger educational contexts. Consequently, funding extensive mentorship programs could raise the standard of teacher preparation generally and support ongoing advancements in education.

2.4 Mentoring preservice teachers in South Africa.

In South Africa, the availability of skilled and capable teachers remains a persistent issue (Rusznyak and Bertram, 2021). The authors also state that, among the processes used in South African educational institutions to improve teachers' competency and quality, mentorship stands out as the most significant (Rusznyak, and Bertram, 2021). The cultivation of preservice student teachers through effective mentoring, either by South African universities or by seasoned educators within schools, is advocated. Regrettably, this ideal scenario is not universally realized across educational institutions (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). As part of their professional development path, mentees become excellent teachers as they advance in their careers from preservice student teachers. The need for all educators to participate in mentoring within their particular schools is one of the duties listed for instructors in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018). Furthermore, as compulsory elements of ongoing professional development programs, instructors must provide pastoral care and mentorship in accordance with the Department of Education's 2011 Integrated Quality Management System. These projects are incorporated into programs for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which give teachers chances to advance and better themselves. The details of the alterations in the education sector are expounded upon in the paragraph. South Africa faces the challenge of redressing past educational inequalities resulting from the former educational system, in which a significant proportion of teachers were trained in inadequate teacher training institutions (Mafugu, 2022). The exposure of all preservice student teachers to experienced educators modelling conceptually rich, inquiry-based teaching approaches is still limited, even with recent extensive reforms in the education system (Mantshiu and Odeku, 2020). Unless they have received mentorship within professional

development frameworks, educators frequently reproduce the teaching approaches that they were subjected to themselves, perpetuating obsolete practices (Gravett & Kroon, 2023). The claims make it clear that mentoring is essential to solving the enduring problems in South African education, particularly in ensuring the availability of skilled and capable teachers. While there are mandates and initiatives in place to promote mentorship and professional development among educators, there remains a need for comprehensive and universally realized mentoring programs. By prioritizing effective mentorship, especially in exposing pre-service student teachers to innovative teaching approaches, South Africa can work towards overcoming historical educational disparities and fostering a generation of proficient

educators equipped to meet the demands of a dynamic education

landscape . 2.4.1 Conducting Effective Mentoring Within educational

contexts, formalized mentoring programs are rare; instead, informal

and unstructured mentoring activities predominate, albeit unevenly (Saidi, 2020). The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education

Qualifications (henceforth, MRTEQ) (2022) stipulate that

schools must provide preservice student teachers with opportunities for placement. Typically, they do this by accepting Bachelor of Education (B. Ed

) or Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students in

ten-week cycles each year, frequently working with university tutors. Additionally, trends from the past few years point to the rise of internships and learnerships in educational contexts (Nowell, 2022). Departments of

Basic Education and Higher Education and Training have said that they want to support joint efforts by establishing "teaching laboratories" (

Department of Education , 2011). The Department of Education

(2011) suggests that these programs aim to establish Teaching Schools and Professional Practice Schools as specific locations for student placements during their practical components of education. Preservice

student teachers are expected to engage in a variety of experiential

learning activities in various contexts, such as attending topic technique courses, participating in microteaching sessions, and observing excellent teaching practices (Department of Education, 2011). One noteworthy aspect of the text is its emphasis on the development of mentors inside Teaching Schools. These individuals would be qualified to teach technique courses that are specific to their fields. It is also intended for teachers in Professional Practice Schools to function as mentors to new teachers, providing them with specialized assistance and direction. The importance of mentors in educational settings is emphasized by the South African Department of Education, however these goals are not always put into effect (Gravett and

Ramsaroop, 2019). Open-ended interviews were conducted with ten pre-service teachers in a study by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) titled "Effective mentoring: Understanding factors affecting the holistic development of preservice teachers during teaching practice" to learn more about the pre-service teachers' experiences with mentoring during their teaching practice. Participants in the study included fourth-year Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education pre-service teachers, with an emphasis on schools in less affluent South Africa. According to Ntshangase and Nkosi's (2022) results, most pre-service teachers had serious worries about not receiving sufficient mentorship from mentor professors and in-service mentors after being assigned to schools.

From the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers who were interviewed, a common theme emerged that showed how little awareness there is of the everyday struggles faced by in-service teachers in less privileged schools, especially in townships or rural areas where basic amenities like data projectors, smart boards, and computer rooms are not easily accessible (Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022). The research by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) provides insightful information about mentoring pre-service teachers in difficult settings, but to fully comprehend and use the study's findings, certain important areas can be carefully examined. The research is based purely on subjective data derived from in-depth interviews. This method leads to biases influenced by personal viewpoints and may result in varied response consistency. Furthermore, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) posited that the lack of quantitative metrics or observational evidence to substantiate the statements of participants could be seen as a research gap when utilizing this approach. As a result, this current study aims to fill this methodological gap by including quantitative analyses and observational data to support the findings and conclusions drawn from the participants' statements. By incorporating these additional methodological measures, the present study seeks to strengthen the research findings and enhance the credibility of the research outcomes. According to Mphojane's (2019) study, "A framework for effective formal mentoring of novice teachers," which involved 30 participants—six mentor teachers and 24 pre-service teachers—interview results revealed that South African public-school teachers lack formal mentoring. Based on the lack of official tasks to support pre-service teachers in adjusting to their new duties and responsibilities, the study found that there is no formal mentoring program in place and that mentorship develops on its own. South Africa is not alone in experiencing a dearth of formal mentorship; in many other nations, mentorship programs are either non-existent or poorly organized (Mphojane, 2019). According to Mphojane (2019), the lack of structured mentorship initiatives for preservice student teachers results in their lack of readiness for the demands of their new positions. The research by Mphojane (2019), it should be highlighted, reveals a significant lack of teacher

preparation, especially regarding the lack of formal mentorship programs in South African public schools. The study's exclusive emphasis on interviews may give a narrow perspective, thereby ignoring the wide spectrum of mentoring experiences, even though the formal mentoring part needs to be thoroughly examined. In order to successfully address this restriction, a mixed methods approach should be employed since it provides a more thorough assessment of the necessity of a well-defined mentorship framework. Henning and Gravett (2012) carried out a study on behalf of the

Gauteng Department of Education, conducting 38 interviews with

relevant stakeholders such as district officials, teachers, Heads of Departments (HODs), and school principals. Their study emphasizes how unrealistic it is to expect colleges to fully prepare instructors for careers in teaching. Rather, they support schools as the necessary setting for real,

substantive immersion in the complexities and demands of

teaching in the South African educational context (Henning & Gravett, 2012). The results of the study suggest that educators may not receive adequate preparation from colleges for the difficulties they will face in actual classroom environments. Even though university instruction has its limitations, I contend that this viewpoint shouldn't lessen the importance of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations offered. It is crucial to find a harmonious balance between theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience, rather than completely disregarding one in favour of the other. The study highlights the necessity for practical learning experiences, prompting a reassessment of the role of universities and how they can enhance collaboration with schools to create a more comprehensive teacher education program. By integrating more practical experiences alongside academic instruction, a more well-rounded approach to teacher training can be achieved, ensuring that upcoming educators can effectively apply their

knowledge and skills in the various professional environments they will encounter. In a research paper titled "Becoming Professionally Qualified: The School-based Mentoring experiences of Part-time PGCE students,"

Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram (2015) interviewed twenty students

who had just finished their part-time Postgraduate Certificate in

Education (PGCE) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The participants in

the study reported three different kinds of mentoring encounters. First, subject-specific mentoring that is, mentoring involving comments on the way in which courses are taught was discovered. Furthermore, criticism on general teaching strategies and classroom management techniques was included in general pedagogical mentorship. Finally, mentors who just worked on finishing the paperwork that the student's enrolled institution requested were said to be practicing compliance mentoring (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram, 2015). Different participants received different levels

of mentoring; some were guided in one area exclusively, while

others received all three types of coaching. This suggests that in order to guarantee that mentors are prepared to offer pre-service teachers appropriate support, extensive mentor training is required (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram, 2015). Grossman and Davies (2012), on the other hand, argue against a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring, highlighting the significance of customizing mentoring experiences to each mentee's unique requirements, history, and educational situation. I contend that, albeit being insightful, the sample size of 20 pupils is insufficient given the scope of the educational system in KwaZulu, Natal, or the larger South African setting. As a result, one could wonder if the results are representative. To obtain a wider range of insights, it could be advantageous for future study to include a larger and more diverse sample.

When the results of the previously mentioned research are combined, they all highlight how important it is to have thorough, well-organized mentorship programs in order to support the pre-service teachers' growth in South Africa. According to the experts behind these studies, mentoring is a dynamic process that helps more inexperienced pre-service teachers and seasoned mentor teachers build a lasting and mutually beneficial connection. They both agree that mentoring plays a critical role in supporting pre-service teachers' personal and professional development and emphasizing how important it is to provide them with the tools and resources they need to successfully negotiate the challenges of the teaching profession. Thus, there is a unified voice advocating for the execution of strong mentoring programs to improve pre-service teachers' preparedness and readiness for their upcoming positions in South Africa's educational system. To better prepare pre-service teachers for their future roles in influencing South Africa's educational system, I support the swift establishment of strong mentorship programs.

2.4.2 Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) assert that it is critical for a mentor and mentee to build a solid rapport. Goodwill and trust should be the cornerstones of this partnership. It is required of mentors to exhibit dedication, effectiveness, accountability, and passion in their work. The diverse range of the mentor-mentee relationship is highlighted by the usage of terms like mentor, coach, supervisor, counsellor, role model, nurturer, advisor, critic, and supporter (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). This opinion is in line with Gravett and Kroon's (2023)

admission that intense comprehension, dedication, aptitude, and effort are necessary for successful mentoring. According to the authors, mentors are in charge of organizing and running mentorship programs and leading activities that advance pedagogical comprehension (Gravett & Kroon, 2023).

Additionally, they stress the value of developing a rapport based on mutual respect and trust in order to encourage group reflection on instructional strategies (Gravett & Kroon, 2023). Rusznyak and Bertram (2021) identify specific qualities that they deem essential for effective mentors. These include strong interpersonal skills, attentive listening, non-judgmental handling of differences of opinion, preference for open-ended questioning, and maintaining flexibility while keeping the focus on the mentee's development (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). Rusznyak and Bertram's (2021) study provides significant contributions to the understanding of effective mentorship by identifying key characteristics of successful mentors.

However, delving into the development of mentoring relationships over time and how the importance of these qualities may shift at various stages could offer a deeper insight into effective mentorship. Additionally, the study may have overlooked the intricacies of interpersonal skills, as nuances in communication styles, such as active listening and empathy, play a crucial role in fostering a successful mentoring connection. The study "Master teacher experiences of mentoring teachers" by Pather (2010) examined the

experiences of master teachers in their role as mentors by

interviewing three teachers from KwaDukuza area (iLembe District).

The findings revealed that master teacher mentors embraced qualities like critical dialogue, collaboration, and collegiality in their relationships with mentees. Pather (2010) According to Hudson and Hudson (2018), the mentor serves as a supervisor who is in charge of performance evaluation and progress. This suggests that the mentor-mentee relationship may change based on how the mentor fulfils this position. Nonetheless, Gravett and Kroon (2023) contend that mentees' learning and development may be hampered by mentors' narrow variety of techniques. Hudson and Hudson's (2018) research provide insightful information about the structural function of mentors by highlighting the importance of their supervisory and evaluative duties. Their exploration of how the mentor-mentee relationship can transform based on these responsibilities introduces an interesting dynamic, highlighting the fluidity of these roles within professional settings. However, the study may benefit from a broader perspective that considers the diverse forms of mentorship beyond managerial oversight, including the more nuanced aspects of guidance and support that can influence a mentee's journey. Gravett and Kroon's (2023) research delves into the constraints of mentorship that occur when mentors rely on a restricted range of mentoring techniques. They highlight the significance of flexibility and having a varied skill set to effectively guide individuals. While their discoveries reveal a crucial aspect of mentoring that can hinder mentees' development, there is an opportunity for additional investigation into the root causes of mentors' limited approaches. These causes might encompass insufficient training, personal inclinations, time limitations, and constrained resources. I suggest

that additional research should be undertaken, similar to the

current study on mentoring programs. This research could offer

practical solutions aimed at expanding mentors' toolkit of strategies to enhance mentee engagement and improve learning outcomes. Contrary to this, Ponte and Twomey (2014) propose that acknowledging and addressing the potential conflicts inherent in the assessor or evaluator role can lead to resolution (Ponte & Twomey, 2014). A two-year mentorship program for students participating in a two-year site-based university teacher

preparation program was undertaken by mentors, who were experienced teachers, according to the study "Veteran teachers mentoring in training: negotiating issues of power, vulnerability and professional development." According to them, the mentor's function involves both assessment and evaluation, and areas of conflict can often act as catalysts for growth for all parties involved (Ponte & Twomey, 2014). Ponte and Twomey (2014) provide an example of a collaborative approach to resolving tensions in the evaluation process by describing a scenario where the final

assessment was based on a combination of self -assessment, peer

assessment, mentor evaluation, principal evaluation, and field

supervisor assessment. However, the inherent connection between assessment, evaluation, and mentoring is well-founded, the claim could be reinforced by incorporating empirical evidence or case studies demonstrating how this dynamic plays out in practice, and how mentors can harness conflicts constructively. Additionally, the statement could be made more robust by including a discussion on the role of communication skills, and the psychological safety of the parties involved in creating an environment where conflicts can translate into growth. Considering the above findings, it is evident that effective mentorship requires a balance between supervision and support, with mentors fostering collaborative and reflective relationships with mentees. Collaborative assessment approaches that involve multiple stakeholders can help mitigate conflicts and promote growth for both mentors and mentees (Ponte & Twomey, 2014). These studies underscore the significance of mentorship in the development of teachers, emphasizing the necessity for mentors to take a multipronged approach involving reflective practice, critical discourse, and collaboration. The results also highlight how important it is to resolve issues in the mentoring process by using inclusive and collaborative assessment techniques. I recognize that by providing encouraging and productive mentorship settings, educators can promote pre-service and inexperienced teachers' professional development, which will ultimately lead to better teaching practices and student results.

2.5 Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor Teachers During Mentoring
Mentors can have a variety of roles, depending on the mentor and the school setting. As mentors usually appreciate professional independence, this diversity can be helpful even though some mentors may concentrate on

particular facets of classroom management or teaching methods. Yet, it

could also cause conflict in the relationship between the mentor and the

mentee (Hudson & Hudson, 2018) Mentoring must be planned and meet specific requirements in order to be really effective (Saidi, 2020). This requires that the mentor's position be clearly understood. In order to close

the skills gap and strengthen the teaching abilities of new teachers, experienced educators are essential. However, rather than just their cumulative experience over time, mentors' abilities and knowledge are more important to the success of mentoring (Saidi, 2020). It is imperative to acknowledge that not all educators possess the requisite abilities and expertise to effectively mentor preservice student teachers, just as not all instructors can effectively address the problems faced by them (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). The claim made by Ambrosetti et al. (2017) may be true, but in order to help the reader better grasp the requirements for successful mentorship, a more thorough explanation of the particular abilities and knowledge that mentors must possess would be beneficial. Consequently, mentors ought to be carefully chosen, properly trained, and given enough time to collaborate closely with their mentees (Attard Tonna, 2019). Furthermore, mentors ought to work to foster a supportive environment that supports efficient teaching and learning in addition to assisting preservice student teachers in honing their teaching abilities (Attard Tonna, 2019). However, the author could enhance its critique by considering potential challenges and limitations. For instance, it might examine the institutional resources required for such an investment in mentorship, the feasibility of dedicating sufficient time for mentoring in a fast-paced educational context, and the practicalities of implementing a comprehensive mentor training program. Examining these topics in greater detail may help to clarify the nuances of preservice student teacher mentorship. Good mentors are essential in helping their mentees realize their potential and realize it, all the while stressing the value of constant contact. As per the findings of Fu, Tang, Xue, Li, and Shan (2019), an efficient mentor demonstrates attributes like enthusiasm, empathy, selflessness, candour, generosity, perceptiveness, and proficient time management. Furthermore, a great mentor is someone who helps mentees solve problems on their own instead of giving them prepackaged solutions. According to Stronge (2018), mentor teachers generally view their primary responsibilities as giving instructional and emotional support, helping with paperwork and planning, sharing information about procedures and governance, and providing problem-solving assistance. According to Attard Tonna (2019), effective mentors are compassionate and eager to help new instructors by introducing them to the institution's standards and principles on all fronts. Effective mentoring essentially entails building a caring and supporting relationship that enables mentees to advance both personally and professionally, in addition to providing information and skills.

2.5.1 Personal Support for Mentees Preservice student teachers need mentors' one-on-one assistance to get over the transitional difficulties they face in their first years of teaching (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). These difficulties frequently result in depressive symptoms, elevated stress levels, and self-doubt about one's ability (Hudson and Hudson, 2018). Preservice student teachers need mentoring programs to help them form their identities as educators (Hudson and Hudson, 2018). Teachers who have taken part in mentoring programs report higher levels of aptitude, motivation, attentiveness, and support because of their mentoring experiences, according to Hakwendenda and Njobvu (2019). In addition to providing emotional support, mentoring helps employees develop positive working connections. The strength and durability of the mentor-mentee

relationship, as well as the mentee's retention in the teaching

profession, are strongly influenced by the level of emotional support that mentors provide (Mphojane, 2019). Early events, especially those that occur in the early years of a teacher's profession, have a long-lasting effect on the behaviours and attitudes of teachers (Hakwendenda and Njobvu, 2019). These encounters influence the way in which new teachers adjust to their surroundings and line of work, underscoring the significance of good mentorship in promoting teachers' long-term career success and retention (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2020).

2.5.1.1 Social Support for Mentees

Through the provision of structured chances for new teachers to interact with seasoned colleagues, mentoring programs are essential in promoting teamwork and offering social support (Gravett and Kroon, 2023). These partnerships facilitate the exchange of feedback and ideas, making new teachers feel like valued members of a team that embraces diverse perspectives (Nowell, 2022). Moreover, social support within the school environment extends beyond teacher-teacher interactions to involve various stakeholders such as district officials, parents, and the community, contributing to the establishment of a cooperative educational setting (Nowell, 2022). The school culture also significantly influences the social support received by novice teachers. Through interactions with veteran colleagues, novices gain insights into the traditions and norms of the school, which helps them acclimate to their new roles and responsibilities (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). However, correct mentor-mentee matching is

crucial for effective professional support. Mentors play a pivotal role in

helping mentees develop effective classroom practices and engage in professional reflective dialogue (Nowell, 2022). Nevertheless, challenges may arise in the social dynamics between preservice student teachers and mentor teachers. However, others contend that preservice student teachers' skills and expertise might enhance the school's standing and status (Rusznayak and Bertram, 2021), others highlight the potential for conflicts or envy among mentor teachers and preservice student teachers (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). These dynamics underline the importance of fostering positive relationships and providing appropriate support to ensure the success and retention of preservice student teachers in the teaching profession.

2.5.1.2

Professional Support

To close the gap between teacher preparation and

the actual teaching environment in schools, mentorship programs offer professional support that is the first step in a continuous process of post-initial learning (Stronge, 2018). This assistance promotes a positive and professional work environment by empowering mentees as well as the larger staff community (Attard Tonna, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017). According to Stronge (2018), effective mentoring necessitates that mentors could recognize when to offer assistance and when to let mentees find their own way. Mentors must modify their mentoring strategy to fit each mentee's specific needs because mentees differ from one another in terms of

personality, abilities, and knowledge (Saidi, 2020). They have to understand the unique circumstances surrounding mentoring and be aware that not every mentee will benefit from a one-size-fits-all strategy. Before taking on their mentoring positions, Ambrosetti et al. (2017) recommend that all teacher mentors have access to a standardized model of mentoring

knowledge. This will guarantee uniformity in mentoring procedures among educational institutions and facilitate the development of superior mentoring initiatives across the country. Schools can increase the efficacy and impact of their mentoring programs by providing mentors with the knowledge and skills they need. This will ultimately help new teachers as well as the larger educational community (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). Research suggests that the mentor's role is complex, involving multiple roles within different conceptual frameworks (Stronge, 2018). But there is a dearth of study, especially in the field of education, on mentoring from the mentor's perspective (Stronge, 2018). A thorough framework for the function of the mentor is proposed by Cochran Smith and Paris (1995). It involves introducing newcomers to regulations, processes, and expectations in schools and higher education as well as offering coaching, assistance, and feedback. Sensitivity, no judgmentalism, and supportiveness define these interactions. Taken from

Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010), Figure 2.1, outlines six interpersonal functions or roles that mentors typically perform. These functions likely encompass aspects such as guidance, support, feedback provision, modelling, and fostering professional growth and development in mentees. Figure 2.1: Six interpersonal functions and roles of the mentor adapted from

Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010, p. 48) The passages emphasize the value of mentorship programs in providing new teachers with professional development. The vital link between initial teacher

preparation and the real-world difficulties faced in the classroom is provided by mentoring. It encourages a cooperative and encouraging work atmosphere in schools and gives mentees more authority. To be effective, mentors must be able to adjust their support to the particular needs of each

mentee, taking into account the differences in their backgrounds and

experiences. Standardized mentoring knowledge models can help ensure quality and consistency within mentoring programs and prepare mentors to effectively support preservice student teachers. Ultimately, the development and success of mentees is greatly aided by the personal, professional, and social support provided by mentoring programs; this ultimately benefits the educational community (Stronge, 2018; CochranSmith and Paris, 1995; Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Saidi, 2020; Attard Tonna, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017). 2.6 Roles and Responsibilities of

the Preservice Teachers During Mentoring Mentees are essential to the mentoring process and need to have certain qualities in order for it to be effective. One of their duties is to pinpoint their areas of improvement and advise their mentors on them. Mentors must take the initiative to make themselves available and show that they are eager to pick up knowledge from their mentors. Effective mentorship requires respect and dedication from both individuals, even though the relationship may not be official (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Mphojane, (2019) emphasizes that mentors should allow mentees to explore and experience things independently, guiding as needed to help mentees achieve their goals.

Mentees should actively engage in the mentoring program, providing input and actively participating in its activities. Ambrosetti et al. (2017) stresses

the significance of valuing the knowledge and abilities that

inexperienced teachers bring to the field and their work environment and stress the necessity for mentees to be flexible and prepared to question preconceived notions and attitudes. According to Gravett and Kroon (2023), mentoring programs ought to focus on fostering mentees' capacity for self-reflection so they may recognize and resolve issues in the classroom on their own. Mentors need to show that they are dedicated, have a positive outlook, and are eager to learn from and work with other professionals. All individuals involved must possess ambition, responsibility, humility, and strong communication skills in order for mentoring to be effective. Effective mentees, according to Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), take ownership of their own development, recognize that mentors are there to challenge and encourage rather than to provide answers, prepare for meetings in advance, are receptive to suggestions, put recommendations into practice, identify when the mentoring partnership has reached its goals, and recognize when the relationship is no longer beneficial. Despite the critical role mentees play in the success of mentoring relationships, scholarly inquiry into this area is not as extensive as one might expect. The existing literature predominantly focuses on the responsibilities and impact of mentors, often overlooking the active participation of mentees. However, it is crucial for mentees to engage with intentionality and commitment to facilitate their development and derive the greatest value from the mentorship experience. Engaging as a mentee involves setting goals, seeking feedback, applying learned knowledge, and driving the relationship forward. The dearth of research specifically targeting the mentee's perspective and strategies for effective engagement presents a gap in understanding how mentees can optimize their role within these relationships. Further exploratory studies could illuminate the nuances of effective mentee behaviours and how they contribute to the mentoring outcome.

2.7 The Status of Preservice Teachers' Mentoring in Industrialized and African Nations

The subsequent sentences delve into the methodologies employed for mentoring novice educators across various African and developed nations. While mentoring has been an established practice in education for some time, it continues to be a vital aspect of supporting newly appointed teachers. These individuals, often referred to as novice teachers, receive encouragement and assistance from experienced colleagues, indicating the enduring tradition of mentorship within the teaching profession.

2.7.1 Mentoring Preservice Teachers: African Studies

Very few nations in Africa have started offering official mentorship (Mukeredzi, 2021). Some pre-service teachers are allocated to in-service training to advance professionally. Carvalho and Santos (2021) state that in nations like Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, and Namibia, pre-service teachers receive some kind of orientation and induction to the field. For instance, staff members from teacher training institutions monitor pre-service teachers' progress in their schools, or inspectors and supervisors are expected to visit schools and assist pre-service teachers. Moreover, business experts support aspiring educators by planning and providing in-service education (Shanyengana, 2023). According to (Maundeni and Kahaka, 2022), Botswana lacks a structured mentoring program to support new teachers. Even though mentoring is essential to preservice teachers during TP, which

occupies most of the classroom experience, there is no document that teaches class teachers on their expected obligations as mentor teachers. However, the mentorship experiences have a long-lasting effect on the

attitudes and perspectives of the preservice teachers on the

teaching profession (Ndhlovu, Nkhata, Chipindi, Kalinde, Kaluba, Malama, Mambwe, 2021). In Botswana, teachers are placed on two-year probation. Rebecca and Musisi (2022) claim that this is a disorganized process since there is no oversight and the School Management Team

makes decisions based on the needs of the school. Whereas, the above paragraph is informative, the authors are silent on statistical evidence to support its claims. Its argument could benefit from citing quantitative data that demonstrate the consequences of the unstructured mentoring system. I posit that a mentoring framework can only be deemed effective if it thoroughly examines and incorporates every significant piece of knowledge. As such, the current investigation employs a mixed-methods strategy to get an all-encompassing model, seamlessly integrating every essential component of mentorship protocols. Like many developing nations, Ghana has not implemented a well-defined mentorship program for pre-service teachers (Buckler, 2020). Matiba, 2023; Buckler, Stutchbury, Kasule, Cullen, and Kaije, 2021). agree that Ghana does not have a formalized mentoring program for nascent or inexperienced educators. They continue by stating that the introduction of pre-service teachers in certain other developing nations, like Ghana, is essentially a process of trying a variety of approaches and learning from failures until a solution is found. As a result, effective mentorship programs are required to assist pre-service teachers while also increasing teacher retention in the profession. The text rightfully points out that the establishment of effective mentorship programs could offer substantial support to pre-service teachers. However, the authors do not address potential challenges and successes to implementing programs on a trial and error. Inclusion of these could strengthen the argument of mentorship in preservice teacher education. 2.7.2 Mentoring Preservice Teachers: International Studies Formal mentoring programs have not been widely implemented, especially in developing nations, despite the fact that

mentoring is crucial for helping pre-service teachers make it through their first year of teaching (Bjorklund et al., 2020). This also includes South Africa. However, in industrialized nations, other than the US. As a result of their recognition of the value of formal mentoring of pre-service teachers, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom

, Australia, and other nations like Switzerland, France, New Zealand, Japan, and China have established well-funded, well-supervised mentorship programs that assist all pre-service teachers for a minimum of three years. Pre-service teachers in New Zealand receive their first year of instruction as an extension of their first training. This is what Kenrick (2019) refers to as

their college education. A minimum of two years of classroom

experience is required for teachers to become qualified registered teachers, according to the New Zealand Teachers Council (2020). Teaching tools and guidance are provided to pre-service teachers over the first two

years. and are also seen by educated academics. In Australia, most schools volunteer to mentor newly hired teachers. Education authorities have their own set of guidelines and protocols for acclimating recently qualified educators to the field. Unfortunately, due to major differences in the goals of application and new teacher support, these policies are not being appropriately implemented across Australia (Kurti, 2023). In Australia, especially in rural and isolated locations, school principals have the authority to design and operate institution-based mentorship programs, and websites related to these programs are the primary source of support for aspiring teachers (James, Hudson, and Lascik, 2022). There is a distinct demand for newly qualified instructors to be inducted in urban and inaccessible areas. However, the paragraph does not elaborate on the effectiveness or accessibility of these mentoring programs, neither does it draw from empirical data or state how these programs satisfy the various needs of educators in distant versus urban settings. According to me, this study seeks to close the existing gap by confirming the mentorship program's effectiveness. Through active participant involvement in the planning and development process, the program seeks to be customized to educators' individual needs, addressing the difficulties that participants in urban and distant areas may encounter. By establishing a more approachable and pertinent support structure, this participatory method aims to improve educators' overall mentoring experience. Research carried out in Kosovo by Nopriyeni et al. (2019) showed the need of providing a mentorship strategy, especially to help prospective teachers improve their pedagogical skills. The least common mentoring element utilized by mentors was system requirements mentoring, per (Albakri et al., 2021; Munijita, 2021; Virtič et al., 2021). This implies that many final-year pre-service teachers may not

have been aware of the objectives, curricula, or policies related to elementary education before beginning their careers. The present state of mentor feedback disputes and challenges in the teaching practicum is revealed by research (Beek et al., 2019; Byars-Winston & Butz, 2021). Although the Nopriyeni et al. (2019) study is cited to emphasize the value of a mentoring method, it is vague about the nature of these pedagogical skills and how the mentoring technique promotes them. In a similar vein, the paragraph may use a more thorough examination or concrete instances of successful mentoring approaches. The state of mentoring in developing countries remains a crucial area requiring attention and investment. While the importance of mentorship in nurturing future educators is widely

acknowledged, I acknowledge that there is often a lack of structured

and comprehensive mentorship programs in place. As developing nations endeavor to tackle issues in their educational systems, such as attracting and retaining qualified educators, the creation of strong mentorship programs becomes more crucial. I assert that by prioritizing mentorship and providing adequate resources and support, developing

countries can empower pre-service teachers to thrive in their roles, ultimately contributing to the improvement of education quality and

outcomes for generations to come. 2.8 Models of Mentoring The mentoring literature contains a plethora of mentorship models, many of

which use interchangeable nomenclature (Lasater et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017). The literature abundantly emphasizes the advantages of mentorship for mentors and mentees, despite the absence of standard terminology and

definitions (Lorenzetti et al., 2019 ; Oddone Paolucci et al., 2021 ;

Petherick et al ., 2020; Nowell, 2022). An overview of various mentorship models, such as group mentoring, peer observation, traditional mentoring, and reciprocal mentoring, is provided below. The purpose of this overview is to encourage additional research into the potential applications of these models in higher education teaching techniques. Traditional mentoring, where a senior or experienced faculty member guides a junior colleague, is indeed a valuable model for developing teaching competence, confidence, and career goals. It offers access to resources and networks crucial for professional growth. However, there are potential drawbacks. Power imbalances can hinder open communication and growth if not addressed. Mismatched expectations, where the mentor and mentee have different understandings of the relationship's purpose or scope, can lead to frustration or disappointment. Lack of diversity in mentoring pairs may limit exposure to different perspectives and experiences. To mitigate these issues, clear roles, boundaries, and objectives should be established from the outset. Both parties should openly discuss expectations, goals, and communication preferences. Regular feedback and evaluation sessions can help address any issues early on and ensure alignment between mentorship dynamics and the mentee's needs. By fostering a transparent and collaborative mentoring environment, traditional mentoring can effectively support the development of junior faculty members while minimizing potential pitfalls (Ambrosetti et al., 2017) Reciprocal mentoring represents a shift towards a more egalitarian and collaborative approach, where two faculty members with distinct backgrounds or expertise mutually support and learn from each other. Within academia, this strategy fosters a culture of variety, creativity, and ongoing progress. By leveraging diverse perspectives, reciprocal mentoring can enhance interpersonal and communication skills, leading to richer professional development experiences. However, this model also demands a high level of trust, commitment, and openness from both parties. Engaging in reciprocal mentoring requires a willingness to challenge and be challenged by one's partner, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas and insights. Choosing a courteous and compatible partner is essential to the success of reciprocal mentoring. Clear and realistic goals and expectations should be established from the outset, providing a framework for the mentoring relationship. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions can help maintain alignment and address any issues that may arise. Overall, reciprocal mentoring offers a promising alternative to traditional mentorship models, promoting mutual learning and growth while fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity within academic settings (Ambrosetti et al., 2017) Peer observation, a form of mentoring, entails the observation and reciprocal observation of teaching practices among colleagues, followed by constructive feedback and discussion. This model holds potential for enhancing teaching quality, effectiveness, and reflective practice while fostering collegiality and professional growth within academic settings. However, peer observation also presents challenges. There's a risk of bias in observations, and participants may experience anxiety or defensiveness about their teaching being scrutinized. Moreover, conducting peer observations requires dedicated time and resources. It's critical to provide a

private, encouraging space where individuals feel comfortable having candid conversations in order to address these issues. Following a structured and evidence-based process can help ensure fairness and effectiveness. This includes setting clear expectations, focusing on specific teaching goals or areas for improvement, using validated observation tools, and providing training and support for observers. Furthermore, promoting a culture of mutual feedback and ongoing development might assist in reducing worries about prejudice and defensiveness. Encouraging a growth mindset, where feedback is viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than criticism, can further promote professional development and collaboration among peers. While peer observation has its challenges, it can be a valuable tool for improving teaching practice by encouraging a culture of ongoing education and collaboration within academic communities when implemented thoughtfully and supportively (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). Group mentoring offers a collective and interactive approach to mentorship, where faculty members with common interests or objectives convene regularly to share insights, experiences, and guidance. This model holds the potential to enrich social and intellectual capital, foster diversity, spur innovation, and alleviate feelings of isolation and stress among participants. However, group mentoring comes with its own set of challenges. Managing group dynamics, logistical arrangements, and ensuring meaningful outcomes can be complex. Moreover, there's a risk of losing focus or direction amidst diverse perspectives and discussions. To optimize the effectiveness of group mentoring, it is crucial to establish a clear purpose and agenda for each session. This helps ensure that discussions remain relevant and productive. Additionally, facilitating active and inclusive participation among members is key. Encouraging open dialogue, respecting diverse viewpoints, and providing opportunities for all members to contribute can enhance engagement and foster a supportive learning environment. Regularly assessing and refining the group mentoring process based on feedback from participants can also help address challenges and improve outcomes over time. By actively managing group dynamics and maintaining a focus on shared goals, group mentoring can be an effective tool for academic communities' professional growth and cooperation (Ambrosetti et al., 2017).

2.9 Advantages/Benefits of Mentoring

The topic of teaching quality and effectiveness, particularly in relation to the comprehension and knowledge retention of preservice student teachers, has garnered significant scholarly attention (Stronge, 2018). Furthermore, there is an increasing emphasis on preservice student teachers' professional development, which suggests a

change in the understanding of the significance of preparing teachers

for the demands of modern teaching practices (Tammets, Pata, & Eisenschmidt, 2019). Scholars (Cheng & Szeto, 2016) argue that when preservice student teachers are encouraged, supported, and strategically developed, they have the potential to help improve the standard of instruction, support creativity, and aid in the academic achievement of students (Cheng & Szeto, 2016). Moreover, scientists from a variety of fields have highlighted the broad and well-established advantages of mentoring in this regard, emphasizing its role in promoting professional and psychological

development (Attard Tonna, 2019; Booth, Merga, & Mat Roni, 2016). Consequently, there has been a growing integration of mentoring into institutionalized practices and policy (MrTeq, 2015, 2022). Additionally,

research in this field has grown, offering empirical proof of the advantages of mentoring for mentors as well as mentees (Jeong, Irby, Boswell, & Pugliese, 2018). According to Fu, Tang, Xue, Li, & Shan (2019), these advantages

include mutual learning, resilience, career capital, improved problem-

solving skills, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. **2.10 Challenges and Barriers to Mentoring** The environment and working conditions within an organization has a big influence on how well mentoring relationships work. Effective mentoring thrives in environments that foster learning and support (Mphojane, 2021). Institutions should strive to create platforms that facilitate interaction and idea-sharing among individuals at various levels. Members should demonstrate consideration, sensitivity, and a willingness to empower one another. Mentoring activities should also be prioritized and supported by institutional culture, job design, reward systems, and management practices (Ehrich, Hansford & Ehrich, 2011). However, certain factors within the institution can hinder successful mentoring relationships. These may include physical barriers, such as teachers being confined to their workshops or classrooms, limiting opportunities for social interaction (Mphojane, 2021). Time restrictions, poor teamwork, a lack of professional experience, personality conflicts, and a lack of funding are a few more potential obstacles (Hudson, 2013). It is imperative to tackle these obstacles in order to provide a setting that is favourable for successful mentoring.

2.10.1 Lack of Time A major obstacle to the successful mentorship of preservice student teachers is time, either insufficient or poorly managed (Ntshangase & Nkosi, 2022). It is challenging for mentors and mentees to have meaningful conversations and offer feedback when mentorship activities are not allotted time (NTIP, 2011). Because their schedules are usually packed with classroom responsibilities, mentor teachers frequently

find it difficult to find time to share their experiences with mentees

(Goldrick, 2016). Teachers in many South African township schools

have little leisure time, which is frequently devoted to other tasks. Mentors must set aside specific time to concentrate on assisting and mentoring preservice student teachers during the mentoring process in order for mentoring to be effective. It is essential that mentoring activities have enough time and space. Insufficient time allotted might be a sign of insincerity and lack of commitment to mentoring or other developmental relationships (NTIP, 2011). According to research by Ehrich et al. (2011), mentor teachers' busy schedules and lack of time frequently make it difficult for them to carry out their mentoring duties. Leshem (2014) brought attention to this issue by observing rushed interactions between mentors and mentees in school hallways or during breaks, which suggests that mentoring meetings are not given enough time. Even with limited time, mentors frequently manage to provide their mentees with guidance and assistance. But another factor that is mentioned as a hindrance to successful mentoring is the absence of cooperation between mentor teachers and mentees. **2.10.2 Lack of Collaboration** An additional obstacle to productive mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees is a lack of teamwork, which prevents mentees from taking charge of the program. According to Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009), a lot of organizations fail to consider the role

that their members play in the creation of mentoring programs, which creates the impression that participation is required rather than optional among mentors and mentees. Participants may become resistant as a result of this lack of participation in the planning process, which would ultimately

reduce the mentorship program's efficacy. The success of the program

depends on the cooperative involvement of all stakeholders, especially throughout the planning and implementation phases (Hudson and Hudson, 2018). Hakwendenda and Njobvu (2019) emphasizes the importance of mentors recognizing and valuing collaboration, as it fosters continuous professional growth, innovation, and enthusiasm. Healthy relationships among coworkers are encouraged in collaborative work environments, which also lessen emotional stress and burnout and boost output and job satisfaction. Additionally, preservice student teachers benefit greatly from staff collaboration since it enables them to learn from seasoned colleagues and avoid the trial-and-error method that is sometimes observed in the early stages of their employment (Shah, 2012). 2.10.3 Absence of Specialized Knowledge Mentors' lack of professional experience is another major disadvantage of mentoring for mentees. When mentors lack the requisite abilities and comprehension of the goals of the planned activities, mentoring becomes ineffective or even destructive (Professional Growth Networks, 2015). In the absence of both initial and continuous high-quality mentoring to aid in their professional development, mentors find it difficult to lead and help novice instructors with their difficulties. (Goldrick, 2016). Mentoring can be perceived as burdensome and emotionally draining when mentors are expected to mentor preservice student teachers without being adequately prepared or provided with the necessary resources and support

from their superiors (Ehrich, 2013). Moreover, sustaining a mentoring plan becomes challenging for mentors if their colleagues know that it lacks approval from school authorities (McCollum, 2014). Effective mentoring programs should include essential information such as the program's purpose, goals, objectives, and participants' roles and duties (Ehrich et al., 2011). According to Hobson and Malderez (2013), mentorship programs should offer mentor training focused on communication, listening, and feedback skills. Universities are essential to the success of mentorship programs because they place a high value on mentor training (Professional Growth Networks, 2015). Care should be taken when choosing a training location, whether it is done by outside experts or on school property and administered by local staff. Participating in expert learning communities that respect professional ethics, follow relevant content area standards, and prioritize teacher growth, problem-solving, and mutual support is beneficial for preservice student teachers (Sokhulu, 2022). Opportunities for interactions, cooperation, professional discussions, and reflection are offered by regularly planned workshops and online learning groups. When the objective and goals of a mentorship program are made apparent to all participants, it is more likely to be successful and produce the desired results. Furthermore, mentorship may suffer from personality mismatch (Sokhulu, 2022). 2.10.4 Personality Mismatch Differences in philosophy, ideology, or knowledge between people are referred to as personality mismatches, and they can occasionally cause conflict in relationships (Ehrich, 2013). These incompatibilities can cause relationship problems in mentoring when there is minimal to no compatibility between the partners because of

personality or worldview discrepancies. Partners with divergent opinions may quarrel and find it difficult to accomplish desired results rather than working toward a common goal (Van Ginkela et al., 2015). Formal mentorship programs should minimize the likelihood of compatibility problems by giving participants some autonomy in choosing their partners. Compatibility is less of a concern in casual mentoring agreements since both individuals actively seek the relationship and may already be acquainted, increasing the likelihood that they will get along. According to NTIP (2011), mentors and mentees should set clear expectations and always uphold a high standard of professionalism. Positive working relationships are fostered, and mistrust is decreased when both mentors and mentees maintain control over their relationship. Mentees' attitude and degree of interest can also be a hindrance to their performance in a mentorship program, as these variables might negatively affect their participation (Dishena, 2014). When mentees exhibit a willingness to learn and actively participate in the process, mentoring is more effective. Furthermore, financial resources may also act as a barrier to mentoring that is effective. 2.10.5 Insufficient Funds Enough money and time must be dedicated to mentoring and other preservice student teacher support programs. One of the difficulties with financial resources is acknowledging that mentoring increases staff members' already heavy workloads. According to Dominguez and Kochan (2020), mentor teachers ought to receive compensation for the extra duties they perform. If mentors are to be compensated at all, the partnering universities must determine how. According to Liston, Whitcomb, and Borko (2006), mentoring should not be seen as an extra activity that teachers might choose to add to their burden; rather, it is a responsibility that needs time commitment. For mentor mentors to properly concentrate on mentoring, their teaching time should be minimized. Additionally, mentors are important because they have

a good impact on the school's complete teaching and learning

environment (Liston et al., 2006). Incentives such as salary increases can serve to motivate mentors. Kilburg (2007) emphasizes the importance of compensating mentor teachers for the time they invest in mentoring, as taking personal and family time without compensation is not sustainable. School districts and school management teams should consider providing monetary compensation to mentors, demonstrating a commitment to, and valuing the conversations that mentees and mentors need to have regularly. For mentors, it's essential to reduce their workload while maintaining their

salaries. This reduction is important since in the initial years of teaching

, lesson preparation takes a lot of time. It also enables mentees to take an active part in mentoring programs. 2.10.6 Contextual Components The mentoring process is influenced by several circumstances, including demanding work environments that can result in feelings of ineffectiveness and burnout, such as large teaching loads, extracurricular obligations, resource constraints, and long hours (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005). Furthermore, elements of the educational setting, including school culture, goals, policies, curricula, administrative support, and resource availability, impact the effectiveness of mentoring (Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). According to Mabaso (2012), a supportive school culture—which encompasses instructors' comprehension of the school's structure, work requirements, and interpersonal relationships is crucial for the effectiveness of mentoring. The

curriculum of the school, which includes instructional paradigms and policies for classroom management, and instructional techniques, also shapes the learning environment and affects mentoring outcomes (Mabaso, 2012). Preservice student teachers require orientation not only on educational practices but also on administrative tasks and resources within the school to alleviate frustrations and stress (Mabaso, 2012). Cultural factors within the school, such as mentor motivation, preservice student teacher engagement, the efficiency of mentoring is influenced by resources available, support from school administration teams, and other factors (Nghaamwa, 2017). Disabling school cultures characterized by poor leadership, professional isolation, and demoralized staff can hinder good mentorship (Intellectual Growth Networks, 2015). According to Liston et al. (2006), there is a substantial impact of workplace conditions specifically, supportive leadership and well-informed decision-making on teachers' competency and professional development. Mentees' professional identities and experiences are greatly influenced by their educational environment, and collaborative cultures are conducive to successful outcomes (Dishena, 2014; Nghaamwa, 2017). However, in some schools, preservice student teachers may face challenges such as excessive workloads and unfair distribution of responsibilities, which can lead to frustration and burnout (Nghaamwa, 2017). To create a supportive learning environment for mentees, schools should focus on collaboration, leadership in learning, and recognizing mentees as valuable assets (Gravett and Ramsaroop, 2019). Supportive school cultures, where the needs of preservice student teachers are recognized and addressed, are essential for their success (Gravett and Kroon, 2023). In order to create a supportive culture for mentees, mentors play a critical role in offering assistance, organizing mentoring programs, and encouraging cooperation among stakeholders (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). To guarantee the success of mentoring programs, all relevant parties' teachers and school administrators included should be included (Iancu-Haddad, 2009). Mentoring programs might not be successful if stakeholders don't support them (Liston et al., 2006). In conclusion, addressing the barriers to effective mentoring requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders and a commitment to creating a supportive school culture. Changing a school's culture takes time, but with patience and incentives, such as rewards for teacher participation, it can be achieved (Schussler, 2006).

2.11 Group Mentoring as a Sustainable Solution for Mentees

Group mentoring can indeed serve as a sustainable solution for mentees in various contexts. In a group mentoring setting, mentees have access to a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and expertise from multiple mentors and peers. This diversity can offer comprehensive guidance and support that addresses different aspects of their professional and personal development. Group mentoring encourages collaboration and shared learning among mentees. Through discussions, brainstorming sessions, and collaborative projects, mentees can improve their combined knowledge and abilities by learning from one another's achievements, difficulties, and tactics (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). Mentees in group mentoring settings often feel a sense of accountability to their peers, which can motivate them to set and achieve their goals (Ambrosetti, Dekkers, and Knight, (2017). Knowing that they are part of a supportive community where progress is monitored and celebrated can boost mentees' commitment and perseverance. Group mentoring exposes mentees to a broader network of mentors, peers, and professionals in their field. This expanded network can provide valuable connections, opportunities for collaboration, and access to resources that contribute to their long- term

success and sustainability (Mphojane, 2021) Group mentoring can be more cost and time efficient than traditional one-on-one mentoring, as it allows mentors to support multiple mentees simultaneously. Additionally, mentees benefit from shared resources, experiences, and support, maximizing the impact of mentoring efforts. Group mentoring can facilitate ongoing support and mentorship beyond formal programs or specific timeframes. Mentees may remain in touch with their peers and mentors, developing enduring bonds and getting assistance all throughout their professional lives (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). Overall, I assert that group mentoring offers a sustainable and holistic approach to mentorship, leveraging the collective wisdom, support, and resources of a community to empower mentees in their personal and professional growth journey. According to my findings, group mentoring exemplifies a comprehensive and enduring methodology for mentorship, capitalizing on the shared expertise, encouragement, and assets of the mentoring collective. This communal framework serves to uplift and assist mentees as they pursue their developmental trajectories in both their personal lives and career paths. The collective approach not only distributes mentoring responsibilities among a wider group, but also enriches the mentoring experience with diverse viewpoints, creating a robust support system that fosters individual advancement within the context of a nurturing community.

2.12 Mentoring Framework

The framework for mentoring programs, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership (2011) and exemplified by Queensland Health's Continence Clinicians mentoring framework, encompasses various essential components. These include identifying the target population, defining objectives and aims, facilitating mentor- mentee matching, determining the form and logistics of mentoring, establishing meeting arrangements, and involving relevant stakeholders such as advisors, staff, and participants (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011) Queensland Health's framework, for instance, aimed to promote professional development principles, support clinicians in a dynamic work environment, offer tailored support, foster knowledge and skill growth, enhance recruitment and retention, improve workplace communication and efficiency, encourage a culture of organizational learning, and bridge training and clinical implementation gaps (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011) Effective mentoring frameworks require careful consideration and planning. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2011), setting up and managing such frameworks involves various components such as the mentoring process itself, mentor identification and training, routine organizational activities, public relations efforts, fundraising activities, budget allocations, and data collection for evaluation. Successful mentoring frameworks are grounded in established mentoring methods and strategies, as highlighted by Montgomery (2017). Key discussions in forming a shared understanding about mentoring frameworks include communication methods, meeting frequency and objectives, and mentoring aspirations (Montgomery, 2017). To ensure successful outcomes, it is crucial for mentors and mentees to have clear expectations and obligations (Grant, 2015; Washington & Cox, 2016). Megginson et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of establishing measurable outcomes linked to defined goals and expectations, as well as achieving a shared understanding of the mentoring discussion's nature and the form of the mentoring relationship. Strike and Nickelsen (2011) suggest that effective mentoring frameworks typically span over several years, with ongoing support, professional development, and evaluation processes in place. Cordingley (2019) further emphasizes ten principles informing mentoring frameworks, including structured professional discourse,

collaborative support, self-direction, goal-setting, and efficient resource utilization. In summary, designing and implementing a sustainable mentoring framework requires careful consideration of objectives, target populations, logistics, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing evaluation processes. Clear communication, shared expectations, and a commitment to growth and development are essential for the success of mentoring programs. 2.13 Developing A Mentoring Framework The creation of a

mentoring framework for mentor teachers and preservice student

teachers fulfils the vital function of offering assistance and

direction in navigating the demands and obligations of their positions. According to Hudson & Hudson (2018) major aims of such a framework include: Understanding Job Expectations: Mentors and mentees should be able to comprehend their employment tasks, responsibilities, and expectations with the aid of the mentoring framework. Mentors can provide insights into the day-to-day tasks, leadership responsibilities, and effective strategies for managing school operations. Navigating Challenges: Mentees may encounter various challenges in their roles, such as managing conflicts, implementing new policies, or improving academic performance. The mentoring framework should equip mentees with strategies and resources to effectively address these challenges and overcome obstacles. Improving Communication and Understanding: Effective communication is essential for successful mentorship. Mentors can support mentees in enhancing their communication skills, fostering positive relationships with staff, learners, and

parents, and promoting a culture of collaboration and trust within

the school community. Establishing Professional Networks: For mentees to obtain resources, exchange best practices, and ask seasoned colleagues for guidance, they must first create professional networks. The mentoring framework should facilitate opportunities for mentees to connect with other educational mentors, both within and outside their school district. Providing a Support System: Mentors often face high demands and levels of stress in their jobs. Principals should feel at ease asking for advice, disclosing issues, and getting encouragement from peers and mentors in a supportive environment created by the mentoring framework. Enhancing Trust and Self-esteem: Mentoring can help boost mentees' confidence in their leadership abilities and decision-making skills. A strong sense of self-worth and role competency can be developed in principals through mentorship, support, and constructive criticism. Promoting Professional and Personal Development: Ultimately, the mentoring framework should aim to foster the professional and personal growth of mentees. Mentors can support mentees in setting goals, identifying areas for improvement, and pursuing professional

development opportunities to enhance their teaching effectiveness. By addressing these key objectives, a well-designed mentoring framework can provide invaluable support to novice or struggling principals as they navigate the complexities of educational leadership and work towards achieving their professional and personal goals (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). Model for Teaching Practice Mentoring Emanating from The Study The figure below sets out the framework and interventions emanating from the data. From the six broad themes, a model for operational effectiveness was

developed, as shown below: Figure 2.2: Model for Teaching practice mentoring For preservice teachers to complete their teaching practice in schools, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are essential sources of support. To create mentorship cultures that work, these institutions need to make sure that mentor instructors have strong support networks and opportunities for interaction. This necessitates a careful review and improvement of mentorship rules and associated guidelines for teaching practices. The foundation for how mentor lecturers and mentor teachers conduct their mentoring sessions is provided by the laws and framework that regulate teaching practices. As a result, taking care of these elements is crucial to creating a thorough and successful mentoring strategy. One concept drawn from Vygotsky's theory that emphasizes the importance of collaboration, shared decision-making, and a strong sense of community

between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is the Zone of

Proximal Development (ZPD). By utilizing this Vygotskian paradigm while mentoring Foundation Phase preservice teachers, an environment of respect for one another, candid communication, and cooperative problem-solving can be fostered. The ZPD method promotes power-sharing based on knowledge and a shared comprehension of the goal of education. By enabling mentor teachers to actively participate in decision-making processes and offer their experience, this collaborative process facilitates successful decision-making and problem-solving. The concept is consistent with Vygotsky's observation that decisions and policies ought to result from dialogue that leads to agreement (Vygotsky, 1978). It emphasizes how crucial it is to meaningfully and collaboratively include mentor teachers in decision-making processes. Mentor teachers and lecturers can share their insightful knowledge and are held responsible for doing so. This collaborative decision-making increases the overall efficacy of the mentoring process and promotes a sense of ownership. Important elements of this paradigm are open, honest communication, strong administrative procedures, and efficient monitoring and assessment systems. These components deal with issues with participant trust, communication, and coherence. The Vygotskian principle of shared learning emphasizes the need for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to align their beliefs, goals, and sense of accountability to foster a supportive learning environment and build trust (Kiral, 2020). Despite the important function that mentoring plays, a lack of training in many programs prevents upward mobility within mentoring jobs. Mentors frequently take strict, prescribed methods that might not be in line with how teaching is changing. Mentoring frameworks need to put flexibility and creativity first in order to solve this. The mentoring framework should incorporate ongoing professional development and training to guarantee that mentors have the abilities needed to successfully navigate the changing educational landscape. The new mentoring framework has a strong emphasis on professional development and leadership, which is in line with the study's conclusions. Control over resources, such as time, materials, and personnel, is frequently emphasized in traditional management teachings (Wana, 2019). But to be truly effective, mentoring needs to move from a model of control to one of service and support. "Leaders don't command and control; they serve and support," as Wana (2019) observes. It is imperative that mentors have the authority to make judgments grounded in professional ethics and collaborative principles. This emphasizes the necessity of providing mentors with both initial and continuous training and development. Preservice

teachers need a strong mentoring program to develop into excellent educators. Recognizing how mentor lecturers and mentor teachers impact the learning process is crucial to resolving problems with mentoring methods. A cohesive and effective mentoring environment requires cooperation between mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers. Contextual elements like location, available resources, and institutional support also need to be considered because they have a big impact on how effective mentoring is. Comprehending these variables facilitates enhanced problem-solving efficacy and aids in detecting possible obstacles within the mentoring procedure. HEIs can improve the assistance given to preservice teachers and mentor teachers by incorporating these components into the mentoring framework. This will ultimately result in more effective teaching practices and professional development. 2.14 Hudson's

Five-Factor Framework for Mentoring A five-factor model was identified by Hudson (2013) and includes the following: modelling, feedback, system needs, pedagogical expertise, and personal traits (see Figure 2.3). Every element has a major impact on how successful mentoring relationships and instructional strategies are. The five-factor model is explored below.

Figure 2.3: Five-Factor Framework for Mentoring Developed By Hudson (2013)

Personal Attributes: This component includes the traits and personal attributes of mentors as well as mentees. Personal attributes such as empathy, communication skills, adaptability, and openness to feedback are crucial for building strong mentoring relationships and fostering professional growth. Mentors and mentees with positive personal attributes are more likely to establish rapport, trust, and mutual respect, which are essential for effective mentoring.

Pedagogical Learning: is the comprehension of educational theories, practices, and concepts. Mentors should possess a deep understanding of pedagogy and instructional strategies to provide meaningful guidance and support to mentees. This includes knowledge of curriculum development, assessment techniques, differentiated instruction, and classroom management strategies. Mentors with strong pedagogical knowledge can help mentees improve the learning outcomes for their students and their efficacy as teachers.

System Requirements: encompass the organizational structures, policies, and procedures that influence mentoring programs and educational practices. Mentors and mentees must navigate various system requirements, such as administrative expectations, resource allocation, time constraints, and accountability measures. Understanding and effectively managing these system requirements are essential for implementing successful mentoring programs and achieving desired outcomes.

Modelling: involves the demonstration of effective teaching practices and professional behaviours by mentors. Mentors serve as role models for mentees, showcasing exemplary teaching strategies, decision-making processes, ethical conduct, and reflective practices. Mentees gain knowledge from mentors' modelling behaviours through observation and imitation, which they then implement into their own teaching practices. In mentoring relationships, modelling is an effective way to impart knowledge, skills, and values.

Feedback: is essential for promoting continuous improvement and reflective practice in mentoring relationships. Mentors provide constructive feedback to mentees based on observations, assessments, and interactions. Effective feedback highlights strengths, identifies areas for growth, and offers specific suggestions for improvement. Mentees benefit from receiving timely and actionable feedback from mentors, which helps them refine their teaching techniques, address

challenges, and achieve professional goals (Hudson, 2013). The five-factor model developed by Hudson (2013) emphasizes the complexity of mentoring relationships and instructional strategies. Mentors and mentees can improve student learning outcomes, foster professional growth, and increase their effectiveness by addressing personal qualities, pedagogical expertise, system requirements, modelling, and feedback. The mentoring study makes use of Hudson's (2013) five-factor framework since it provides a comprehensive and empirically supported method for comprehending the workings of successful mentoring partnerships. Each element is crucial in defining the experiences and outcomes of mentors and mentees, including human traits, pedagogical knowledge, system requirements, modelling, and feedback. This study uses this framework to assess how these components operate in the mentoring program, especially with regard to mentees improved professional development. Additionally, the framework makes it possible to analyze the mentoring process in a more systematic manner and provides insights into the ways in which professional competence, institutional expectations, and personal traits interact to create meaningful, introspective learning experiences. Furthermore, Hudson's model aids in identifying the mentoring framework's strong points and potential areas for development, directing the creation of interventions that can enhance the standard of mentoring and, in turn, enhance instructional strategies and student achievement. By applying this framework, mentoring relationships are guaranteed to be in line with best practices and to foster long-term development in the context of education. 2.15 Conclusion Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive examination of models of mentoring, the conceptualization of mentoring, and the roles of mentors and mentees, with a particular focus on the context of South Africa, other African countries, and developing nations. Throughout the literature review, various models of mentoring have been explored, highlighting the diverse approaches to mentorship found in different educational settings. From formal structured programs to informal peer mentoring arrangements, the review has demonstrated the importance of

flexibility and adaptability in mentoring practices to meet the unique

needs of preservice student teachers. Additionally, the

conceptualization of mentoring has been discussed, emphasizing its multifaceted nature as both a supportive relationship and a professional development process. Mentoring is not only about imparting knowledge and skills but also about fostering personal growth, confidence, and resilience among mentees. The roles of mentors and mentees have been delineated, underscoring the importance of collaboration, guidance, and mutual respect in mentoring relationships. Mentors play a crucial role in providing support, feedback, and encouragement to mentees, while mentees contribute their enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and openness to feedback. Furthermore, the concept of mentoring in South Africa, other African countries, and developing nations has been examined, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced in these contexts. Limited resources, lack of mentoring programs, and socio-economic disparities present significant barriers to effective mentorship, yet innovative approaches and community-driven initiatives offer promising avenues for supporting mentees in these settings. CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 3.1 Introduction Chapter 2

delved into the relevant literature pertaining to the subject of

the study. It provided background information on the mentoring of

preservice student teachers in South Africa , outlined the

study's location and context, and reviewed the impact of mentoring in various studies and contexts. Moreover, it examined both challenges and success factors influencing mentoring preservice student teachers. The chapter also discussed effective mentoring areas, mentor and mentee roles, responsibilities, and the obstacles encountered in mentoring. As previously highlighted, the study aimed to design, implement, and evaluate a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers while identifying barriers hindering effective mentoring in a South African higher education institution. It also investigated issues affecting mentoring and defined what constitutes effective mentorship. The study also considered factors impacting lecturers and mentor teachers, given the emphasis on preservice student teacher mentorship. The parts that follow provide a detailed

explanation of the theoretical framework used in the study

as well as the mentorship structure. 3.2 Mentoring Framework The framework for mentoring programs, as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership (2011) and exemplified by Queensland Health's Continence Clinicians mentoring framework, encompasses various essential components. These include identifying the target population, defining objectives and aims, facilitating mentor- mentee matching, determining the form and logistics of mentoring, establishing meeting arrangements, and involving relevant stakeholders such as advisors, staff, and participants (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011) Queensland Health's framework, for instance, aimed to promote professional development principles, support clinicians in a dynamic work environment, offer tailored support, foster knowledge and skill growth, enhance recruitment and retention, improve workplace communication and efficiency, encourage a culture of organizational learning, and bridge training and clinical implementation gaps (National Mentoring Partnership, 2011) Effective mentoring frameworks require careful consideration and planning. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2011), setting up and managing such frameworks involves various components such as the mentoring process itself, mentor identification and training, routine organizational activities, public relations efforts, fundraising activities, budget allocations, and data collection for evaluation. Successful mentoring frameworks are grounded in established mentoring methods and strategies, as highlighted by Montgomery (2017). Key discussions in forming a shared understanding about mentoring frameworks include communication methods, meeting frequency and objectives, and mentoring aspirations (Montgomery, 2017). To ensure successful outcomes, it is crucial for mentors and mentees to have clear expectations and obligations (Grant, 2015; Washington & Cox, 2016). Megginson et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of establishing measurable outcomes linked to defined goals and expectations, as well as achieving a shared understanding of the mentoring discussion's nature and the form of the mentoring relationship. Strike and Nickelsen (2011) suggest that effective mentoring frameworks typically span over several years, with ongoing support, professional development, and evaluation processes in place. Cordingley (2019) further emphasizes ten principles informing mentoring frameworks, including structured professional discourse, collaborative support, self-direction, goal-setting, and efficient

resource utilization. In summary, designing and implementing a sustainable mentoring framework requires careful consideration of objectives, target populations, logistics, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing evaluation processes. Clear communication, shared expectations, and a commitment to growth and development are essential for the success of mentoring programs. 3.3 Developing a New Mentoring Framework Developing a mentoring framework for preservice student teachers and mentor teachers serves the crucial purpose of providing support and guidance to navigate the challenges and responsibilities of their role. According to Hudson & Hudson (2018) primary objectives of such a framework include: Understanding Job Expectations: The mentoring framework should help mentors and mentees to gain a clear understanding of their job roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Mentors can provide insights into the day-to-day tasks, leadership responsibilities, and effective strategies for managing school operations. Navigating Challenges: Mentees may encounter various challenges in their roles, such as managing conflicts, implementing new policies, or improving academic performance. The mentoring framework should equip mentees with strategies and resources to effectively address these challenges and overcome obstacles. Improving Communication and Understanding: Effective communication is essential for successful mentorship. Mentors can support mentees in enhancing their communication skills, fostering positive relationships with staff, learners, and parents, and

promoting a culture of collaboration and trust within the school

community. Establishing Professional Networks: Building professional networks is critical for mentees to access resources, share best practices, and seek advice from experienced colleagues. The mentoring framework should facilitate opportunities for mentees to connect with other educational mentors, both within and outside their school district. Providing a Support System: Mentors often face high levels of stress and pressure in their roles. The mentoring framework should establish a supportive environment where

principals feel comfortable seeking guidance, sharing concerns,

and receiving encouragement from their mentors and peers. Enhancing Trust and Self-esteem: Mentoring can help boost mentees' confidence in their leadership abilities and decision-making skills. Through constructive feedback, encouragement, and mentorship, principals can develop a strong

sense of self-esteem and competence in their role. Promoting Professional and Personal Development: Ultimately, the mentoring framework should aim to foster the professional and personal growth of mentees. Mentors can support mentees in setting goals, identifying areas for improvement, and pursuing professional development opportunities to

enhance their teaching effectiveness. By addressing these key objectives, a well-designed mentoring framework can provide invaluable support to novice or struggling principals as they navigate the complexities of educational leadership and work towards achieving their professional and personal goals (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). 3.4 Theoretical Framework Framing the study within a pragmatic paradigm allows for a flexible approach, combining various methods to address the research questions effectively (Leavy, 2017). The chosen theoretical framework should align

with the research questions and provide guidance for data analysis. Given the focus on examining the mentoring orientation of South African teacher preparation within its context, Vygotsky's constructivism theory, particularly

the concepts of scaffolding and zone of proximal development (ZPD), were selected. Vygotsky's theory is appropriate for comprehending how mentoring functions within the context of teacher preparation since it

highlights the importance of social contact and assistance in

learning (Leavy, 2017). As an additional conceptual framework for the study, Hudson & Hudson's five-factor framework on effective teacher training (2013) was included. This framework provides a paradigm that covers many facets of teacher training and provides an organized method for analyzing successful mentoring methods. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study can effectively explore the dynamics of mentoring in South African teacher preparation programs, considering both the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications for designing an effective mentoring framework. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of how mentoring operates within the specific context of South African teacher education, while also providing insights into the practical implementation of mentoring practices. By considering both theoretical principles, such as Vygotsky's constructivism theory, and practical considerations outlined in frameworks like Hudson and Hudson's, the study can offer valuable guidance for the development of mentoring programs that meet the needs of

novice teachers and contribute to their professional growth

and development (Hudson, 2013). 3.4.1 Social Learning Theories and Mentoring The integration of social learning theories, such as Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978), into mentoring programs can greatly enhance the effectiveness of mentoring for preservice student teachers. The

importance of social interaction and teamwork in the learning

process is emphasized by Vygotsky's theory. In this situation, mentoring acts as a way to encourage social contact and give mentees directed support as they advance their knowledge and abilities. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning happens when people connect with more experienced people, like mentors, who help learners by offering guidance and scaffolding when they take on tasks that are beyond their current capacity. Mentors serve as expert others who guide and facilitate the mentees' learning process, gradually transferring responsibility to the mentees as they gain confidence and competence. Furthermore, social learning theories stress how crucial modelling, imitation, and observation are to the learning process. Mentors can demonstrate effective teaching practices, provide feedback, and offer opportunities for mentees to observe and emulate successful strategies in real-world contexts. By integrating social learning principles into mentoring programs, mentors can create collaborative learning environments where preservice student teachers have opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, receive tailored support, and actively participate in their own learning. This method not only helps mentees advance professionally, but it also builds a sense of support and companionship between mentees and mentors. Incorporating social learning

theories into mentoring programs for preservice student teachers can help mentors effectively support mentees' learning and development by providing scaffolding, modelling, and opportunities for social interaction and collaboration. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the

social nature of learning and can contribute to the

success and effectiveness of mentoring initiatives in education (Vygotsky, 1978). 3.4.2 Social Cognitive Theories and Mentoring Bandura's social cognitive theory, as described by Kasai (2012), provides valuable insights into how people learn through observation, imitation, and practice in social environments. This theory underscores the significance of mentors as role models whose behaviours and actions are observed and emulated by mentees. The emphasis on observation, imitation, and practice highlights the iterative process through which individuals internalize and refine their skills and behaviours. The mentor-mentee relationship, as depicted in this theory, is characterized by mutual understanding and reciprocal learning. Mentors serve as critical friends, guides, and counsellors, actively engaging in a relationship that benefits both parties. This aligns with the idea that mentoring is a two-way stream, where mentors and mentees derive value from each other's experiences, perspectives, and skills. Furthermore, the theory underscores the importance of social learning in various contexts beyond formal mentoring programs, such as schools, churches, and sports fields. This highlights the pervasive nature of social learning and its relevance in diverse social settings. Bandura's assertion that most human behaviour is learned through observation underscores the significance of modelling and social interaction in shaping individuals' behaviours and choices. However, it is essential to recognize that observation alone is not sufficient for learning; individuals' own motivation and cognitive processes also play a crucial role in determining what is learned and how it is applied. Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a compelling framework for

understanding the role of observation, imitation, and practice in learning within social contexts. By recognizing the importance of mentors as models and facilitators of learning, this theory informs effective mentoring practices aimed at supporting mentees' professional and personal development. In this study, Bandura's theory of social learning is not utilized in the development of the mentoring framework. Bandura's theory emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in learning behaviour, suggesting that individuals learn from their environment through social interactions and the experiences of others. While Bandura's theory offers valuable insights into

how individuals acquire new knowledge and skills through observation and modelling, it may not directly align with the specific focus of the mentoring framework being developed in this study. Therefore, while Bandura's theory offers valuable insights into social learning processes, I highlight that it is not directly applied in the development of the mentoring framework in this study, as the focus is on integrating Vygotsky's constructivism theory and Hudson and Hudson's framework to address the specific research questions and objectives. 3.4.3 Vygotsky's Social

Constructivist Theory The zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is central to Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, offers a useful framework for comprehending the mentor- mentee relationship in the

context of education. The difference between what a learner can do on their own and what they can accomplish with the help of a more experienced person, such a mentor, is known as the ZPD. The mentoring model aligns

well with Vygotsky's theory, as mentors play a crucial role in guiding

and scaffolding the learning of their mentees. Mentors provide the necessary support and assistance to help mentees progress from their

current level of understanding and skill to a higher level of

proficiency. This process involves a gradual transfer of responsibility from the mentor to the mentee, as the mentee gains confidence and competence in their abilities. Vygotsky highlighted how people build knowledge through their relationships with others, emphasizing the importance of social interactions in learning. As a result, mentoring turns into a cooperative process in which mentees and mentors cooperate to meet common learning objectives. Mentees actively participate in learning activities and strive to internalize new information and abilities, while mentors offer direction, criticism, and modelling. In the mentoring process, the idea of intersubjectivity, or shared understanding, is essential. The duties and objectives of the mentoring relationship must be understood by both mentees and mentors. This common viewpoint promotes efficient communication and teamwork, which helps the mentor and mentee transmit information and abilities (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes the value of social interaction, scaffolding, and shared understanding in the learning process, provides insightful understanding of the dynamics of mentoring relationships overall. By putting Vygotsky's theories into practice, mentors can assist their mentees in realizing their full potential and advancing on their learning path. The way the mentor raises the mentee's ZPD is depicted in Figure 2.4 (Vygotsky, 1978). Figure 3.1 Zone of Proximal Development (Adapted from Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This

study defines the zone of proximal development (ZPD) of preservice

student teachers as the difference between their potential level and the level of knowledge they now possess from their teaching practice, under the guidance of seasoned mentors. This emphasizes the notion that mentors, texts, in-service training, and observation are some of the other resources that help preservice student teachers advance their ZPD in addition to their university education. Actively participating in the process of transitioning from one ZPD to the next is essential for ongoing development, both personally and professionally. Stalling ZPD can occur from nonparticipation in developmental initiatives. Setting specific short- and long-term goals and keeping track of advancement are necessary to maintain one's ZPD. It is advised for preservice student teachers to take charge of their own development rather than relying only on mentors. To advance both personally and professionally, preservice student teachers must participate in ongoing professional development programs and get mentorship early in

their careers. According to Vygotsky, the ZPD represents the difference

between what a learner can accomplish on their own and what

they can accomplish with help. "Proximal" refers to the degree to which the help offered is in line with the learner's prior knowledge or abilities. Mentees can improve their knowledge and abilities through interaction with seasoned mentors through collaborative initiatives like mentoring programs. (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Chaiklin (2003), the

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is reached when a

student gains the capacity to work independently through contact or cooperation with their teacher. The teacher provides opportunities for learning, imitation, observation, and gradual skill improvement. As per Vygotsky (1998), the ZPD can be established through collaboration, which enables the extraction of components that propel mental growth both during and post the developmental stages of the learner. Vygotsky (1998) used collaboration and interpretation as techniques of instructional experiments to identify and support learners with smaller ZPDs in moving to larger ones, as noted by Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, and Miller (2003). In order for people to advance from their current developmental stage to their potential level, scaffolding is necessary. When scaffolding is used throughout the mentoring process, mentees benefit since it makes it more likely that they will learn the skills they are taught using this method. Scaffolding Figure 3.2: ZPD and Scaffolding (Adapted from McLeod, 2018, np). According to McLeod (2018, np), Figure 5 shows the extent of a child's capacity for autonomous learning, the knowledge that can be acquired with help, and the concepts that are above their current level of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning should occur through social contact, with more experienced people serving as mentors and leaders. These adults could give verbal directions or set an example of behaviour until the youngster is able to complete the task on their own. This procedure is similar to the use of scaffolding in building, where support is given while a structure is being built and taken down once it is finished or stable. Preservice student teachers face the challenge of bridging theoretical knowledge acquired during pre-service education with practical applications in schools. This transition can be complex and unsettling, necessitating scaffolding. Scaffolding involves teachers ensuring that learners academically benefit from instruction and learning materials (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). These supportive measures are crucial, as the volume and complexity of knowledge acquired may leave preservice student teachers at a threshold, rather than fully integrating them into the learning environment. Similarly, as adult learners navigating new teaching environments, preservice student teachers may experience uncertainty and require guidance to acclimate to the work environment. Scaffolding is defined by Balaban (1995:52) as the direction that the teacher gives the student while utilizing targeted questions and encouraging interactions to promote learning. According to Van de Pol, Volman, Oort, and Beishuizen (2019), it entails assisting the student in moving from their present level of understanding to their prospective level of understanding. Van de Pol et al. (2019) claim that the scaffolding and assistance provided to learners to do tasks successfully determines their success in any given activity. By assigning assignments of a suitable level of difficulty, overseeing them skilfully, and modifying their support as necessary, teachers offer contingent support. Scaffolding is a metaphor used by Van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2019) to represent the temporary help that is given in education to satisfy the requirements of learners. Scaffolding in education

refers to individualized help that is catered to the needs of students and the educational norms (Van de Pol et al., 2019). This implies that scaffolding entails students being guided by an experienced teacher who progressively withdraws support, in a manner akin to how scaffolding is taken down when construction is finished. When it comes to mentoring, an experienced teacher who has more knowledge and experience is in charge of assisting a new teacher in learning the nuances of the classroom until the new teacher is competent enough to run the program on their own without the mentor's help. 3.5 Linking the Newly Developed Mentoring Framework to Vygotsky's Theory Scaffolding: The new mentoring framework aligns with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding by providing temporary, targeted support to help preservice teachers achieve tasks they cannot perform independently. The framework's structured feedback and personalized support mechanisms mirror the scaffolding approach, offering step-by-step guidance that gradually reduces as preservice teachers gain competence. This ensures that support is closely matched to the preservice teacher's current abilities and

developmental needs. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The

framework directly connects to the ZPD by focusing on providing support within the range of tasks that preservice teachers can perform with guidance but cannot yet complete on their own. By tailoring feedback and support to the preservice teacher's ZPD, the framework ensures that challenges are appropriately aligned with their developmental level. This helps preservice teachers progress from guided learning to independent practice, effectively bridging the gap between their current capabilities and potential. Relationship-Building and Trust: Building trust and respect between mentors and preservice teachers is crucial for effective scaffolding. The framework's emphasis on relationship-building activities and supportive interactions is consistent with Vygotsky's view that a positive and collaborative learning environment is essential for effective scaffolding. Strong mentor-preservice teacher relationships facilitate a supportive learning atmosphere where preservice teachers feel comfortable seeking help and exploring new concepts. Professional Development for Mentors: Ongoing professional development ensures that mentors are equipped with the skills necessary for effective scaffolding. Training in advanced mentoring techniques and communication skills helps mentors identify and address the ZPD of their preservice teachers, providing appropriate and effective support. This continuous professional growth aligns with Vygotsky's idea that educators need to be well-prepared to support learners' developmental needs. Regular Evaluations: Evaluations of the mentoring process conducted on a regular basis show how scaffolding is dynamic and adapts to the changing demands of the learner. By ensuring that mentoring support is adaptable to changes in the preservice teacher's ZPD, the framework's iterative evaluation approach promotes continued growth and learning. In summary, the new mentoring framework integrates Vygotsky's principles of scaffolding and the ZPD by offering tailored, step-by-step support, focusing on the preservice teacher's developmental level, fostering strong relationships, and ensuring continuous professional development and evaluation. This theoretical alignment enhances the framework's effectiveness in supporting the growth and development of preservice teachers. 3.6 Conclusion The theoretical framework and mentorship structure supporting the study were thoroughly outlined in this chapter's conclusion. The chapter established the groundwork for understanding how

these theories feed successful mentoring practices by examining the pertinent ideas that informed the research, such as Vygotsky's concept of

scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. The intricacies

of the mentoring relationship were scrutinized via the prism of the theoretical framework, specifically with regard to preservice teacher

development within the context of a higher education environment in

South Africa. A thorough explanation of the mentorship framework was also provided, highlighting the duties and obligations of lecturers and mentor teachers in assisting preservice teachers as they progress through their careers. In addition to assisting in the development of teaching competencies, this framework was intended to provide a positive learning atmosphere where preservice teachers could evaluate their methods and get helpful criticism. The chapter emphasized the interaction between theory and practice, showing how the mentorship framework's conception and execution were guided by theoretical precepts. To summarize, this chapter presents the theoretical framework and mentorship structure that serve as the conceptual and practical basis for the research. These components are essential for comprehending the study of the mentoring framework's efficacy that follows, as well as for identifying problems and potential areas of development. This chapter will provide valuable insights that will be crucial in analyzing the results and developing suggestions for improving mentorship in teacher education. CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1. Introduction Chapter Three of this study focused on the

theoretical framework and concepts that guided the process

of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The social learning theorist Vygotsky (1978) and his influential works on scaffolding and the

Zone of Proximal Development theory significantly deepened the

critical analysis of the research outcomes. This chapter emphasized the importance of aligning research sites, methodology, design, instruments, sampling techniques, study participants, and rationale with the study's objectives and research questions. The methodology chapter is divided into several sections that outline the reasoning behind participant selection, the rationale behind specific study site selection, and the underlying reasoning for methodological decisions. The pragmatic paradigm,

which served as the research paradigm for this study, is also covered in

depth in this chapter. The chapter ends with a brief analysis of the

limitations of the study and how they were overcome. 4.2

Critical Research Question As previously stated, this study aims to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for pre-

service teachers, in a higher education institution in South Africa.

Research questions are derived from knowledge gaps that have been found in a given field or subject. These inquiries may result from in-depth literature assessments or original research projects (Maree, 2020). They are the first steps in a research activity since they are inquiries into particular problems or concerns that need to be looked at. On the other hand, the research topic is the initial stage of a research project that is usually started after a thorough grasp of the topic needs to be investigated (Creswell, 2017). A substantial body of published research characterizes the research topic as a targeted investigation that forms the basis of a research study. It expresses the particular facet of a subject that the investigator hopes to explore (Maree, 2020; Willis, 2023). In a subject of study, research questions are created to fill in knowledge gaps or investigate novel occurrences. They give the research process direction by advising the choice of suitable methodologies, tactics for gathering data, and approaches for analysis. A well-written research topic is precise, succinct, and clear, allowing the investigator to methodically examine and respond to it via empirical study

(Ibrahim & Bryant, 2023; Newman & Gough, 2020). The study is

directed by the following main research question, which considers the demands of mentor teachers, lecturers, and preservice student teachers

during teaching practice : How is a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed?

4.2.1 Research Hypothesis The inclusion of hypotheses that align with the

quantitative aspect of the study is reasonable, considering the mixed-

method approach utilized in the research. A statement or assertion that the researcher wants to verify or look into is called a hypothesis in a research project. It usually asserts a conclusion regarding a study's findings or forecasts a relationship between two or more variables (Maree, 2020). A clear direction for data gathering and analysis is provided by the hypothesis, which directs the research process, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). As per Creswell & Creswell (2018), the hypothesis presents a particular claim or forecast that the investigator hopes to verify by empirical

research. The aim of this study is to design, implement, and assess a

sustainable mentoring framework for pre-service teachers. This

study is motivated by the recognized importance of good

mentoring in shaping pre-service teachers' professional development

and accomplishments. Although traditional mentoring approaches have shown to be beneficial, they might not be sustainable or able to adjust to new difficulties in teacher preparation (Hudson & Hudson, 2018; Haas, Hudson, and Hudson, 2022). Consequently, the investigation of a sustainable mentorship structure tailored to pre-service teachers' evolving requirements is suggested by this study. Based on the above given circumstances, the ensuing research hypotheses are developed: Null Hypothesis (H0): There won't be a discernible difference between the sustainable mentoring model and conventional mentoring techniques in terms of how effective mentoring

is for pre-service teachers. Alternative Hypothesis (H1): When compared to conventional mentoring techniques, the sustainable mentoring model will result in far higher efficacy in mentoring pre-service teachers. According to the alternative hypothesis, traditional mentoring methods will not result in the same level of progress or effectiveness for pre-service teachers as the sustainable mentoring model. By conducting a thorough empirical investigation, this research seeks to investigate and validate this theory. 4.3 Rationale for Developing a Framework for Preservice Teachers The rationale

of the proposed study originally arose from the researcher's contact and

informal conversations with a few mentor teachers she met during teaching practice at partnering schools. During these conversations, mentor teachers indicate that they were frustrated and faced uncertainty about how to conduct mentoring with student teachers. In addition, the researcher encountered student teachers who attended teaching practice at the same partnering schools who voiced their frustrations about not knowing what to expect during teaching practice mentoring. Based on these encounters the

researcher started investigating the literature available in this regard

but soon realized that although there was literature available on this topic, there was a lack of literature that was conducted with an aim of addressing gaps in practice, structure, support, mentee learning, and developing a context-specific mentoring framework that will provide

guidance to the mentor teachers and student teachers. In line with the

above statements, it is evident that there is an opportunity and a greater need for a mentoring framework to be developed. In taking advantage of the gap that exists this study aims to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for pre-service teachers that enhances teaching practice of preservice in a higher education institution in South Africa. 4.4 Research Site The environmental context in which the study is conducted, and the data is gathered is known as the research setting (Yin, 2018; Maree, 2020). The research site, Mavuba Primary School, is situated in the township of Siyabuswa. For the sake of anonymity, it is referred to by aliases in this study. By keeping the research site anonymous, readers are better able to avoid assuming anything about the institution based on its location or reputation. This makes it possible to keep the findings and analysis front and center rather than the site's particular features. South Africa's province of Mpumalanga has the township of Siyabuswa. The capital of the Kwa Ndebele Bantustan during the Apartheid era was Siyabuswa. It served as the capital from 1981 to 1986, when Kwa Mhlanga assumed the role. The ethnic Ndebele people make up most of the population. The social structure of the people of Siyabuswa is diverse and

influenced by a multitude of factors, such as their cultural

background, economic status, and historical background. The community is defined by ties to one another, a feeling of shared identity, and comfortable connections. Township people work in a range of occupations that show a blending of the formal and informal economies. Siyabuswa does, however, have social issues, just like many township areas. These issues,

which include issues with poverty, education, and resource availability, might have an impact on the community's overall social cohesiveness (Phahlamohlaka & De Villiers, 2021). 4.4.1 'Mavuba Primary School' Mavuba

primary school is an ordinary school specializing in full-service subjects

. Since the school is a Section 21 institution, the Department of Education provides funding for it. The school must use the allotted funds to purchase textbooks and student stationery, pay for electricity and water, and take care of its own maintenance. With a population of 1633 and 30 teachers serving it, the school falls into quintile 2, meaning that the learner-teacher ratio is 54:1. According to student enrolment in schools, quintiles are assigned. Parents and students do not contribute to school fees if they fall under the national quintile 1 to 3. This reflects the socioeconomic status of the students. The quintile and enrolment data for the primary school are shown in the diagram below. NATIONAL QUINTILE 2021 SCHOOL ENROLMENT 2022 SCHOOL 2023 SCHOOL ENROLMENT ENROLMENT NQ1-3 1466 1536 1610 NQ 4 735 770 807 NQ 5 590 598 650 Table 4.1: National Quintiles of Schools The selected public-school falls within the quintile 1-3 threshold, which means that they are no-fee-paying schools. The schools' population is depicted in the table below. SCHOOL POPULATION/ENROLMENT Mavuba Primary School 1633 Table 4.2: Learner Enrolment of the Selected Primary School 4.5 Target Population The participants were assigned pseudonyms that represented their roles in the study for the sake of confidentiality: the abbreviations MT, LT, and PT stood for mentor teachers

, lecturers, and preservice teachers, respectively. The

development of a mentorship framework for pre-service teachers

throughout their teaching practice was the main focus of this study's research. Purposive selection of the participants was done using the qualitative method. The process of choosing research participants for information-rich data from a certain place to fulfill the study

's objectives is known as purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling is used to reach "knowledgeable people," or those who have in-depth knowledge due to their professional function, power, and access to

networks, expertise, or experience, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017). Lewin (2019) states that purposeful sampling comprises selecting people, groups, or institutions (like schools) who possess a wealth of knowledge that may be utilized to solve the research questions. By purposefully choosing the participants, I aimed to reduce the impact of bias

and improve the validity and reliability of the results. The

validity and reliability of my study were enhanced using a range of methodologies, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and

document analysis (Yin, 2009). Mavuba Primary School was purposefully chosen by me because of its proximity to the university, which makes it convenient for collaboration. The mentor teachers there are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their respective fields. They are deeply aware of the complexities and difficulties associated with teaching in their setting. Purposive sampling, according to Weyant (2022), entails the researcher's

deliberate selection of participants. Researchers may choose cases by hand to include in the sample based on their assessment of the

cases' typicality. According to Creswell (2021), it is critical that the

researcher gains knowledge from the research participants who

provide the data. Since they follow course and module guidelines, the mentor lecturers will be included in this sense. Because subject- integration is a crucial component of their curricular practices, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. Pre-service teachers in their third year of schooling have usually finished most of their teacher education program and acquired fundamental information and abilities. They are now in a position where they can actively participate in mentoring relationships and offer insightful criticism on the creation of a mentoring framework. Research issues aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the mentorship framework will be addressed using quantitative data. To obtain the respondents, stratified sampling will be employed. By grouping the population into subgroups or strata according to specific traits that are pertinent to the study, stratified sampling is a sampling technique. In 2020, Maree; in Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Stratified sampling is a technique that divides the population into

homogeneous subgroups, or strata, depending on characteristics

, and then chooses a proportionate number of participants from each stratum to guarantee that the sample accurately represents the

community. Table of target population Research Gender Race
Qualifications participants Mentor teachers 4 Females 1 male All African All
have bachelor's degrees Lecturers 3 females 2 males 2 black 1 white 1 black

and 1 white All have doctoral degrees Preservice teachers 5
females 5 males All black Third year Bachelor of education in Foundation
phase students Table 4.3 Table of Target Population 4.6 Sampling techniques
A sampling approach is a method used in research to choose individuals from

a population (Maree, 2020). Because of the nature of the research

project, participants in the teaching practice program were chosen through the technique of purposive sampling. Because it enables the

researcher to select participants who are both easily accessible and

have pertinent information, the purposive sampling method is

suitable for qualitative research. As per Lewin (2019), purposeful sampling comprises selecting individuals, groups, or institutions (like schools) that possess copious amounts of information that can be employed to tackle the

research problems. Careful thought and effort will go into the selection of participants, which will take place within the HEI. The mentor teachers will be recruited as participants using purposive sampling. The sample will consist of five mentor lecturers and five mentor teachers in addition to 10 preservice teachers who are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. These 10 third-year students are preservice

teachers pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree with a

Foundation phase concentration. The third-year preservice students were recruited through an email invitation. An email was sent to all third-year students in the B.Ed. Foundation phase program, explaining the purpose of the research and inviting interested individuals to participate. Due to their extensive mentoring experience with preservice teachers, the five mentor teachers will be chosen as the most knowledgeable. They were therefore supposed to have amassed important knowledge that could be converted into relevant data. Because they follow course and module guidelines, the five mentor lecturers will be included. Because subject-integration is a crucial component of their curricular practices, the lecturers were deemed competent because they created the course and module outlines. Based on casual contacts that led to observations that they would provide the most relevant data; these five mentor lecturers are the most knowledgeable since they showed that they owned a great deal of mentoring information that they were eager to share. Since year three preservice teachers at the research site are allocated to mentor lecturers and mentor teachers who will be evaluating them, quantitative data from year three preservice teachers will be gathered. Research issues aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the mentorship framework will be addressed through the use of quantitative data. To obtain the respondents, stratified sampling will be employed. According to specific characteristics that are pertinent to the research, the population is divided into subgroups or strata using the stratified sampling approach (Maree, 2020; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

For this reason, preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers who are participating in teaching practice at the higher institution are welcome to participate in the research of this study.

Several criteria will be used to categorize the participants into groups: the mentees' experience level in mentoring, the mentor instructors' mentoring skills, and the fact that they are third-year students pursuing a B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. The five mentor lecturers who are assigned to third years out of a possible 10 mentor lecturers will be chosen through stratified sampling from among the ten preservice teachers, who are third-year students pursuing the B.Ed. Foundation phase degree. Preservice teachers who attend teaching practice at fifteen cooperating schools are paired with five mentor teachers. 4.7 Research Design According to Van Wyk & Taole (2021), the research design is the road map that directs a researcher in choosing how to conduct their study strategy. As such, it is an

exact description of how a researcher would do their work. To make sure that the study's conclusions adequately answer the research questions, research designs are plans for connecting the data to be gathered, the data to be analysed, and the research questions. (2020, Babbie). The type of research topic under investigation, the target audience for the study, and the specific objectives of the research project all influence the research design, in my opinion. The design that will be employed is exploratory sequential design. Exploratory sequential design is a three-phase study in which a researcher follows the constructivist approach. In the first step, a researcher conducts a thorough investigation of the issue; in the second part, the variable and statistical trend are identified and measured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to this design, testing and collection of quantitative data come after the analysis and gathering of qualitative data (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Dawadi, 2020). The first step in this strategy is the gathering and examination of qualitative data. Finally, a researcher quantitatively evaluates the variable they have identified and interprets the quantitative data in terms of how it generalizes and extends the qualitative findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). These steps build on the qualitative findings and lead to the development of quantitative measures or instruments (Maree, 2020). The exploratory sequential design is helpful when the researcher and the research topic are more qualitatively oriented and when the researcher is interested in the transferability or generalizability of the phenomena (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Researchers claim that this architecture enables the construction of a new instrument at any point during the study process (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The aim of the proposed study is to design, implement, and assess a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase pre-service teachers that enhances teaching practice of preservice in a higher education institution in South Africa.

Structured interviews will be utilized to gather qualitative data from the purposively selected participants in the exploratory sequential design.

The results of the collected data will be utilized to create a new tool (questionnaire), on which the researcher will perform a quantitative evaluation of the variable they have identified and interpret the results, determining how the quantitative data expands and generalizes the qualitative results. The research employs a sequential design that is exploratory in nature. In this design, gathering and analyzing qualitative

data comes before gathering and analyzing quantitative data. Here's how the study was conducted: Qualitative Phase: Structured interviews were

used to gather data from participants who were purposefully chosen. The analysis of qualitative data would be done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis. Phase of Quantitative Analysis: Using the prepared questionnaire, the variable found in the phase of qualitative analysis was assessed quantitatively. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends, and linkages. The mentorship framework in this study will be developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it will be objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings. 4.7.1 Research Type An intervention study is used in this study.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are being used to gather data on the HEI's mentorship program. Interventions can be investigated using both quantitative and qualitative research methods

, according to Van der Merwe-Muller (2021). This study, which is an instrumental intervention study, will use triangulated mixed methods to concentrate on gaining a comprehensive picture of how much mentoring is done during teaching practice by preservice teachers and mentor teachers. The intervention type was selected because it will allow for the use of narrative discourse in interviews to gather important information about the mentorship sessions that participants perform. The researcher will investigate the causal relationship between mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers by creating a questionnaire based on the qualitative findings. This will also offer a chance to comprehend how the mentoring framework affects the individuals involved. To measure the impact of the mentoring framework, the researcher will create and distribute a questionnaire to participants. The newly developed mentoring framework is implemented during mentoring sessions between mentees and mentor

teachers and between mentor lecturers and mentees. The

intervention in this study is the introduction of the newly developed mentoring framework, which is developed through the participants' needs, which is identified through the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). 4.8 Research Paradigm Assumptions made at the outset of the study must align

with the approach, techniques for collecting data, and analysis used (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). According to Coates (2021), a paradigm is a worldview, or a framework for understanding and interpreting the complexity of the outside world. Guba (2018) and Lincoln (2018) define a paradigm as a set of attitudes and convictions about the world and how it ought to be comprehended and investigated. Philosophical presumptions concerning the nature of truth or reality regarding a phenomenon (ontology), the attitude or stance of the researchers in comprehending that truth or reality (epistemology), and the values that the researchers may attach to the entire study process (axiology) all inform a paradigm. Research studies are informed by a few paradigms. Post-positivism, participative, positivism, critical realism, and pragmatism are a few of these (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I have decided to use the pragmatism paradigm for my research. The study easily fits under the pragmatism paradigm because it is a social science that attempts to provide a mentorship framework for pre-service

teachers during their teaching practice. The paradigm of

pragmatism encourages researcher to gather data that support the rational creation of the reality in which study participants are situated (Wilkinson & Staley, 2019). The pragmatic paradigm, according to Dawadi (2020), is based on the notion that reality is the outcome of interactions between people and the outside world. It is based on the idea that as people interact with their natural surroundings, they are actively creating new information. To attain successful outcomes, this paradigm promotes experimentation, flexibility, and modification based on the observed results. It disproves the idea that knowledge can only be produced through a single process and that several approaches must be taken to it. I chose this study paradigm because it allows me to collect detailed data on the day-to-day interactions that preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers have when utilized mentoring as a teaching approach in the classroom. I gave practical effectiveness first priority while creating a mentoring framework based on the pragmatic paradigm, taking into account the following pragmatist principles as stated by Sharma, Devi and Kumari, (2018). Flexibility and adaptability: In my capacity as a researcher, I provide for flexibility in the mentoring framework's design by acknowledging the distinct demands and learning preferences of mentees, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers. This enables the mentorship structure to be modified in response to the development of the mentees, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers. Action-oriented approach: The researcher promotes the use of knowledge and concrete actions. To guarantee that mentorship has a noticeable effect, mentees, mentor instructors, and mentor lecturers are placing an emphasis on the actual application of skills in their day-to-day interactions. Learn from experience: By allowing the mentor lecturers and mentor teachers to offer real-world knowledge and lessons gained, the researcher can draw on prior experiences from the mentorship. Iterative development: I approach the mentorship as an iterative procedure. The framework may be improved and modified by the researcher in response to the changing requirements of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and mentees. By incorporating these principles, the researcher has the opportunity of creating a mentoring framework that aligns with the pragmatist paradigm, emphasizing practicality, adaptability and a focus on achieving tangible outcomes in real world. 4.9 Research Approach According to Tashakori, Johnson, and Teddlie (2021), the study's mixed methodology

suggests that it enables the researcher to expand their investigation to a suitable depth and scope. For this reason, a mixed-methods strategy, which balances the shortcomings of each method, has the best chance of addressing research issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are integrated and combined into a single study using mixed methods research. To learn more about a phenomenon and find answers to research questions, it comprises obtaining

and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Maree, 2020). Combining the two approaches yields a more comprehensive picture and

permits a wider range of opposing or complementary points of

view. These are valuable perspectives because they not only encourage further thought and deepen our comprehension of a phenomenon,

but they also pave the way for more research in the future (Tashakkori et al., 2021). Additionally, the results of mixed-methods

research offer a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as

well as additional insights into its various components, which can help create meaningful theories (Creswell & Clarke, 2018). Put differently, qualitative research, especially in the context of educational theory and practice, aims to understand, analyze, and provide an explanation for specific events by drawing on the experiences and/or perspectives of the

participants. Broadening the body of evidence, enhancing the validity of research findings, and contrasting the outcomes of one method with the other are the objectives of mixed method research (Creswell & Clarke, 2018; Maree, 2020). The development of a mentorship framework

for pre-service teachers throughout their teaching practice was the

focus of this study's research. The study explains the events that occur inside the participants' native context—a rural higher education institution— using the qualitative approach. To better comprehend and capture the significance that participants attach to the phenomenon under research, the behaviour and experiences of the participants is recorded as the occurrences take place. The utilization of quantitative technique expands the scope of the investigation by helping the researcher collect data from several sources regarding different aspects of a phenomena. 4.10

Exploratory Sequential Design A popular research methodology in the social sciences and other domains, exploratory sequential design employs a multi-phase approach to collect comprehensive data (Creswell, 2022). It allows researchers to initially investigate a topic qualitatively before doing more organized quantitative analysis since it integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a sequential fashion (Weyant, 2022). The exploratory sequential design is carried out in phases, with the researcher first collecting qualitative data using techniques including focus groups, interviews, and observations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). Identifying factors of interest and gaining a thorough understanding of the research issue are the goals of this phase. After data collection, analysis is done to find themes and trends. The creation of research questions or hypotheses for

the following stage is influenced by this analysis. Based on the knowledge gathered from the qualitative phase, researchers create quantitative investigations in the following phase. Surveys, tests, and other quantitative techniques may be used in this process to test theories and extrapolate results to a broader population. Ultimately, researchers combine their findings from the two stages to present a thorough grasp of the subject matter. Weyant (2022) asserts that this integration can produce richer insights and enable a more nuanced interpretation of data than either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. Exploratory sequential design has several benefits, such as the capacity to modify research strategies in response to new information, the chance to examine complicated phenomena from several angles, and the possibility of triangulation, which improves the validity and reliability of results (Maree, 2020). By integrating

qualitative and quantitative methodologies, it enables researchers

to have a thorough grasp of a research issue (Creswell, 2021). They can investigate the subject from several angles with this method,

gaining a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the

subject. Triangulation is a technique that researchers can use to

improve the validity and reliability of findings by combining

qualitative and quantitative data. To avoid biases and corroborate conclusions, triangulation entails using different methods, data sources, or perspectives from researchers. 4.10.1 Motivation for Using Exploratory Sequential Design As part of a mixed methods research methodology, the exploratory sequential design initially collects and analyses qualitative data before moving on to gather and analyze quantitative data (Maree, 2020). It enables researchers to investigate a research problem step-by-step, beginning with the larger background before using qualitative inquiry to go further into parts (Creswell, 2021). Structured interviews were used to

gather data from participants who were purposefully chosen for the study. The analysis of qualitative data would be done to find insights, themes, and patterns. The creation of a new tool (a questionnaire) would be guided by the conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis. The variable found in the qualitative phase was quantitatively evaluated in the quantitative step using the created questionnaire. A quantitative analysis of the data would be performed to evaluate the findings' generalizability, trends, and linkages. The mentorship framework in this study will be developed using the insights from the structured interviews, and it will be objectively tested to complement the qualitative findings. Using qualitative research techniques, the studies of Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022), Mphojane (2019), and Mkhasimbe (2018) investigated the creation of a mentorship framework for preservice teachers. Preservice teachers' development could be improved by using this kind of framework, as these studies have repeatedly shown. This study benefits greatly from the use of an exploratory sequential design. This strategy makes sure that every aspect of the research is fully explored, from the preliminary qualitative approaches of topic investigation to the more in-depth quantitative inquiry. This thorough methodology allows for a complete knowledge of the mentorship framework

and its possible impact on the development of preservice teachers, which adds deeper value to the research. Furthermore, by evaluating the mentorship framework, the exploratory sequential design offers a chance to learn more about its efficacy. Researchers can unearth nuanced viewpoints and pinpoint areas where the mentorship framework needs to be improved by iteratively combining quantitative findings with qualitative investigation. The research findings are strengthened by this iterative approach, which also adds to a deeper comprehension of how the framework might assist in the development of preservice teachers.

4.11 Informed Consent Informed consent is a crucial procedure in research involving human subjects. For

research participants to make an informed decision about whether or not to engage in a study, this approach must guarantee that they receive all relevant information. Therefore, it is essential that participants receive a thorough explanation of every aspect of the research before providing their signed informed consent to participate (Creswell

& Creswell, 2018). For study participants to give their "fully" informed

consent to engage in the research, it is imperative that special consideration be given to the documentation that they receive (Yilmaz, 2019). The information sheet included a clear and simple overview of the research project and its goals, outlining every step of the study process in a way that even a non-expert audience could comprehend. Additionally, it should describe what participation implies in terms of timing, location, and contents (Creswell, 2017). The information sheet for this study included

details regarding the study's goals and methodology. The letters of

consent and authorization for carrying out the study were made public. Refer to Appendix B for more information.

4.12 Instruments for Data Collection Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected using

measuring tools and descriptive information-gathering techniques that are typical of exploratory research. After authorization has been given, information will be gathered for data collecting. Additionally, choosing the method for recording data will be part of it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.12.1 Qualitative Data Collection Methods The study will utilize qualitative

data collection methods such as document analysis, structured

interviews, and mentoring session observations. The mentor instructors and mentor lecturers will provide feedback to the participants as part of their observations in practice. The Theoretical Framework—Vygotsky's social

constructivist theory (1978), which established the framework for this research project and attempted to address the research issue, will serve as the basis for the selection of questions for the semi-structured interviews. To

address the research sub-questions and achieve the

study's objectives, a carefully crafted set of interview questions will be

used to determine the extent to which constructivist mentoring tactics will be implemented. These questions will highlight important strategies for

mentoring preservice teachers during their teaching practice , and their

substance is based on a thorough review of the research. As a result, the information identified in the reviewed literature will serve as the basis for the questions measuring the degree of mentoring expertise and

knowledge. 4.12.2 Semi-Structured Interviews The interview follows a

semi-structured format. Data acquisition is the main reason for using interviews in research, and in this instance, doing semi-structured interviews will require a lot of resources (Creswell, 2021). The participants are interviewed one-on-one and in focus groups. Interviews with mentor teachers and mentees will take place through focus groups. Mentor lecturers will be interviewed one-on-one. We used a mix of semi-structured interviews, which allow for extensive responses and questioning on many

elements of mentoring, and open-ended interview questions ,

which allow for the investigation of issues from the

participants' viewpoints. I can ask pre-planned follow-up questions

throughout the semi-structured interviews; most of these questions are

based on the particular responses from each participant. Every comment made by a participant will be carefully examined. Semi-structured interviews, according to Creswell & Clarke (2018), make it possible to collect

unstructured, first-hand information by watching people at a research

location. He continues by saying that close attention to visual

details is necessary for observation. My goal is to gain a deeper comprehension of the mentor teacher's viewpoint regarding their duty. Interviewing is a technique for learning more about people's experiences and the significance they place on them, claim Creswell & Creswell (2018). Therefore, in addition to being friendly and non-threatening, the interview questions are made to answer the goal of my research (Yin, 2018). In this project, mentees and mentor professors are interviewed through focus groups, and mentor lecturers are interviewed one-on-one. To develop a

mentoring framework that would meet the needs of preservice teachers

and mentor teachers , interviews are conducted. 4.12.3

Observations For this study, observation was used as the method to see what and how mentoring sessions are conducted during teaching practice by mentors and mentees. Every time the participants get together, including during mentorship sessions for teaching practice, direct observation will take place in the schools' classrooms. The researcher examines existing research documentation, materials created for participants, minutes of participant-initiated meetings, and documents related to mentoring. The second stage of

the exploratory design research focuses on creating a new tool that can be applied to expand on the qualitative results. This indicates that testing is done on the tool that was designed qualitatively. Participants in the mentoring sessions need to engage with the new material for the mentoring framework—the new instrument—to be tested. The researcher will be able to

respond to research questions that aim to investigate the

implications of the developed study with the use of quantitative data. Using an exploratory approach, the second stage of the study entails creating a new tool called the mentorship framework with the intention of expanding on the understandings obtained from the qualitative results. Participants interact with this new tool during mentoring sessions to

assess its efficacy. The researcher can address the study questions

centered on the influence of the proposed framework by means of quantitative data collecting. The study intends to expand on the qualitative findings and provide a more thorough knowledge of the mentoring framework's potential consequences by obtaining quantitative

data to shed light on the ways in which the mentoring framework influences different outcomes. Observations are used to expand on the qualitative findings and ascertain the degree to which participants can apply the created framework. 4.12.4 Document Analysis Documentary evidence is one of the methods or strategies for data production that is used in this investigation. Documentary evidence is essential to give further data for triangulation because research cannot be only dependent on the statements of research participants. This method is important since it offers data that would have been hard to come by otherwise. Records of events, actions, and procedures made by people or organizations are referred to as documentary evidence (Maree, 2020). Many documents govern instruction and are necessary for implementing policies in higher education institutions (Cohen,

2021). The Department of Higher Education's training policies on

teaching practice, mentee portfolios, notebooks, a teaching practice study guide, and mentoring brochures are included as documentary evidence in this study. As guidelines for instructional practice, the following documents are utilized: The South African Department of Higher Education

released the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education

Qualifications (MRTEQ) in 2015, which is a manual for teaching practices. Because I want to examine if the mentor's written reflections can reveal anything about how she views her function as a mentor and the way that mentoring sessions are run, I concentrate my data analysis efforts on documents. 4.12.5 Quantitative data collection Preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers who complete closed-ended surveys will provide data for quantitative analysis. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), the questionnaire is regarded as the most effective tool since it allows for the quick collection of data with little bias that could compromise

the validity and reliability of the study instrument. The forthcoming

chapters will contain specifics of the mentorship structure that this study create. The mentorship framework's "Section A," which is the leading portion, requests personal information from the respondent without revealing their identity. To gauge preservice teachers' level of understanding about mentorship and teaching practices, statements in the second part, designated "Section B," is asked of them. The comments in the third section, referred known as "Section C," determines the degree to which a respondent would have formed attitudes in favour of mentoring. I thoroughly proofread the mentorship framework that was built for this project. It is necessary for a properly chosen person to administer a pretest using the mentoring framework design. This pre-test is administered by a member of the

academic staff at the institution to get clarification on certain phrasing, spelling, and grammatical issues as well as to solicit suggestions for potential instrument enhancements and corrections. There are closed-ended questions in every area of the mentorship framework, with responders having to select from predefined options. The value of each response scale is not indicated when the closed-ended items are scaled (Smit, 2021).

4.13 Data Trustworthiness Data trustworthiness is comprised of multiple elements, such as credibility, confirmability, transferability, and reliability (Kimmons, 2022). Credibility is the extent to which the data are authentic and precise,

ensuring that the findings accurately represent the phenomenon under

investigation. The study's generalizability is enhanced by how well its conclusions may be applied to various contexts or populations.

Transferability is the term for this. Depending on how well study results hold up over time and in different contexts, dependability measures how stable and consistent the data are. By guaranteeing that results are unbiased and objective, confirmability guards against subjectivity and bias in research. Harrison, Reilly, and Creswell (2020) state that to enhance the rigor, dependability, and transparency of the research process, researchers employ a range of techniques and procedures, including peer debriefing, member checks, triangulation, and rigorous documentation. These methods also contribute to a rise in confidence in the validity and reliability of the findings.

4.13.1 Measures of Trustworthiness According to Korstjens & Moser (2018) and Statistics Solutions (2020), research is considered trustworthy if the methods used are honest and precise, and the results accurately reflect the data that was obtained. The (UFS) Research Ethics Code of Conduct (UFS, 2019) shall serve as the foundation for these procedures regarding ethical issues. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies differ in how reliability metrics are provided.

4.13.2 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Outcomes Credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability are characteristics of reliability in qualitative research

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). ? Credibility Credibility, according to

Korstjens and Moser (2018), is the degree of confidence that is put in the accuracy of research findings to guarantee that the conclusions represent legitimate data that is correctly deduced from the data that was first collected from the study area. This study concentrated on a few of the issues brought up in the literature that indicated areas of knowledge that required further investigation. In this study, appropriate questions were formulated

with the help of the evaluated literature to elicit appropriate answers. ?

Transferability According to Maree (2020), "transferability" refers to how well the results of qualitative research may be used in different contexts. The study employed an exploratory sequential design to thoroughly examine the qualitative and quantitative data collected from each participant. This approach allowed for the elaboration and confirmation of the study findings in a way that would strengthen their overall applicability in different contexts. To facilitate potential users' perception of the study's findings as meaningful, the methodology described by Korstjens and Moser (2018) will be employed to provide contextual detail when conducting qualitative research that involves witnessing and evaluating social meaning. ?

Dependability Dependability is the ability of results to remain consistent across time (Mandal, 2018). Achieving this consistency can be facilitated by ensuring that a research technique is logical, thoroughly recorded, and suitably audited (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Therefore, a thorough description of the full research project is created and securely maintained throughout the inquiry to guarantee the validity of this study. The stability of these results ensured by ensuring that all interpretations and suggestions of the study are founded on the real data obtained from the study field. On electronic devices, passwords are used to protect the original data. Together with the electronic data that has been backed up, any print-formatted data will also be kept on e-storage devices. ?

Confirmability The degree to which the findings of a research study may be independently corroborated by other researchers is known as confirmability . The researcher in this study impartially examines the whole investigation to ensure that the conclusions and interpretations are backed up by data. It is necessary to maintain records of the research path and the findings throughout the study in order to reduce and eliminate personal prejudices, preferences, and predispositions that negatively affect how a researcher evaluates the descriptive data collected from participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the researcher must approach the topic with objectivity and neutrality. Thus, the process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data is used for the qualitative part of this study.

4.14 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Research Results

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are measured to determine the research's trustworthiness or rigor, which effectively refers to the degree to which researchers strive to improve the quality of their study (Smit, 2021; Leech, 2021). According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell & Creswell (2018), validity is the degree to which a reality is precisely assessed, and reliability is the accuracy of measuring that directly influences a measure's consistency levels. It was crucial to make sure that every statement in Sections B and C addressed the appropriate material on mentoring during teaching to

guarantee that the framework used in this study appropriately assessed the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' knowledge levels of mentoring as well as the prevalence of pre-mentoring attitudes. Content validity was guaranteed by the meticulous selection of the assertions (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Construct validity, or the capacity to draw

conclusions about numerical data collected for this study regarding the

knowledge of preservice teachers and mentor teachers and

the prevalence of pro-mentoring attitudes, will be ensured by carefully crafting quantifiable statements that can be added up to create a summation that measures the realities. The researcher employed test-retest-reliability testing to apply the mentoring framework to a group of carefully chosen individuals to verify the accuracy of the framework used in the study. 4.15 Ethical Considerations To discuss topics including permission to enter, participant rights, informed consent, privacy, and pro vulnerability. injury, obtaining confidentiality, upholding professionalism, and the susceptibility of participants. The creation of legitimate and trustworthy research studies

requires careful consideration of ethical issues. The researcher

adheres to the following ethical guidelines (Korstjens & Moser, 2018): • Confidentiality The respondents' privacy is appropriately safeguarded. Respondents are advised not to submit any private information, including their name or address. Confidentiality is maintained since reporting won't reveal any private information about study participants. • Seeking Consent Participants in the study are not coerced or coerced into taking part. Prior to the data being gathered, written consent will be required. • Reporting the Findings The study's conclusions are presented honestly, without editing or tampering. 4.16 Data Analysis Procedures Data analysis, which involves examining, interpreting, and synthesizing data to identify important patterns, relationships, and insights, is a crucial stage in

any research endeavor. It is the foundation of scientific inquiry, enabling researchers to compile data, draw inferences, and make decisions that can be defended considering verifiable facts. Data analysis is, at its core, the process of turning raw data into meaningful information by using precise and rigorous methodologies. It encompasses a wide range of techniques and approaches that are tailored to the specific objectives and

features of the research project. In a wide range of fields and disciplines, data analysis—whether quantitative or qualitative in nature—is crucial for providing answers to research questions, validating hypotheses, and producing new information. In today's big data and advanced analytics environment, effective data analysis is more crucial than ever. As data sources proliferate and research challenges get more complicated, researchers are faced with the task of extracting meaningful insights from big and diverse datasets. As such, mastering the art and science of data analysis has become essential for researchers attempting to navigate the intricacies of today's research environment. This research delves into the fundamental ideas, approaches, and optimal procedures of data analysis, offering a synopsis of the principal ideas and strategies utilized throughout the procedure. 4.16.1 Qualitative Data Analysis The gathered data is

thematically analysed using both deductive and inductive reasoning, following the methodology developed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Researchers utilize a framework of approaches known as data analysis to identify patterns, offer information on the data collected to answer study questions, and clarify facts (Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). One kind of qualitative analysis that is used to examine categories and display themes or patterns that are connected to the data is called thematic content analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2023). According to Braun and Clarke (2023), inductive analysis selects codes and categories depending on the data, while deductive analysis uses a theoretical or conceptual framework to structure the study in the analysis of data. Thematic analysis is used to identify distinct, noteworthy patterns by coding in six stages. This procedure entails the following steps: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating the first codes, searching the codes for themes, evaluating the themes, characterizing and identifying the themes, and generating the final report. It will be necessary to read and reread the data that was gathered from the participants' reflections to become comfortable with it. The first step in constructing the codes is to identify recurring patterns in the data set and arrange the patterns according to the study themes. The data will be thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that only relevant information is used. The researcher will first clearly identify and categorize any emergent themes from the data before searching for patterns in the codes. A critical analysis and examination of these issues will be conducted. Using the theoretical frameworks (Vygotsky's) to describe and label the topics, the evolving categories will be confirmed. Ultimately, the investigator constructs themes that provide relevant information to address the study inquiries. These ultimately are developed into the primary subjects that form the structure for the research findings' presentation and interpretation.

4.16.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics is used for the quantitative data analysis. Methods for computing, characterizing, and summarizing collected research data in a logical, understandable, and effective way are known as descriptive statistics (Maree, 2020). In the paper, descriptive statistics are shown graphically in the figures or quantitatively in the text and/or tables. Large numbers of observations are reduced into indices by the research using percentages and other methods, which are then explained and utilized to characterize the data that was gathered using particular factors. IBM SPSS version 28.0, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer program, is used to compute the results of the second analysis of the quantitative data that are gathered

using the inferential test of relationships 4.17 Ethical Considerations To cover issues relating to gaining entry, participants' rights, informed consent,

confidentiality , pro vulnerability. harm, achieving anonymity,

maintaining professionalism, participants' vulnerability . Ethical considerations are critical in the development of valid and reliable research

studies . The following ethical considerations is observed by the

researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018): • Confidentiality The

confidentiality of the respondents is well protected. Respondents

are instructed not to provide any personal information such as their

name or contact details. Reporting does not disclose any sensitive

information regarding the research participants and as such,

confidentiality is protected. • Seeking Consent Respondents are not

forced or induced to partake in the study. Written consent is obtained

before the data is collected. • Reporting the Findings The findings of the

study is truthfully reported without any changes or manipulation .

4.18 Limitations of the Study Any research endeavor must acknowledge and address any study restrictions. "Limitations" refers to the constraints, imperfections, or inadequacies that can compromise the reliability, validity, or applicability of the study's findings (Weyant, 2022). Understanding and communicating these boundaries is necessary to maintain the research process's integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. A constraint of the study is its small sample size, which precludes extrapolation of the results and conclusions to a larger population (Creswell, 2021). However, because several data creation tools were employed, the study's findings were more trustworthy (Maree, 2020). 4.19 Conclusion I have carefully described

the methodology used in this chapter, explaining the research

strategy, data gathering strategies, and data analysis

procedures used in our current study. My focus to following a methodical and exacting strategy highlights my commitment to making sure the study findings are legitimate, dependable, and credible. An effective framework for the investigation was supplied by the choice of an exploratory sequential design. This design was selected due to its capacity to facilitate a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the research subject. My objective was to obtain a thorough grasp of the phenomenon I was studying, by beginning with qualitative data collecting and then moving on to

quantitative investigation. With the use of this methodology, the

researcher was able to use qualitative analysis to investigate preliminary patterns and trends and quantitative analysis to go further into the underlying meanings and contexts. Furthermore, the utilization of focus groups, observations, and interviews helped to make it easier to collect detailed and extensive data. These techniques were chosen because they were thought to be appropriate for capturing the complex viewpoints,

experiences, and insights of the subjects. I was able to sort

through the data, find reoccurring themes and patterns, and derive insightful information that was pertinent to the study objectives using data analysis. Conclusively, the methodology chapter constitutes the fundamental basis of our investigation, steering our strategy and molding the course of our study. We work hard to create research findings that stand up to scrutiny and have a significant impact on our area through our thorough attention to detail and dedication to methodological rigor. CHAPTER 5 (i): DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION FROM THE INTERVIEWS OF FIVE MENTOR

LECTURERS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FROM THE FIVE

MENTOR TEACHERS AND TWENTY PRESERVICE TEACHERS 5.1

Introduction In chapter four, the researcher explained the research

method and design. The research design, data collection

technique, research questions, analysis of data methods and other relevant aspects related to the research methodology were discussed. This

chapter is divided into sections. The first section (chapter 5A) presents an analysis and interpretation of the data that was generated from the

interviews of five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions from the

five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. The second section (chapter 5B) presents an analysis of the observations conducted throughout the study and the analysis of the questionnaire which was used as an evaluating tool the proposed mentoring framework. The insights and reflections of the participants comprising the Mentor teachers, Mentor lecturers and Preservice Teachers are critical to the research

questions. The participants provide a comprehensive perspective and

an understanding of the entire breadth of the teaching practice environment which is aided by the distinct perspectives that each group offers, which are based on their roles and experiences. The participants collectively represent the teaching practice community. Due to the leadership and mentoring roles that they perform, their input was critical to the research questions being explored. The teaching practice community

is centrally responsible for shaping the professional development of

preservice teachers, enhancing the quality and effectiveness

of teaching practices, facilitating the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience, providing continuous feedback and support to preservice teachers, fostering a collaborative and reflective learning environment, and guiding and modeling best practices in education. The participants were knowledgeable about the best practices in mentoring and supporting preservice teachers. The researcher sought to gain more insight into the development of a mentoring framework for foundation phase preservice teachers. This was done through the medium of individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews which meant that the knowledge and experiences of the teaching practice community could be understood from both the individual and the group perspective. Mixed method research was selected as best suited because it allows the researcher to widen their inquiry with sufficient depth and breadth (Tashakkori, Johnson and Teddlie (2021). In the study, teaching practice mentoring as a phenomenon is being explored with the teaching practice community in the selected primary schools. This research study utilized an exploratory sequential design, using two data collection sites.

5.2 Overview of the Data Collection Process

As mentioned in Chapter 4, to address the study topics, mixed-method data was gathered. The first section of this chapter will explain the qualitative data analysis, which offers in-depth participant comments and perspectives. The chapter will next provide the quantitative data analysis, which provides a numerical and statistical viewpoint on the research findings, after the qualitative analysis. The methodical methodology enables a thorough comprehension of the study topics by presenting the rich and intricate accounts from the qualitative data first, then moving on to the empirical proof from the quantitative data. This mentoring study's mixed-methods approach is warranted since it integrates both qualitative and quantitative data to offer a thorough knowledge of the mentoring process. While quantitative data from questionnaires enables the evaluation of patterns and trends across a wider group, qualitative methods like observations and interviews offer rich, in-depth insights into the individual experiences and perceptions of mentors and mentees. By using triangulation to validate subjective experiences with empirical data, this combination guarantees a more nuanced study and improves the trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, complementary insights are made possible by the mixed-methods approach, whereby quantitative data confirms effectiveness through statistical analysis and qualitative data explains the "why" and "how" of specific events. This methodology is especially advantageous in the

assessment of the mentoring framework, guaranteeing a comprehensive examination of its influence on career advancement, mentor-mentee bonds, and educational advancement. The following table depicts the number of

participants who took part in the interview and focus group

discussions. Conducting focus groups in addition to interviews enabled a deeper, more in-depth investigation of the research question. While focus groups offer breadth and highlight group dynamics, interviews offer depth and individual insights. When combined, they provide a comprehensive

understanding of the research topics, improve the validity of the

findings, and enrich the data collection process. The participants were coded as follows: ? Set 1: Individual Interviews Group 1: Mentor lecturers (ML) ML1; ML2, ML3, ML4 and ML5 ? Set 2: Focus Group Interview Group 2: Mentor teachers (MT) MT1; MT2, MT3, MT4 and MT5 ? Set 3: Focus Group Interview Group 3: Preservice teachers (PT) PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4 to PT 20 The rich, in-depth narratives that the members of the teaching practice

community supplied are the focus of the qualitative data analysis. To

identify the recurring themes and patterns in the experiences

of Mentor Teachers, Mentor Lecturers, and Preservice Teachers, this part analyzes their observations and insights. Thematic analysis of the

qualitative data highlights the nuances and complexity of the

roles, challenges, and contributions made by the participants to

the preservice teachers' professional growth. This study, which begins with the qualitative data, offers a thorough, contextual grasp of the

research questions and establishes the framework for the quantitative analysis that follows. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The semi-structured questions were posed to the participants and interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The researcher first listened to the recordings of each interview. The transcripts were read and re-read to get a general understanding of the interviews and to identify

categories and units of meaning. The following table portrays the

number of participants who took part in the interview and focus

group discussions. PARTICIPANTS NO OF METHOD OF DATA

PARTICIPANTS COLLECTION ML1, 2, 3, 4, 5 5 Individual MT1, 2, 3, 4, 5 5

Focus Group PT1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-20 20 Focus Group Table 5.1 Participants

'Distribution in the Interview and Focus Group Discussions. The entire

teaching practice community was interviewed. This approach was used to

ensure that an overview of different perspectives was established. This

presented an opportunity to triangulate the findings. 5.3 Data Collection

Process In this study, data was collected over eight months. The participants

have busy schedules and need to be accommodated. The participants were

allocated days and time slots for the interviews. Consideration of the availability of the participants was necessary to ensure optimal participation. The researcher undertook to collect data from participants when it was most convenient for them and without disturbing their daily programme as teaching practice community. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the method of data collection, and the voluntary nature of the interviews was communicated in written form. The data collection methods included observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews and a perusal of teaching practice mentoring documents. Observation as an approach was chosen for this study to observe what and how the mentors and mentees conduct mentoring sessions during teaching practice. Direct observations were conducted in classrooms whenever the participants meet, such as during mentoring sessions during teaching practice. The duration of the observations was carefully planned to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring phenomenon. These were conducted over a three-month period where observations were conducted weekly. The individual interviews took an average of an hour and a half whilst the focus group interviews took an average of two and half hours.

5.4 Data Analysis Approach

Cohen (2019) argues that qualitative data analysis includes organizing, accounting for, and explaining, the data to make sense of it in terms of the participant's perspective on the situation, as well as recognizing patterns, themes, categories, and regularities. The data from the focus group discussions and interviews was then converted into text by the researcher. This allowed for the identification of themes. To discuss the results in an orderly and relevant way, the identified themes were arranged following the study questions. To analyze the data, thematic analysis and narrative description were used. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within a dataset. Thematic analysis involves systematically organizing and interpreting qualitative data to uncover meaningful patterns and insights. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), researchers immerse themselves in the data by reading and re-reading it. This step helps the researcher to become familiar with the content and gain a holistic understanding of the dataset. The researcher then started the coding process by identifying and labeling segments of data with codes. Codes are typically short labels that capture the essence of the data (Squires, 2023). This was done through line-by-line coding. Codes are then grouped based on similarities to form higher-order categories known as themes. Themes are patterns or concepts that capture important aspects of the data. The researcher searched for recurring ideas or patterns. The researcher mapped out the relationships between themes and allocated appropriate names or labels for each theme. The researcher presents their findings by describing and illustrating each theme with supporting quotes or examples from the data. The report should provide a clear and coherent narrative that reflects the richness of the data.

5.5 The Data Coding Process

Coding is an essential component of qualitative data analysis. Coding is the labeling and organization of qualitative data to uncover themes and patterns. The goal of coding is to give structure to free-form material so that it may be studied methodically. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), a code is a term or phrase that expresses a common subject or idea in the data. Coding is a fundamental step in qualitative data analysis, allowing researchers to organize, analyze and interpret large volumes of qualitative information (Maree, 2020). The code name should be meaningful and should convey the substance of the free-form response or observation. Researchers begin by reading or listening to all the data and assign codes to

basic phrases, ideas or categories that emerge. The codes could be the participant's words, a label, description, definition or category name. The goal of this round is to obtain an overall grasp of the data. The researcher should review and mind the data line by line, refining the list of codes and adding detail. The coding process involves line-by-line analysis where coding, the categorization of codes and generating themes occurs. Codes may be grouped based on their similarities or, if they are related, on the same topic or broad notion. The researcher then goes through the categories, looking for any themes or patterns that emerge throughout the data set (Maree, 2020). The research also focused on the challenges and successes mentor teachers and preservice teachers faced in the two selected primary schools, in terms of: ? Roles and responsibilities as mentor teachers. ? Strategies that needed improvement. ? Training and development opportunities. ? Promoting a conducive environment for mentors and mentees. In addition to that, the questions further focused on the factors that contribute to effective mentoring during teaching practice. Lastly, mentor teachers, preservice teachers and mentor lecturers probed their reflections to assist mentor teachers to become more effective in their roles. The themes that emerged in the interview questions are presented in Table 4 below. The contributions of mentor lecturers, mentor teachers and preservice teachers are discussed thereafter. Research Interview question/ focus group Themes question

question Q.1 mentoring What framework is used at the selected higher education institution? 1.1 Talk to me about your THEME 1: Effective understanding of what a mentoring Mentoring framework is? Practices in 1.2 What are your expectations from Teacher Education your mentor in terms of support and guidance? 1.3 How do you envision the mentorship relationship aiding you in your personal and professional development? 1.4 What specific goals or objectives do you hope to achieve through this mentoring experience? 1.5 How comfortable are you receiving constructive feedback and guidance from your mentor? Q.2 What has been 2.1 How are mentoring sessions your experience conducted during teaching practice? with the 2.2 In what ways do you feel the mentoring mentoring framework has supported or framework hindered your development as a provided by your preservice teacher? institution during 2.3 How is the framework used sin the your teaching development of preservice students practice? during teaching practice? THEME 2: Effectiveness and areas of improvement of the Mentoring Framework Q.3 Are there any 3.1 Have you encountered any specific aspects challenges or limitations in of the mentoring implementing the mentoring framework that framework in your teaching practice you feel have not placements? been effective in 3.2 What improvements or changes supporting your would you suggest making the development mentoring framework more effective during teaching for preservice teacher development? practice? 3.3 What are the challenges experienced by mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? THEME 3: Challenges experienced during mentoring sessions Q.4 Can you share 4.1 Have you experienced any any challenges or communication or compatibility issues difficulties you with your mentor teacher during have faced while mentoring sessions? working with your 4.2 How do you perceive the level of mentor teacher support and guidance provided by during mentoring your mentor teacher during mentoring sessions? sessions? 4.3 What are the needs of mentor teachers/lecturers and mentees during mentoring sessions? THEME 4: Needs and expectations in mentoring sessions Q.5 What support 5.1 As a mentee, what kind of support or resources do or guidance do you expect from your you feel mentor mentor teacher during mentoring teachers require sessions?

to effectively fulfil 5.2 Are there any specific training or their role during professional development mentoring opportunities that you believe would sessions? benefit both mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? THEME 5: Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training Q 6 Can you 6.1 How do you feel the mentoring describe how the framework has been implemented in THEME 6: mentoring practice during your teaching practice Implementation framework was placements? and effectiveness introduced and 6.2 Have you received any feedback of the Mentoring explained to you or evaluations regarding your Framework at the beginning of participation in the mentoring your teaching framework? practice? 6.3 What is the impact of the mentoring framework on preservice teachers' development during teaching practice? Table 5.2: Categories of Research Questions into Themes 5.6 Presentation of the Qualitative Data Analysis This study employs a mixed methods approach with an exploratory sequential

design. This design begins with qualitative data collection to inform the development of a new mentoring framework. The initial phase of our analysis will focus on qualitative data, gathered through observations, structured

individual interviews with mentor lecturers (ML), and focus group

interviews with mentor teachers (MT) and preservice teachers (PT). To enhance the credibility and validity of our findings, we are applying methodological and data source triangulation. As Flick (2018) highlights, "Triangulation enriches the data collection process and ensures a more comprehensive understanding by combining different methods and perspectives." Additionally, Yegidis and Myers (2021) state, "Triangulation enhances the robustness of research findings by integrating diverse methods and perspectives, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation." This approach involves combining

qualitative methods—such as observations and structured

interviews-with quantitative data from questionnaires to provide a thorough understanding of the mentoring framework. 5.7 Analysis of

Structured Interviews and Focus Groups In this phase of the study, we focus on analyzing the qualitative data collected through interviews and

focus groups. The analysis builds upon the data coding process, during which key themes and patterns were identified. The interviews

conducted with mentor lecturers (ML) and the focus group

discussions with mentor teachers (MT) and preservice teachers (PT) offer valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions of the current mentoring practices. This analysis aims to explore and interpret these perspectives to better understand the effectiveness of existing mentoring strategies and identify areas for improvement in the new mentoring framework. Thematic analysis will be employed to systematically

examine the data. Braun and Clarke (2023) describe thematic analysis

as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes)

within data" that allows for a nuanced understanding of qualitative data. Maree (2020) highlights that thematic analysis is "a powerful method for organizing and describing data in rich detail, helping researchers to identify and interpret patterns and themes relevant to the research questions." This approach will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the factors

influencing mentoring practices, ensuring that the new framework effectively addresses the needs and challenges identified by participants. Below is an analysis of the themes identified during the data coding process.

Theme 1: Effective Mentoring Practices in Teacher Education The first question was on understanding and establishing the foundation for an effective mentoring relationship. The responses were analyzed into 3 sub-themes. These are: ? Understanding and Implementation of Mentoring Frameworks ? Support and Guidance in Practical Teaching ? Engagement and Relationship Building in Mentorship

Subtheme 1: Understanding and Implementation of Mentoring Frameworks Participant Group 1 Responses Participant Group 1, comprising the Mentor lecturers (ML), demonstrated a thorough understanding of the mentoring framework at their institution.

They described it as structured and developmental, emphasizing its role in providing consistent and effective mentorship. ML1 stated, "A mentoring framework is a structured approach that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and processes involved in mentoring." ML2 added, "It is a systematic plan that guides the mentor-mentee relationship, ensuring that both parties have clear expectations and objectives." ML3 elaborated, "A mentoring framework establishes the guidelines and principles for mentoring, promoting consistency and effectiveness in the mentoring process." The collective understanding among mentor lecturers highlights their commitment to utilizing the framework to enhance the mentorship experience. Participants Group 2 Responses Participant Group 2, comprising the Mentor Teachers (MT), exhibited familiarity with the mentoring framework, noting its structured support and guidance for preservice teachers. MT1 mentioned, "Yes, I am aware of the mentoring framework used by mentor teachers. It provides a structured approach to mentoring, ensuring that we offer consistent and effective support to preservice teachers." MT2 commented, "Yes, I know about the mentoring framework. It includes regular meetings, feedback sessions, and professional development activities to support preservice teachers." MT3 stated, "Yes, I am familiar with the mentoring framework. It focuses on both personal and professional development, providing guidance and support throughout the teaching practice." This indicates that mentor teachers recognize the framework's role in enhancing the mentoring process and are actively engaged in its implementation.

Participant Group 3 Responses Participant Group 3, comprising the Preservice Teachers (PT), expressed an understanding of the mentoring framework, focusing on its structured and developmental aspects. PT1 explained, "A mentoring framework is a structured approach that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and processes involved in mentoring." PT2 added, "It is a systematic plan that guides the mentor-mentee relationship, ensuring that both parties have clear expectations and objectives." PT3 stated, "A mentoring framework establishes the guidelines and principles for mentoring, promoting consistency and effectiveness in the mentoring process." The responses from preservice teachers suggest they are well-informed about the framework and its role in guiding their professional development.

Subtheme 2: Support and Guidance in Practical Teaching Participants Group 1 Responses The strategies shared by the mentor lecturers illustrate a well-

rounded approach to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and

practical application in teacher education . Each lecturer employs a distinct method, yet all aim to enhance the preservice teachers' ability to

apply theoretical concepts effectively in real-world classroom

settings . ML1's approach focuses on integrating real-life examples and case studies into the teaching process. This strategy involves presenting preservice teachers with practical scenarios that mirror actual classroom situations. By relating theoretical concepts to these real-life contexts, ML1 helps preservice teachers understand how abstract theories manifest in everyday teaching practices. This method not only aids in contextualizing theoretical knowledge but also fosters critical thinking by encouraging preservice teachers to analyze and solve problems similar to those they will encounter in their careers. For instance, if a theory on classroom management is being discussed, ML1 might use case studies depicting various classroom management challenges and solutions, thereby demonstrating how theoretical strategies are applied in practice. ML2

emphasizes the importance of reflective practice as a tool for

linking theory to practice . This approach encourages preservice

teachers to critically reflect on their classroom experiences and

connect these experiences with the theoretical knowledge they have acquired. Reflective practice involves analyzing one's own teaching experiences, identifying what worked well and what could be improved, and understanding how these insights relate to theoretical frameworks. By

engaging in reflective practice , preservice teachers develop a

deeper understanding of how theory informs their teaching decisions and practices. This continuous cycle of reflection and application helps them refine their skills and adapt their teaching strategies based on both theory and practice. ML3's strategy involves using classroom observations and subsequent feedback sessions to bridge the gap between

theory and practice. In this method, preservice teachers are observed in their teaching environments, and their practices are discussed about theoretical concepts. This approach allows for a direct examination of how well preservice teachers apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom situations. Through feedback sessions, ML3 provides constructive critique and guidance, helping preservice teachers understand how their practices align with or deviate from theoretical principles. These discussions not only reinforce the connection between theory and practice but also offer opportunities for growth and improvement. The strategies employed by the mentor lecturers—using real-life examples and case studies, encouraging reflective practice, and conducting classroom observations with feedback—collectively contribute to a robust framework for translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills. By implementing these approaches, the lecturers ensure that preservice teachers are not only able to understand theoretical concepts but also adept at applying them in diverse educational

settings. The integration of theory , practice, and reflective practice in this holistic approach provides preservice teachers with the necessary

tools and insights to effectively traverse the intricacies of

teaching. Teachers can adjust to a range of classroom issues with the support of a complete strategy that combines pedagogical core knowledge with real-world experiences, claims Shulman (2020). Loughran (2020) highlights that a fundamental element of this methodology is reflective practice, which cultivates an enhanced comprehension of pedagogical approaches and advances ongoing professional development. Furthermore, Borko (2020) points out that the development of flexible and reflective teaching methods is supported by a combination of mentoring, observations, and feedback within a comprehensive framework. In the end, this integrated approach produces practitioners who are more thoughtful and productive. Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers are pivotal in bridging the

gap between theoretical content and its practical application by

employing a range of targeted strategies. MT1 integrates real- life examples and case studies with theoretical concepts to illustrate how these concepts manifest in actual teaching scenarios. This approach is designed to contextualize abstract theories, making them more tangible and relevant to preservice teachers. By presenting scenarios that mirror real classroom situations, MT1 helps preservice teachers understand how theoretical principles are operationalized, thereby enhancing their ability to apply these concepts effectively in their own classrooms. MT2 emphasizes the importance of reflective practice, encouraging preservice teachers to

critically examine their own teaching experiences in light of the content knowledge they have gained. This method involves a cyclical process

where preservice teachers reflect on their classroom practices, identify

areas for improvement, and relate their insights back to theoretical frameworks. Reflective practice not only deepens preservice teachers' understanding of how theory informs their teaching but also fosters continuous personal and professional growth. Through this introspective approach, preservice teachers develop a more nuanced understanding of

how to adapt theoretical concepts to meet the diverse needs of their

students . MT3 employs a hands-on approach by using classroom observations and feedback sessions to directly connect theory with practice. For mentors like MT3, a hands-on approach typically involves engaging directly with preservice teachers through practical, interactive methods that

bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice

. By observing preservice teachers in action and providing targeted feedback, MT3 facilitates a practical examination of how well theoretical knowledge is being applied in real classroom settings. These observations

are followed by discussions that link observed practices with theoretical concepts, offering preservice teachers specific, actionable insights into their teaching methods. This feedback loop not only reinforces theoretical understanding but also provides a platform for preservice teachers to adjust and refine their practices based on real-time observations and expert guidance. Together, these strategies underscore the mentor teachers' commitment to ensuring that preservice teachers can effectively translate their theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills. By combining contextual examples, reflective practice, and direct observation with feedback, mentor teachers create a robust framework for preservice teachers

to bridge the gap between theory and practice , ultimately fostering a

more effective and reflective approach to teaching . Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers have articulated a range of expectations from their mentors, reflecting a deep appreciation for the multifaceted support mentors provide. PT1 expressed the need for "regular feedback and guidance on my teaching practice," emphasizing the importance of continuous assessment and constructive criticism to enhance teaching skills and foster professional growth. PT2 highlighted the desire for mentors to be "approachable and supportive," which underscores the necessity of a nurturing environment where preservice teachers feel comfortable asking questions and seeking advice. PT3 sought assistance in "linking theoretical knowledge to practical teaching, providing real-life examples and case studies," demonstrating a clear need for practical applications of theoretical concepts. Adding to these, PT4 expressed the expectation for mentors to "model effective teaching practices," viewing mentors as role models whose techniques and strategies serve as valuable examples to emulate. PT5 emphasized the need for "personalized mentoring that addresses individual strengths and areas for improvement," reflecting a desire for tailored support that aligns with their specific developmental needs. PT6 hoped for mentors to "facilitate networking opportunities and professional development resources," recognizing that building connections within the educational community is crucial for career advancement and continued learning. PT7 sought guidance on "integrating technology into my teaching," indicating a need for support in adapting to modern educational tools and methods. These expanded expectations collectively reveal that preservice teachers value a comprehensive and individualized mentoring approach. They seek not only practical, hands-on guidance and emotional support but also exemplary role modeling, personalized feedback, professional networking, and technological integration. This holistic support is seen as essential for their development, enabling them to effectively translate theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills while navigating the complexities of the education profession. Subtheme 3: Engagement and Relationship Building in Mentorship Participants Group 1 Responses The responses from mentor lecturers (ML) have underscored the critical role of fostering open and supportive relationships with preservice teachers, reflecting a commitment to creating a positive and effective mentoring

environment. ML1 emphasized the importance of maintaining an "open and supportive relationship," where preservice teachers are encouraged to share their experiences and challenges freely. This approach helps build trust and ensures that preservice teachers feel safe and supported as they navigate their teaching practice. ML2 highlighted the practice of "regularly

checking in with preservice teachers," providing ongoing guidance and support to ensure they feel comfortable seeking help. This proactive approach ensures that preservice teachers are not left to navigate difficulties alone and that they receive timely support to address any issues they encounter. ML3 added that they "create a collaborative environment where preservice teachers feel valued and respected," fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging preservice teachers to take ownership of their

learning . This collaborative atmosphere helps preservice teachers feel more engaged and invested in their professional development. Additionally, ML4 shared, "I offer constructive feedback and celebrate successes, helping preservice teachers recognize their growth and stay motivated." This practice not only supports ongoing improvement but also reinforces positive behaviours and achievements, contributing to a more encouraging and motivating learning experience. ML5 noted, "I facilitate regular group discussions and peer reviews, which promote a sense of community and allow preservice teachers to learn from one another's experiences." By integrating peer interactions, ML5 helps preservice teachers benefit from diverse perspectives and collaborative learning opportunities. These responses collectively highlight the mentor lecturers' efforts to create a nurturing and collaborative environment. Through open communication, regular check-ins, collaborative practices, constructive feedback, and peer learning opportunities, mentor lecturers strive to support preservice teachers effectively. This holistic approach not only addresses the individual needs of preservice teachers but also fosters a positive and engaging learning

environment that enhances their overall professional development. Participant Group 2 Responses The responses from mentor teachers (MT) have underscored the critical importance of cultivating trusting and supportive relationships with preservice teachers, recognizing that such relationships are foundational to effective mentorship. MT1 emphasized the need for an "open and supportive relationship," where preservice teachers are encouraged to share their experiences and challenges openly. This approach helps build a trusting environment, allowing preservice teachers to feel secure in expressing their concerns and seeking guidance without fear of judgment. MT2 highlighted the practice of "regularly checking in with preservice teachers," which involves providing ongoing guidance and support to ensure that preservice teachers feel consistently supported and comfortable reaching out for help. This proactive engagement ensures that potential issues are addressed promptly and that preservice teachers feel continuously supported in their development. MT3 spoke about creating a "collaborative environment where preservice teachers feel valued and respected," emphasizing the importance of fostering a sense of belonging

and empowering preservice teachers to take ownership of their learning . This collaborative approach not only enhances engagement but also encourages preservice teachers to actively participate in their own professional growth. MT4 added, "I make an effort to understand each preservice teacher's individual needs and challenges, offering tailored support that meets their specific circumstances." This personalized approach reflects a commitment to addressing the unique needs of each preservice teacher, ensuring that support is relevant and effective. MT5 noted, "I build strong, empathetic relationships by actively listening and showing genuine interest in preservice teachers' progress and well-being." This empathetic

engagement helps create a supportive atmosphere where preservice teachers feel understood and valued, contributing to their overall confidence and motivation. These insights collectively illustrate that mentor teachers place a high priority on creating a nurturing and trusting environment. By maintaining open communication, providing regular support, fostering collaboration, offering personalized assistance, and demonstrating empathy, mentor teachers ensure that preservice teachers have the necessary support

and encouragement to thrive in their professional development. This holistic approach to mentorship not only addresses individual needs but also contributes to a positive and effective learning experience, enabling preservice teachers to grow and succeed. Participant Group 3 Responses

Participant Group 3, comprising the Preservice teachers, emphasized

the critical role of their mentors' engagement and support, particularly valuing constructive feedback as an essential component of their professional growth. PT1 remarked, "I am very comfortable receiving constructive feedback. I see it as an opportunity to learn and improve my teaching practice." This statement reflects a positive attitude towards

feedback, recognizing it as a valuable tool for learning and skill enhancement. PT2 highlighted, "I value feedback and use it to enhance my teaching skills. Constructive criticism helps me to identify areas of improvement and become a more effective teacher." This perspective underscores the preservice teachers' appreciation for feedback as a means to pinpoint specific areas for development and to refine their teaching practices. PT3 added, "I am open to receiving feedback and see it as beneficial. Feedback from my mentor helps me to continuously improve and refine my teaching strategies." This openness to feedback demonstrates an understanding of its role in ongoing professional development and its importance in fine-tuning teaching methods. PT4 mentioned, "Receiving timely and constructive feedback is crucial for me. It helps me adjust my approaches quickly and ensures I am on the right track." This statement illustrates the value of timely feedback in making immediate adjustments to teaching practices, emphasizing the need for regular and prompt evaluations. PT5 said, "I appreciate mentors who are actively engaged in my development. Their insights and suggestions are instrumental in helping me grow as a teacher." This highlights the significance of active mentor engagement in providing valuable insights that facilitate professional growth. PT6 noted, "Feedback sessions with my mentor are incredibly valuable for my growth. They offer a chance to reflect on my practice and make informed improvements." This response emphasizes the reflective aspect of feedback sessions, where preservice teachers can contemplate their practices and implement informed changes. PT7 shared, "I value the constructive conversations with my mentor, as they help me address my weaknesses and build on my strengths." This reflects the role of constructive dialogues in identifying areas for improvement and reinforcing strengths. PT8 added, "The support and feedback from my mentor provide me with a sense of direction and confidence, which is essential for my development as a teacher." This highlights how mentorship support contributes to both direction and self-assurance, critical components of professional growth. Overall, these responses indicate that preservice teachers highly value and appreciate the engagement and constructive feedback from their mentors.

They see feedback as a crucial element for identifying areas for improvement, refining teaching strategies, and enhancing overall effectiveness. The emphasis on timely, actionable, and reflective feedback underscores its importance in supporting preservice teachers' continuous development and helping them grow into competent and confident educators. Summary of Responses to Theme 1 The analysis of responses from mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers reveals a well-coordinated and effective implementation of the mentoring framework. Each group demonstrated a clear understanding of the framework's structured approach and its impact on professional development. Mentor lecturers and mentor teachers both emphasized the framework's role in guiding preservice teachers, underscoring its systematic nature and the consistency with which it is applied. They highlighted key elements such as providing practical examples, facilitating reflective practice, and maintaining open and supportive relationships, all of which are integral to the framework. Mentor lecturers focused on creating a supportive and collaborative environment, where preservice teachers are encouraged to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application. This approach involves regular feedback, modeling effective practices, and fostering an atmosphere of trust and respect. Similarly, mentor teachers stressed the importance of maintaining open communication and providing constructive feedback, which they see as essential for helping preservice teachers grow and refine their skills. Preservice teachers, on their part, expressed clear expectations for their mentors, emphasizing their appreciation for timely and constructive feedback, as well as the need for a supportive and approachable mentoring relationship. They acknowledged the value of feedback in identifying areas for improvement and enhancing their teaching practices. The consistency in these expectations reflects a strong alignment with the mentoring framework's objectives, demonstrating that preservice teachers value a structured approach to their professional development. Overall, the alignment across these groups highlights the effectiveness of the mentoring framework in achieving its goals. The structured nature of the framework facilitates a coherent and supportive learning environment that promotes professional growth. By integrating regular feedback, collaborative practices, and supportive relationships, the framework successfully fosters the

development of practical teaching skills and enhances the

overall effectiveness of preservice teachers. This

comprehensive alignment underscores the framework's role in providing a robust foundation for the ongoing development and success of future educators. Theme 2: Effectiveness and Areas for Improvement in the Mentoring Framework Question 2 focused on the effectiveness of the framework used in the development of preservice students during teaching practice? Participant Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers acknowledge several key aspects of the mentoring framework as crucial for providing structured support and guidance to preservice teachers. A major highlight is the feedback sessions, which are consistently recognized for their value in offering ongoing support and clarity. ML1 remarked, "The regular feedback sessions are particularly beneficial as they provide ongoing support and clarity on areas needing improvement," underscoring how these sessions help preservice teachers identify and address specific areas for growth. ML4 echoed this sentiment, noting that feedback is instrumental in helping

preservice teachers understand their strengths and areas for development, thereby enhancing their overall teaching skills. The goal-setting component of the framework is also highly valued. ML2 emphasized that "The goal-setting component allows preservice teachers to focus on specific areas of their teaching practice, which helps in tracking their progress over time." This structured approach not only aids in maintaining focus and motivation but also ensures that development efforts are aligned with clearly defined objectives. ML3 added, "Setting clear goals helps preservice teachers understand what is expected of them and how to achieve their teaching targets," highlighting the importance of goal setting in providing direction and purpose in their professional development. Reflective practice is another critical element praised by mentor lecturers. ML3 explained that "The reflective practice sessions encourage preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching and identify areas for growth." This reflective process is essential for bridging theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experiences, allowing preservice teachers to evaluate their performance critically and make informed improvements. Overall, mentor lecturers view these components—feedback sessions, goal-setting, and reflective practice—as integral to the mentoring framework's success. They provide essential support that facilitates preservice teachers' development, ensuring that their teaching practices are continually refined and aligned with their professional growth objectives.

Participant Group 2 Responses The mentor teachers of the two selected primary schools largely echo the positive sentiments about the mentoring framework shared by their lecturer counterparts, recognizing several key aspects as particularly beneficial, while also suggesting areas for enhancement. MT1 and MT4 both emphasized the value of regular observation and feedback, with MT1 noting, "The regular observation and feedback sessions are the most beneficial aspects. They provide preservice teachers with actionable insights and help them align their practice with teaching standards." This emphasis on consistent feedback is crucial as it allows preservice teachers to refine their teaching practices and ensure they meet established educational standards. MT4 further supported this view, highlighting how these sessions contribute to a deeper understanding of effective teaching methods and standards. The framework's structured approach was also appreciated by MT3, who stated, "The structured approach helps maintain consistency in mentoring." This consistency is vital for offering a stable and reliable support system, ensuring that mentoring practices are uniformly applied and that preservice teachers receive coherent guidance throughout their development. This structured methodology helps in maintaining a clear direction and systematic progression in the mentoring process. Reflective practice, another core component of the framework, was similarly valued by MT2. MT2 noted, "The reflective practice is particularly useful," suggesting that this element encourages preservice teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods and identify areas for improvement. This reflective process aligns with the framework's goal of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, allowing preservice teachers to make informed adjustments to their teaching practices. While mentor teachers recognize these components as effective in supporting preservice teachers, they also acknowledge that there is room for refinement to further enhance

their impact. This suggests a willingness to continuously improve the mentoring framework, ensuring it remains responsive to the evolving needs of preservice teachers and maximizes its effectiveness in

facilitating their professional growth. Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers recognize several valuable components of the mentoring framework but report mixed experiences regarding its effectiveness. Regular feedback is particularly appreciated by PT1 and PT4, with PT1 noting, "The regular feedback and structured observations have helped me identify areas for improvement." This highlights the critical role of consistent feedback in facilitating growth and addressing specific areas for development. PT4 similarly values the feedback process, emphasizing its importance in refining teaching practices and aligning with educational standards. Structured observations are also highly regarded by PT3 and PT7. PT3 remarked, "Structured observations have been beneficial in guiding my development," indicating that these observations provide clear, actionable guidance that supports their professional growth. PT7 added, "The structured observations give me detailed insights into my teaching practices," suggesting that this component helps in identifying specific strengths and areas needing enhancement. Goal setting is another aspect that PT2 finds beneficial, stating, "The goal setting keeps me focused and motivated." This feature helps preservice teachers maintain a clear direction and stay engaged with their development objectives. Additionally, PT5 and PT6 acknowledged the value of goal setting, with PT5 noting, "Setting goals helps me track my progress and stay on target," and PT6 adding, "Clear goals provide a sense of purpose and direction in my teaching practice." However, despite these positive aspects, some preservice teachers express concerns about areas where the framework might fall short. PT8, for instance, noted, "While feedback is helpful, it sometimes lacks specificity for my unique challenges." This indicates a need for more tailored feedback that addresses individual circumstances. PT9 shared a similar sentiment, saying, "The structured observations are useful, but I sometimes feel they do not fully capture the complexity of my teaching interactions." This suggests that while structured observations are beneficial, they may not always encompass the full scope of teaching dynamics. Overall, while preservice teachers value the regular feedback, structured observations, and goal-setting components of the mentoring framework, they also highlight areas for improvement, indicating a need for more personalized and comprehensive support to fully meet their developmental needs. Summary of responses to Theme 2 The analysis of the mentoring framework's impact on preservice teachers reveals a nuanced view of its effectiveness and areas for enhancement. Mentor lecturers and mentor teachers generally perceive the framework as beneficial, noting several key strengths. Regular feedback is highlighted as a particularly valuable component, with mentor lecturers and teachers emphasizing its role in providing ongoing support and clarity on areas needing improvement. Feedback sessions are seen as crucial for helping preservice teachers refine their teaching practices and adhere to educational standards. Additionally, the structured approach to mentoring and goal setting are appreciated for maintaining consistency and direction throughout the mentoring process. Reflective practice is also valued for encouraging critical analysis and continuous improvement of teaching methods. Preservice teachers also acknowledge these strengths, expressing

appreciation for the regular feedback, structured observations, and goal-setting aspects of the framework. Many find these components helpful in identifying areas for growth, maintaining focus, and receiving actionable guidance. However, their experiences are mixed, with some reporting that the framework does not fully address their individual needs. Challenges include the need for more specific and personalized feedback, as well as concerns that structured observations may not capture the full complexity of their teaching interactions. The analysis thus highlights a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring framework's impact on preservice teachers. While its structured support and guidance are broadly beneficial, the feedback also points to areas where refinements could enhance its effectiveness. Addressing these challenges—such as providing more tailored feedback and ensuring observations capture the nuances of teaching—could further improve the framework's support for preservice teachers' professional growth. This balanced view offers valuable insights into both the strengths and potential areas for development within the mentoring framework, ensuring that it can more effectively support the evolving needs of preservice teachers.

Theme 3: Challenges Experienced During Mentoring Sessions

Question 3 looked at the challenges experienced by mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers voiced facing significant challenges in managing time and resources, which directly impact their ability to effectively mentor preservice teachers. One of the primary issues is finding adequate time for each mentee amidst their packed schedules. ML1 pointed out, "One of the primary challenges is finding adequate time to dedicate to each mentee due to our packed schedules. Often, sessions are shorter than ideal." This limitation in time can reduce the depth and quality of interactions during mentoring sessions, making it difficult to address each mentee's needs thoroughly. Additionally, the difficulty of balancing academic responsibilities with mentoring duties is highlighted by ML2, who said, "Balancing my academic responsibilities with mentoring duties can be quite difficult." This balancing act often results in mentor lecturers struggling to allocate sufficient attention to mentoring, which can affect the effectiveness of the support provided. Resource limitations are another critical issue. ML3 noted, "We sometimes face challenges with insufficient resources and materials, which hampers our ability to provide practical support." This scarcity of resources can impede the ability to offer hands-on guidance and practical experiences that are crucial for the preservice teachers' development. Moreover, the diverse learning needs and styles of mentees add another layer of complexity. ML5 observed, "Addressing the diverse learning needs and styles of mentees can be overwhelming." This diversity requires mentor lecturers to continuously adapt their approaches to meet individual needs, which can be challenging without adequate time and resources. To address these challenges, mentor lecturers employ various strategies to support their mentees effectively. ML1 focuses on a strengths-based approach, stating, "I focus on addressing gaps by first highlighting the mentee's strengths before introducing areas for improvement." This strategy helps maintain motivation and provides a positive reinforcement framework for addressing developmental areas. ML2 emphasizes the importance of providing feedback in a "supportive and non-judgmental manner," which is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment and fostering mentee growth. Additionally, ML3 recommends supplementary readings and resources to help mentees overcome weaknesses, thus bridging gaps that may not be addressed within the constraints of direct mentoring. Encouraging self-reflection is another

key strategy, as ML5 highlighted, "Encouraging mentees to reflect on their own practices before receiving feedback helps them identify their own gaps and solutions." This reflective practice promotes autonomy and self-awareness among mentees, enhancing their ability to address their own development needs. Balancing multiple roles and maintaining mentee engagement are persistent challenges. ML1 observed, "One significant challenge is balancing mentoring with my other academic duties. I constantly strive to manage my time effectively," indicating the ongoing struggle to effectively juggle mentoring responsibilities with other professional obligations. ML2 echoed this sentiment, noting the difficulty in managing institutional expectations while meeting the diverse needs of mentees. Maintaining engagement, particularly when mentees struggle with practical applications, is another critical challenge. ML3 noted, "Keeping mentees engaged and motivated, especially when they struggle with practical applications, is a persistent challenge." To counter these issues, continuous professional development is emphasized as essential. ML5 stated, "I continuously engage in professional development to keep up with best practices and improve my mentoring skills." This commitment to ongoing learning helps mentor lecturers adapt to evolving mentoring needs and enhance their effectiveness despite the challenges they face. Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers face significant challenges in managing role transitions and providing consistent feedback. Transitioning from a classroom teacher to a mentor requires a major shift in approach, which MT1 found challenging, noting, "Shifting from being a classroom teacher to a mentor requires a significant change in approach, which can be challenging." This transition often involves adapting to new roles and responsibilities that differ greatly from traditional teaching duties. MT2 echoed this difficulty, stating, "I find it difficult to manage both teaching and mentoring effectively." The dual responsibilities of teaching and mentoring can strain time and resources, making it challenging to balance both roles effectively. Consistency in feedback is another critical challenge. MT3 observed, "Consistency in providing feedback can be challenging, especially when there are multiple mentees with different needs." Providing tailored and consistent feedback to diverse mentees requires careful attention and can be difficult when trying to meet varying needs simultaneously. MT5 highlighted that "mentoring sessions sometimes lack a clear structure, leading to less effective outcomes," suggesting that an unstructured approach can result in inefficiencies and less impactful mentoring sessions. To address these challenges, mentor teachers employ several strategies to improve effectiveness. MT1 provides targeted feedback based on observed teaching

practices, stating, "I provide targeted feedback based on observed teaching practices and work with mentees to develop actionable plans." This targeted approach ensures that feedback is relevant and actionable, helping mentees to make specific improvements. MT2 emphasizes the importance of a structured approach, saying, "Using a structured approach to feedback ensures that mentees receive clear and actionable advice." Structuring feedback helps to deliver consistent and comprehensible guidance, making it easier for mentees to follow and implement suggestions. Collaborative problem-solving is a key strategy for MT3, who said, "I work collaboratively with mentees to address gaps in their knowledge, discussing potential solutions and strategies together." This collaborative approach fosters a partnership in problem-solving and encourages mentees to take an active role in their development. Regular follow-up is also crucial, as MT5 noted,

"Regular follow-up meetings help ensure that mentees are making progress in addressing their gaps." Regular check-ins provide opportunities to monitor progress, adjust strategies, and maintain engagement. In addition to these strategies, mentor teachers face ongoing challenges related to transitioning roles and managing feedback. MT1 commented, "Transitioning from a classroom teacher to a mentor involves a significant shift in mindset and approach," highlighting the substantial adjustment required for effective mentoring. MT2 added, "Finding the right balance between providing guidance and allowing independence is challenging," reflecting the difficulty of striking an appropriate balance in mentoring practices. Ensuring that

feedback is both effective and well-received is another focus, with MT3 noting, "Ensuring that feedback is both effective and well-received is an ongoing challenge." Finally, MT4 emphasized the importance of utilizing feedback to refine practices, stating, "I use feedback from mentees and colleagues to continuously refine my approach and address any challenges in the mentoring process." This commitment to refining mentoring practices through feedback helps address challenges and improve the overall effectiveness of the mentoring process.

Participant Group 3 Responses

Preservice teachers face notable challenges with gaps in practical application and inconsistencies in feedback, which significantly impact their professional development. PT1 expressed frustration with the mentoring framework, stating, "The mentoring framework sometimes lacks specific, actionable steps, making it difficult to implement feedback effectively." This highlights a critical issue: when feedback is not accompanied by clear, actionable steps, it becomes challenging for preservice teachers to translate it into practical improvements. PT2 echoed this concern, noting that "Feedback is often too general and not tailored to my specific teaching context." Generalized feedback fails to address the unique aspects of each preservice teacher's classroom environment, limiting its applicability and effectiveness. In addition to the lack of specificity, PT3 pointed out that "Mentoring sessions can be infrequent, which delays the resolution of issues and hinders my development." The infrequency of sessions means that problems and gaps in knowledge may remain unaddressed for extended periods, slowing down the preservice teacher's progress and development. This delay in addressing issues underscores the need for more regular and timely interactions to facilitate continuous improvement. The need for personalized feedback is crucial, as highlighted by PT6, who mentioned, "Feedback that doesn't align with my teaching style or classroom environment makes it difficult to apply effectively." Personalized feedback that considers individual teaching styles and classroom dynamics is essential for making the advice relevant and actionable. Preservice teachers appreciate detailed feedback and practical examples to bridge gaps in knowledge. PT8 emphasized, "I need more detailed and specific feedback to understand where I am going wrong and how to improve." Detailed feedback helps in pinpointing exact areas of weakness and provides clearer guidance for improvement. PT9 similarly noted, "Feedback that directly addresses my weaknesses and provides concrete steps for improvement is most helpful." Concrete, step-by-step advice is critical for addressing specific issues and making tangible progress. The importance of practical examples was underscored by PT10, who said, "Providing practical examples and demonstrations during feedback sessions helps me apply theoretical concepts more effectively." Practical examples and demonstrations enable preservice teachers to see how theoretical concepts are applied in real-world scenarios, enhancing their ability to

implement these ideas in their own practice. Sensitivity in feedback is also crucial, as PT12 noted, "Receiving feedback in a constructive and supportive manner helps me feel more confident in addressing my weaknesses." Constructive and supportive feedback fosters a positive learning environment and encourages preservice teachers to address their weaknesses with greater confidence. Inconsistencies in feedback and inadequate support structures are additional challenges. PT7 pointed out, "Inconsistent feedback makes it hard to improve effectively," highlighting how variability in feedback can undermine the development process. PT8 added, "The lack of practical strategies and examples means I struggle to apply feedback in real situations," emphasizing the need for more structured and context-specific guidance. PT10 also stressed the importance of better support, stating, "Providing practical strategies and examples related to my teaching context would be beneficial." This underscores the need for feedback that is not only relevant but also applicable to the preservice teacher's specific teaching context. Lastly, PT12 emphasized the need for empathy, noting, "Mentors should approach gaps in knowledge with empathy and understanding," which highlights the importance of delivering feedback in a way that is both supportive and sensitive to the challenges faced by preservice teachers.

Overall, these insights reveal a clear need for more personalized, actionable, and context-specific feedback, as well as regular and empathetic support, to better address the challenges faced by preservice teachers and enhance their professional growth.

Summary of Responses to Theme 3

The analysis of challenges faced by mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers highlights several critical areas where the mentoring framework can be enhanced. Mentor lecturers frequently grapple with time management and resource allocation, which hinder their ability to provide thorough and individualized support to each mentee. ML1 and ML2 pointed out that their packed schedules and academic responsibilities limit the time available for effective mentoring, with ML1 noting that "sessions are shorter than ideal." Additionally, ML3 highlighted the problem of insufficient resources, which affects the practical support they can offer. Addressing diverse mentee needs is also a significant challenge, as ML5 observed, making it difficult to cater to varied learning styles and requirements. Similarly, mentor teachers face challenges related to the transition from classroom teaching to mentoring roles. MT1 remarked that this shift requires a substantial change in approach, and MT2 noted the difficulty in managing both teaching and mentoring responsibilities effectively. Ensuring consistency in feedback is another major issue, with MT3 acknowledging the challenge of providing uniform feedback to multiple mentees with differing needs. MT5 further pointed out that the lack of a clear structure in mentoring sessions can result in less effective outcomes, underscoring the need for a more organized approach. Preservice teachers encounter their own set of challenges within the framework. They often struggle with the practical application of feedback, as PT1 noted, finding that the framework sometimes lacks "specific, actionable steps." PT2 echoed this concern, stating that "feedback is often too general," indicating a need for more tailored and context-specific guidance. The infrequency of mentoring sessions also delays problem resolution and hampers development, as PT3 highlighted. Furthermore, preservice teachers emphasize the need for more detailed and practical feedback to effectively implement improvements. PT8 and PT10 stressed the importance of providing concrete examples and actionable advice during feedback sessions to aid in applying theoretical concepts. Sensitivity in feedback delivery is also crucial, with PT12 noting that constructive and

supportive feedback helps in building confidence and addressing weaknesses. In summary, the mentoring framework's effectiveness is significantly impacted by challenges faced across all participant groups. Mentor lecturers struggle with time constraints, resource limitations, and diverse mentee needs, while mentor teachers deal with the complexities of role transitions, feedback consistency, and session structure. Preservice teachers face difficulties in applying feedback due to its general nature, session infrequency, and a lack of practical guidance. Addressing these challenges by improving time management, enhancing resource availability, ensuring structured and consistent feedback, and providing personalized and actionable advice will be essential in strengthening the mentoring framework and better supporting preservice teachers' professional development. Theme 4: Needs and Expectations in Mentoring Sessions Question 4 covered the

needs and expectations of both the mentors and preservice teachers during mentoring sessions. Subtheme 1: Skills and Knowledge Expected from Preservice Teachers Participant Group 1 Responses Mentor

lecturers play a pivotal role in shaping the competencies of

preservice teachers by emphasizing the development of practical teaching skills alongside theoretical knowledge. According to ML1, a key expectation is that preservice teachers "acquire strong classroom management skills." This implies not just understanding the principles of classroom management but also being able to apply them effectively in real classroom settings. ML1 further stresses the importance of "applying theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings," indicating that successful teaching goes beyond theoretical learning to involve hands-on experience. ML2 builds on this by highlighting the necessity of integrating theory with practice. They assert that preservice teachers "need to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate their teaching strategies." This points to a comprehensive approach where preservice teachers are expected to be adept at designing lesson plans, executing them, and critically assessing their effectiveness to ensure continuous improvement. Critical thinking and adaptability are also deemed essential by ML3. They argue that "critical thinking and adaptability in the classroom are crucial skills," emphasizing that preservice teachers must be able to navigate the complexities of classroom dynamics and adjust their strategies as needed. Reflective practice is another core element highlighted by ML4 and ML5. ML4 notes that "reflection on teaching practices and student outcomes is an essential component," underscoring the importance of introspection and analysis in refining teaching methods. This reflection helps preservice teachers understand what works well and what needs adjustment. ML5 complements this perspective by stressing that these reflective skills are necessary for ensuring that preservice teachers are "ready for teaching careers." This indicates that readiness for the teaching profession is not only about acquiring skills but also about being prepared to continuously reflect and improve. Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers underscore the critical importance of practical skills and professional conduct for preservice teachers, highlighting several key areas essential for their development. MT1 emphasizes the foundational skills that preservice teachers need to master. They assert that developing "classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional strategies" is crucial. This indicates that a well-rounded teacher

must be proficient in organizing and managing a classroom environment, designing effective lesson plans, and employing instructional strategies that facilitate learning. These skills are not only fundamental to effective teaching but also pivotal for the preservice teachers' professional growth. MT2 highlights the importance of adaptability in teaching. They stress that preservice teachers must be capable of "adapting lessons to diverse student needs." This adaptability ensures that all students, regardless of their varying needs and backgrounds, receive appropriate and effective instruction. It underscores the need for flexibility in teaching approaches to accommodate the unique requirements of each student. Reflective practice and adherence to professional standards are also central themes highlighted by MT3 and MT4. MT3 underscores the significance of professional behavior by stating, "Understanding professional standards and behaving accordingly is crucial." This reflects a broader expectation that preservice teachers must not only understand the ethical and professional norms of the teaching profession but also consistently exhibit these standards in their practice. MT4

complements this by focusing on the role of feedback in the

development of preservice teachers. They argue that "providing timely and relevant feedback is crucial to their development." This points to the importance of continuous and constructive feedback in helping preservice teachers improve their teaching practices and professional skills. Together, the responses from the mentor teachers reflect a cohesive emphasis on the development of practical teaching skills, such as classroom management

and lesson planning, as well as the importance of

professional conduct and reflective practice. The integration of these elements is essential for preparing preservice teachers to be effective and professional educators. Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers are acutely aware of the rigorous expectations placed upon them, though their experiences reveal a range of challenges and insights. PT1 highlights the necessity of quickly adapting to various teaching styles and classroom management techniques, emphasizing the need for versatility in their roles. PT2 and PT3 stress the importance of translating theoretical knowledge into practice, with PT2 noting that "the ability to put theory into practice is crucial," and PT3 adding that "receiving constructive feedback helps us refine our teaching strategies." This feedback is vital for improving their methods, yet PT4 struggles with the pressure to demonstrate proficiency quickly, revealing the difficulty of meeting high standards within a short timeframe. Other preservice teachers provide additional perspectives: PT5 points to the challenges of "effective lesson planning and time management," while PT6 underscores the importance of building rapport with students for effective teaching. PT7 speaks to the need for continuous self-improvement, which can be overwhelming but is necessary for growth. PT8 values collaborative learning with peers, stating that "working with fellow preservice teachers helps us share strategies and support each other." PT9 emphasizes the effort required to engage diverse learners, and PT10 notes the difficulty in balancing teaching with administrative tasks. PT11 highlights the importance of maintaining a professional demeanor, and PT12 discusses the challenge of navigating feedback from multiple sources, which can be confusing but is essential for developing a well-rounded approach. These varied experiences underscore the complex transition from theoretical understanding to practical

application and the ongoing need for support and guidance in their professional development. Subtheme 2: Perceptions of Experiences During Teaching Practice Participant Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers widely regard practical experiences as crucial for the professional development of

preservice teachers, viewing these experiences as pivotal in shaping their readiness for the teaching profession. ML1 emphasizes the transformative nature of these experiences, describing them as “invaluable in bridging the gap between theory and practice.” This perspective highlights how real-world classroom environments enable preservice teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations, thereby enhancing their understanding and effectiveness. ML2 further underscores the importance of practical experiences by noting that they help preservice teachers “understand the complexities of classroom dynamics and student interactions.” This insight reflects the multifaceted nature of teaching, where preservice teachers must navigate various interpersonal and instructional challenges that are not fully captured through theoretical learning alone. ML3 highlights another key benefit of practical experiences: the development of “problem-solving skills.” Facing real-world challenges in the classroom equips preservice teachers with the ability to address and resolve issues effectively, which is essential for their professional growth and adaptability. ML4 and ML5 both recognize the significance of observing growth over time. ML4 finds it “rewarding and indicative of their readiness for a teaching career” to see the progress of preservice teachers throughout their placement period. This view underscores the value of tracking and reflecting on the development of teaching skills and competencies over time as a measure of readiness for independent teaching roles. ML5 complements this by emphasizing the role of practical experiences in fostering ongoing improvement and readiness. The observations of growth and development in preservice teachers provide a clear indication of their evolving capabilities and preparedness for their future careers in education. In summary, mentor lecturers perceive practical experiences as vital for bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world application, understanding classroom dynamics, and developing essential problem-solving skills. The opportunity to observe and support the growth of preservice teachers over time further reinforces the positive impact of these experiences on their overall professional readiness. Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers place significant value on the practical experiences gained during teaching placements, recognizing these opportunities as integral to the development of preservice teachers. MT1 highlights that such experiences “help preservice teachers gain confidence and develop their teaching styles.” This observation underscores how immersive, hands-on teaching environments contribute to building self-assurance and refining individual teaching approaches, which are essential for effective classroom management and instructional delivery. MT2 and MT3 both emphasize the critical role of practical experiences in adapting to various teaching scenarios and meeting diverse student needs. MT2 notes that these experiences are instrumental in helping preservice teachers “adapt to different teaching situations,” which reflects the necessity of flexibility and responsiveness in teaching. By navigating different classroom contexts and challenges, preservice teachers become more adept at modifying their approaches to suit varying instructional demands and student requirements. MT3 further asserts that practical experiences are crucial for “professional development and readiness for full-time teaching roles.” This highlights the broader impact of teaching placements, which are

not only about immediate classroom performance but also about preparing

preservice teachers for the demands and responsibilities of a full-time teaching career. The ability to handle real-world teaching situations effectively is essential for transitioning from preservice training to independent teaching roles. Overall, the views of mentor teachers align closely with those of mentor lecturers, reflecting a strong consensus on the value of practical experiences in the preparation of preservice teachers. These experiences are seen as vital for building confidence, developing teaching styles, adapting to diverse classroom environments, and ultimately achieving readiness for full-time teaching positions. The emphasis on these aspects underscores their importance in shaping well-prepared and capable Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers exhibit a range of perceptions regarding their practical experiences, reflecting both the benefits and challenges associated with these placements. PT1 and PT2 view these experiences as crucial for applying classroom theories and understanding real-world challenges. PT1 highlights that "the practical experiences are crucial for applying what we've learned," emphasizing the importance of translating theoretical knowledge into practice. PT2 describes these experiences as "both stressful and enlightening," capturing the dual nature of their placements as they navigate both the pressures, and the valuable insights gained. PT3 finds that practical experiences have significantly boosted their confidence, stating, "The hands-on experiences have significantly contributed to my confidence as a future teacher." This highlights how direct classroom involvement can enhance self-assurance and preparedness. However, PT4 expresses feeling overwhelmed by the demands, noting that "sometimes the experiences can be overwhelming and challenging to manage," reflecting the difficulties that can arise from intense practical experiences. Additional perspectives reveal further nuances: PT11 appreciates the growth opportunities, saying, "The practical placements have allowed me to refine my teaching methods and better understand classroom management." PT12 mentions the challenge of balancing theory with practice, noting, "Integrating what I've learned with the realities of the classroom is often more difficult than I anticipated." PT13 values the practical experiences for professional development, asserting, "These experiences are essential for developing the skills and resilience needed for a teaching career." PT14 emphasizes the importance of feedback, explaining, "Constructive feedback during placements has been invaluable for improving my teaching practices." Finally, PT15 notes the stress of meeting high expectations, saying, "The pressure to meet high standards can be stressful, but it's also a powerful motivator to improve." These varied responses illustrate that while practical experiences are generally seen as beneficial for applying knowledge and building confidence, they also present significant challenges, underscoring the need for support and strategies to manage these demands effectively. Summary of responses to Theme 4 The

responses from the mentor lecturers, mentor teachers , and preservice

teachers emphasize the pivotal role of practical experiences in

teacher preparation , recognizing both their benefits and challenges. Mentor lecturers view these experiences as crucial for bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world application, developing problem-solving skills, and observing growth over time. Mentor teachers similarly highlight their

importance in building confidence, adapting to diverse teaching situations, and preparing for full-time teaching roles. Preservice teachers, while acknowledging the value of applying theory and gaining confidence through hands-on experiences, also express a range of reactions, from finding the experiences enlightening and essential for professional development to feeling overwhelmed by the demands and high expectations. Overall, the consensus is that practical experiences are vital for developing effective teaching skills, but they also present significant challenges that require support and effective management. Theme 5: Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training Question 5 looked at enhancing the mentorship effectiveness Subtheme 1: Support and Resources for Mentor Teachers Participants Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers (MLs) emphasize that mentor teachers (MTs) need structured guidelines, access to pedagogical resources, and ongoing professional development to enhance their mentoring effectiveness. ML1 underscores the importance of clear mentorship frameworks, stating, "I often find myself unsure of what exactly is expected of me in different situations. Having a well-defined mentorship framework would make it easier to provide consistent and effective support." Similarly, ML2 highlights the need for up-to-date educational resources, noting, "Current educational resources and tools are essential for keeping my mentoring practices effective and aligned with the latest teaching methods." ML3 emphasizes the necessity for continuous professional development, observing, "Regular training sessions focused on communication and feedback techniques would be invaluable. These skills are crucial for providing constructive criticism and building positive relationships with preservice teachers." Additionally, ML4 points out the importance of tools for tracking and evaluating preservice teachers' progress, saying, "Having tools or systems in place to track the progress of preservice teachers would help me provide more targeted feedback and support." Finally, ML5 stresses the need for practical strategies, adding, "Ongoing training should include practical workshops that address real-world challenges, such as managing diverse classroom dynamics." Addressing these areas through structured support and resources can significantly enhance the effectiveness of

mentor teachers and improve the overall quality of teacher training programs. Participants Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers (MTs) express a strong need for comprehensive training programs that equip them with practical strategies for various aspects of their role. MT1 highlights the importance of targeted training, stating, "Practical strategies for providing feedback and managing challenging situations are crucial. Without these skills, it's difficult to effectively support preservice teachers." MT2 adds that access to up-to-date teaching resources is essential, noting, "Having access to the latest educational materials helps me stay current and provide relevant guidance to preservice teachers." Additionally, MT3 emphasizes the value of collaboration, saying, "Opportunities to collaborate with other mentors and share best practices are incredibly beneficial. It allows us to learn from each other's experiences and improve our mentoring techniques." MT4 underscores the need for ongoing support from educational institutions, stating, "Regular workshops and refresher courses are vital. They help us stay updated on new methodologies and address any challenges we face in mentoring." Finally, MT5 advocates for structured professional development, adding, "Training programs should include sessions on handling diverse classroom dynamics and supporting the varied needs of preservice teachers. This ensures we're prepared to tackle real-world challenges effectively."

Addressing these needs through structured training and support can significantly enhance the mentoring experience and improve the overall quality of teacher preparation programs. Participants Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers (PTs) express that mentor teachers (MTs) need enhanced training in emotional intelligence and relationship-building skills to improve their mentoring effectiveness. PT1 comments, "Mentors would benefit greatly from training in emotional intelligence. Understanding and managing emotions can really impact how they interact with us and provide support." PT2 adds, "Building strong relationships is key. Mentors who are good at relationship-building can better understand and address our needs." They also highlight the necessity for comprehensive resources, such as detailed mentorship manuals and feedback templates. PT3 notes, "Having detailed mentorship manuals would help mentors be more structured in their approach and provide consistent guidance." PT4 echoes this sentiment, saying, "Templates for feedback would be useful. They would help mentors give clearer and more actionable advice." Furthermore, PT5 emphasizes the importance of a support network, stating, "Access to a network of experienced mentors would provide valuable support and advice, helping newer mentors navigate their roles more effectively." PT6 agrees, adding, "A support network could facilitate sharing best practices and dealing with common challenges." PT7 suggests that these resources and training would enable mentors to meet diverse needs better, saying, "If mentors had more tools and training, they could tailor their support to the various needs of preservice teachers more effectively." Finally, PT8 concludes, "Overall, improving these aspects would lead to a more supportive and productive mentoring relationship." Addressing these needs through targeted training and resources can significantly enhance the mentoring process and better support preservice teachers.

Subtheme 2: Training and Professional Development for Mentors and Mentees Participants Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers (MLs) advocate for targeted professional development programs designed to enhance advanced mentoring techniques, including coaching and assessment strategies. They emphasize that such programs should also incorporate reflective practices to promote continuous improvement. ML1 stresses, "Professional development should focus on advanced techniques like coaching and assessment. These skills are essential for providing high-quality mentorship and effectively guiding preservice teachers." ML2 adds, "Incorporating reflective practices into training allows mentors to critically evaluate their approaches and make necessary adjustments, fostering ongoing growth and effectiveness." They also believe

that professional development should be tailored to meet the needs

of both mentors and mentees. ML3 notes, "Programs need to address the specific challenges and needs of both mentors and mentees to be truly effective. This ensures that the training is relevant and applicable in real-world mentoring scenarios." ML4 highlights the importance of continuous improvement, stating, "Reflective practices help mentors to not only assess their current methods but also to adapt and refine their strategies based on their experiences and feedback." Finally, ML5 emphasizes the overall impact of well- designed professional development, saying, "Tailored and advanced training programs enhance the overall effectiveness of mentoring sessions by equipping mentors with the skills and knowledge needed to support preservice teachers more effectively." By addressing these areas through focused professional development,

educational institutions can significantly improve the quality and impact of mentoring relationships. Participants Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers (MTs) propose that training programs should emphasize practical aspects of mentoring, including conducting effective observation sessions, providing constructive feedback, and setting achievable goals. MT1 underscores the importance of observation, stating, "Training on how to conduct effective observation sessions is crucial. It helps mentors provide accurate and helpful feedback that can truly support preservice teachers' development." MT2 highlights the need for constructive feedback strategies, noting, "Mentors should be trained on how to give constructive feedback in a way that is clear, supportive, and actionable. This is essential for guiding preservice teachers towards improvement." MT3 emphasizes the significance of goal setting, adding, "Setting achievable goals is key to ensuring that preservice teachers have clear targets to work towards and can track their progress effectively." They also stress the value of workshops that address specific mentoring challenges. MT4 observes, "Workshops that tackle real-world challenges, such as managing diverse classroom dynamics, are incredibly valuable. They prepare mentors to handle various situations that may arise in the classroom." MT5 agrees, stating, "Support for dealing with mentees who have varying levels of experience is also essential. Training programs should include strategies for adapting mentoring approaches to meet different needs." By focusing on these practical aspects and addressing specific challenges, training programs can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mentoring and better support the diverse needs of preservice teachers.

Participants Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers (PTs) believe that both mentors and mentees would greatly benefit from training in collaborative skills and shared goal setting to improve their mentoring relationships. PT8 highlights the importance of collaborative skills, stating, "Training in collaborative skills would help both mentors and mentees work together more effectively, fostering a more productive mentoring relationship." PT9 adds, "Shared goal setting is crucial. When both parties are involved in setting goals, it creates a sense of ownership and alignment, which enhances the mentoring process." They also suggest that professional development should focus on building mutual understanding and effective communication. PT10 notes, "Workshops that focus on improving communication skills can help mentors and mentees better understand each other's perspectives and needs." PT11 agrees, stating, "Effective communication is key to resolving misunderstandings and building a strong mentoring relationship." Additionally, PT12 emphasizes the value of managing stress, saying, "Workshops on managing stress are important. Mentoring can be demanding, and learning how to handle stress helps maintain a positive and supportive environment." PT13 concurs, noting, "Stress management techniques can prevent burnout and ensure that the mentoring relationship remains productive and encouraging." PT14 and PT15 also highlight the need for maintaining a positive mentoring relationship. PT14 states, "Training on maintaining a positive relationship helps both mentors and mentees stay motivated and engaged throughout the process." PT15 adds, "A positive relationship between mentors and mentees leads to better outcomes and a more enjoyable mentoring experience." By addressing these areas through targeted professional development opportunities, both mentors and mentees can benefit from enhanced collaboration, improved communication, and a more effective and supportive mentoring relationship.

Theme 6: Implementation and Effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework QUESTION 6 looked at the effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework. The implementation

and effectiveness of a mentoring framework play a crucial role in the development of preservice teachers, providing structured guidance and support as they navigate the complexities of the teaching

profession. Question 6 delves into the practical aspects of applying the proposed mentoring framework within the teaching practice program. It explores how the framework's objectives are being met through systematic integration into the educational setting, the preparedness and involvement of mentor lecturers, and the availability of necessary resources. By evaluating these elements, this question aims to offer insights into the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation process, ultimately assessing the framework's impact on enhancing the teaching skills and professional growth of preservice teachers. Below is an analysis of theme 6. Subtheme 1: Design and Training of the Framework Participant Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers have approached the design of their mentoring framework with a strategic focus on practicality, relevance, and continuous improvement. Their design process was informed by careful consideration of practical needs, feedback from previous cohorts, and alignment with national educational standards. ML1 emphasized that "we aimed for a framework that could cater to diverse learning styles and teaching environments," indicating a deliberate effort to create a versatile and adaptable framework that meets the varied needs of preservice teachers. This approach underscores the importance of

accommodating different teaching contexts and learning

preferences. In addition to designing the framework, the selection and training of mentors are crucial components of the process. ML2 highlighted that "training focuses on effective communication and mentoring strategies," which reflects a commitment to equipping mentors with essential skills for providing impactful guidance. The emphasis on communication and mentoring techniques ensures that mentors are well-prepared to support preservice teachers effectively, fostering a productive learning environment. Mentor lecturers also integrate current educational research into their framework, which helps keep the mentoring practices up-to-date and relevant. ML3 noted, "Incorporating the latest research allows us to align our practices with contemporary educational trends," emphasizing the importance of staying informed about new developments in education to enhance the mentoring experience. The training provided to mentors includes comprehensive workshops that address various aspects of mentoring, from practical techniques to theoretical foundations. ML4 mentioned, "Our workshops cover a range of topics, including conflict resolution and effective feedback, to prepare mentors for different challenges they might encounter." This thorough preparation reflects the commitment to developing mentors who can address diverse issues and supporting preservice teachers through their development. Overall, the design and implementation of the mentoring framework by mentor lecturers involve a careful balance of practical needs, feedback integration, and adherence to national standards, with a strong emphasis on flexibility, current research, and comprehensive mentor training. Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers highlight that the design of their mentoring framework incorporates feedback from previous implementations and aligns closely with educational

standards, reflecting a commitment to continual improvement and adherence to best practices. MT1 emphasized that “mentors are selected based on their experience and ability to provide effective support,” underscoring the significance of choosing qualified mentors who can offer valuable guidance. MT2 further noted that “training involves workshops on the new framework and mentoring best practices,” highlighting the focus on equipping mentors

with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the framework effectively. MT3 added that “ongoing evaluations and adjustments to the framework ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to both mentor and preservice teacher needs,” illustrating the dynamic nature of the framework’s development. MT4 also pointed out that “mentors receive support in adapting to new educational trends and technologies,” showing an additional layer of preparation aimed at keeping mentors current with evolving educational practices. Together, these perspectives emphasize the framework’s design as a comprehensive, feedback-driven process that values mentor qualifications, effective training, and ongoing adaptation to meet the needs of all participants. Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers encountered the introduction of the mentoring framework through structured orientation sessions, which provided an overview of its goals and components. PT1 noted, “The framework was introduced through an orientation session where we learned about its goals and components,” indicating a systematic introduction. However, PT2 observed that “its implementation has been somewhat inconsistent,” reflecting variability in how the framework was applied in practice. PT3 experienced that “the practical use of the framework in my placement was not always clear,” suggesting a disconnect between theory and application. PT4 added that there was “a disconnect between what was covered in the orientation and how it was implemented in the classroom,” highlighting gaps in execution. PT5 noted improvements over time, stating, “The framework’s application improved as we received more feedback and guidance.” In contrast, PT6 observed that “some mentors were better at integrating the framework than others,” emphasizing inconsistencies. PT7 found the framework’s structured approach helpful but noted variability depending on the mentor. PT8 faced initial challenges but found later adjustments made the framework easier to follow. PT9 appreciated the framework’s guidance once consistently applied. PT10 experienced disjointed application, feeling supported but confused at times. PT11 saw its effectiveness dependent on mentor engagement, while PT12 experienced mixed results due to inconsistency in application. PT13 suggested more practical examples could improve application, and PT14 saw improvements with more frequent feedback. PT15 and PT16 highlighted issues with flexibility leading to confusion and varying mentor engagement impacting effectiveness. Overall, while the framework’s introduction was well-organized, its practical application varied, affecting preservice teachers’

experiences and emphasizing the need for consistency and ongoing

support. Subtheme 2: Implementation and Addressing Challenges Participant Group 1 Responses Mentor lecturers undertook a structured approach to implement the mentoring framework, which included comprehensive orientation sessions, integration into daily mentoring practices, and regular assessments to monitor progress. However, the implementation process faced several challenges, including inconsistent application and resistance from some mentors. ML3 reported that “logistical

issues with scheduling and coordination were addressed by streamlining communication channels,” showcasing the problem-solving strategies employed to overcome difficulties in organizing and coordinating the framework’s rollout. This adjustment aimed to enhance efficiency and ensure smoother integration into the mentoring process. ML4 highlighted another significant challenge, noting that “some preservice teachers struggled with the new framework’s expectations.” This issue reflects the difficulties faced by preservice teachers in adapting to the new requirements and standards set by the framework. The struggle indicates that while the framework was designed to improve mentoring practices, its introduction also created challenges for preservice teachers who had to adjust to new expectations and methodologies. Additionally, ML5 pointed out that “some mentors were initially hesitant to adopt the new framework,” revealing resistance among mentors that could affect the framework’s effectiveness. This resistance required targeted strategies to encourage buy-in and ensure that all mentors were fully engaged with the new approach. ML6 also noted that “ongoing support and professional development were crucial for addressing these challenges,” emphasizing the need for continuous guidance and training to facilitate a smoother transition and effective implementation of the framework. Overall, the implementation of the mentoring framework involved detailed planning and proactive problem-solving, but it also faced challenges related to inconsistent application, resistance from mentors, and adjustment difficulties for preservice teachers. Addressing these issues required ongoing support, effective communication, and adaptability to ensure the framework’s successful integration and impact.

Participant Group 2 Responses Mentor teachers approached the implementation of the mentoring framework through a phased integration process complemented by ongoing support to ensure a smooth transition. Despite these efforts, they encountered several challenges, including resistance to change and technical issues. MT2 highlighted the difficulty of adapting to new practices, stating, “We faced resistance from some mentors who were accustomed to previous methods.” This resistance indicates that established mentors were hesitant to embrace the new framework, which could impede its successful adoption and integration. In addition to resistance, MT3 noted, “Technical issues with online resources were a problem,” illustrating a significant challenge related to the digital components of the framework. Technical difficulties with online resources not only hindered the immediate effectiveness of the framework but also required additional troubleshooting and support to resolve. MT4 elaborated on the resistance issue, explaining, “Mentors who were comfortable with old practices found it difficult to shift to the new framework,” underscoring the challenge of changing established routines and methods. This resistance often necessitated additional training and motivational strategies to encourage mentors to engage fully with the new approach. MT5 addressed the technical challenges further by noting, “We had to implement additional training sessions to help mentors navigate the online tools,” highlighting the need for extra support to mitigate technical issues and ensure that all mentors could effectively utilize the resources provided. Overall, the phased integration and ongoing support provided by mentor teachers were crucial in addressing the challenges of resistance to change and technical issues. The implementation process required careful management of mentor resistance and proactive solutions to technical difficulties, with additional training and support aimed at overcoming these obstacles and facilitating the successful adoption of the new mentoring framework.

Participant Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers reported

variable experiences with the implementation of the mentoring framework, largely influenced by individual mentors' commitment and adherence to the framework. PT3 noted, "The actual implementation depended largely on our mentor's commitment to the framework," reflecting the significant impact of mentor engagement on effectiveness. PT4 observed that "there were gaps in how it was applied," indicating inconsistencies in practical application and support. Additional feedback revealed that while some mentors closely followed the framework, providing clear guidance and enhancing the learning experience, others adapted or partially implemented it, leading to mixed results. PT5 mentioned, "Some mentors followed the framework closely, which was beneficial, while others adapted it in ways that sometimes felt less helpful." PT6 found that unclear communication about the framework's guidelines led to confusion, while PT7 highlighted that "when the framework was well implemented, it provided clear guidance and support." However, PT8 noted that "the framework's benefits were often overshadowed by uneven application," and PT9 described how "its impact was diminished when mentors only partially implemented it." Overall, the feedback underscores that while the framework has potential, its effectiveness is significantly affected by inconsistent application and mentor engagement, with calls for clearer guidelines and more uniform implementation to enhance its impact.

Subtheme 3: Impact and Evaluation

Participants Group 1 Responses

Mentor lecturers employed a structured approach to evaluate the mentoring framework, focusing on gathering feedback and conducting assessments to ensure it met the needs of preservice teachers. ML5 highlighted this approach, stating, "We use a structured approach with clear milestones and feedback mechanisms," which underscores their commitment to a systematic evaluation process designed to track progress and identify areas for improvement. This method involves setting specific milestones and incorporating feedback loops to continually assess and refine the framework's effectiveness. Despite these efforts, challenges persisted, particularly concerning the consistency of the framework's impact. ML2 noted that "we encountered resistance from some mentors," which indicates that not all mentors fully embraced or adhered to the framework. This resistance affected the uniformity of its implementation and, consequently, its overall effectiveness. The variability in mentor adherence created disparities in how the framework was applied across different placements, making it challenging to achieve a consistent impact. ML3 further explained that "addressing these challenges involved ongoing support and adjustments based on feedback," highlighting their adaptive approach to managing resistance and ensuring that the framework remained relevant and effective. This included providing additional resources and training to mentors to address their concerns and improve their engagement with the framework. Overall, the evaluation process was designed to be rigorous and responsive, incorporating structured feedback and assessments. However, the challenges of mentor resistance and varying levels of adherence required continuous adjustments and support to enhance the framework's overall impact and effectiveness.

Participants Group 2 Responses

Mentor teachers observed that

the framework had a noticeable impact on the development of

preservice teachers, though its effectiveness varied based on implementation. MT4 noted, "The framework is designed to be adaptive,"

reflecting its flexibility to address the diverse needs of preservice

teachers and adapt to different teaching contexts. This adaptability is intended to ensure that the framework remains relevant and supportive across various placements and individual situations. To support effective implementation, MT5 highlighted the provision of additional resources, stating, "We also provide mentors with resources and support materials." This effort underscores the commitment to equipping mentors with the tools and guidance necessary to implement the framework effectively and overcome potential challenges. By offering these resources, mentor teachers aim to enhance the framework's application and ensure that it positively

contributes to the professional development of preservice teachers. Despite these supportive measures, the variability in the framework's impact suggests that its effectiveness can differ depending on how well it is applied and how engaged mentors are with the provided resources. The focus on adaptability and support materials reflects an ongoing effort to maximize the framework's benefits and address the varying needs of preservice teachers.

Participants Group 3 Responses Preservice teachers experienced a mixed impact from the mentoring framework, where structured support offered notable benefits, yet inconsistent implementation hindered its overall effectiveness. PT5 reflected this dual experience, saying, "The framework's impact has been mixed; while it provided valuable support, its inconsistent implementation affected my learning experience," highlighting the framework's strengths and weaknesses. PT6 echoed this sentiment, stating, "When the framework was well-supported, it was very helpful, but inconsistency in its application often led to confusion." PT7 found that "structured support was beneficial, but the uneven application meant that not all aspects of the framework were fully realized." PT8 added that "the framework's adaptability was useful, but when mentors did not apply it consistently, it diminished its effectiveness." PT9 noted, "The support materials and guidelines were good, but their inconsistent use meant that the framework's potential was not fully achieved." PT10 mentioned, "There were instances where the framework worked well, but too often, its application varied widely depending on the mentor." PT11 observed that "the framework's structure was strong, but variability in how it was implemented led to mixed outcomes." PT12 added, "Despite the framework's promising approach, its impact was diluted by inconsistent application and varying levels of mentor engagement." PT13 found that "the framework had valuable elements, but the lack of uniform application meant that its benefits were not always clear." PT14 noted, "The support was there, but the inconsistency in how the framework was applied affected how much we could benefit from it." PT15 said, "When mentors engaged fully with the framework, it was effective, but inconsistent use led to uneven experiences." PT16 added, "The framework's flexibility was a strength, but the varying commitment levels from mentors led to mixed results." PT17 observed, "The benefits of the framework were evident when implemented properly, but inconsistency created challenges." PT18 found that "the structured approach was helpful, but without consistent application, its impact was limited." PT19 stated, "The framework offered good support, but variability in implementation meant that not all preservice teachers benefited equally." PT20 concluded, "While the framework had potential, its effectiveness was often compromised by inconsistent implementation across different mentors." Overall, these perspectives reflect a common theme: while the framework provided valuable support, its inconsistent application led to varied and sometimes

diminished outcomes. Summary of Responses to Theme 6 The responses highlighted that the implementation of the mentoring framework was marked by both successes and challenges. Mentor Lecturers designed the framework with an emphasis on flexibility, feedback, and alignment with national standards. However, they faced issues such as mentor resistance and inconsistent application, which affected its effectiveness. Mentor Teachers focused on phased integration and provided support to mentors but encountered obstacles including resistance to change and technical problems with online resources. Preservice Teachers experienced mixed results from the framework. While the structured support offered was beneficial, inconsistencies in its application led to varying outcomes. Some preservice teachers found that the framework provided valuable support but noted that uneven implementation and differences in mentor engagement impacted their overall learning experience. The general sentiment was that while the framework had potential, its effectiveness was diminished by inconsistent application and varying levels of mentor commitment. Addressing these issues is essential for improving the framework's impact and ensuring a more consistent experience for preservice teachers. 5.8 Conclusion Chapter

5A provided a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data

collected from individual interviews with five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions involving five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. This section illuminated the diverse perspectives within the teaching practice community, highlighting the distinct roles and experiences of each participant group. The insights gained from these interactions

underscored the importance of the mentoring framework in

shaping the professional development of preservice teachers. The analysis revealed key themes related to the effectiveness and implementation of the mentoring framework, including the alignment of mentoring practices with educational goals, the preparedness of mentor lecturers, and the support provided to preservice teachers. The participants' reflections offered valuable feedback on the successes and challenges

encountered in the mentoring process, emphasizing the need

for continuous improvement and adaptation. The findings from Chapter 5(i) contribute significantly to the overall understanding of the mentoring framework's impact, demonstrating its critical role in enhancing teaching practices and integrating theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience. This analysis sets the stage for the subsequent section, Chapter 5 (ii), which will delve into the observational data and questionnaire results, further evaluating the proposed mentoring framework and its effectiveness in the teaching practice program. CHAPTER 5 (ii): DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE OBSERVATIONS CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE STUDY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH WAS USED AS AN EVALUATING TOOL FOR THE PROPOSED MENTORING FRAMEWORK 5.1 Introduction In Chapter five 5 (i), the researcher provided a detailed analysis

and interpretation of data derived from interviews with five mentor lecturers and focus group discussions involving five mentor teachers and twenty preservice teachers. This comprehensive examination offered

valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the mentoring process. According to Loughran (2020), such qualitative insights are crucial for understanding the complexities of teacher development and the impact of mentoring practices on preservice teachers. This chapter 5 (ii) builds upon this foundation by presenting an in-depth

analysis of three additional data sources : observations conducted

throughout the study, document analysis, and the results of a questionnaire designed to evaluate the proposed mentoring framework. This chapter continues the mixed methods approach of the study, which utilizes an exploratory sequential design. This design begins with qualitative data

collection and analysis to explore and develop insights into the

mentoring framework, followed by quantitative data collection to further

investigate and validate the initial findings. Additionally, triangulation which was employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by

cross verifying the data from multiple sources will be explained. Observations are essential for capturing real-time interactions and practical applications of mentoring strategies. As Borko (2020) highlights, direct observations provide valuable insights into how theoretical concepts are implemented in practice, revealing the alignment between mentor support and preservice teachers' needs. Document analysis involves reviewing relevant documents, such as mentoring session plans and feedback forms, to understand the formal and informal practices embedded in the mentoring framework. This approach helps identify how mentoring practices are documented, communicated, and perceived within the educational context. The questionnaire served as an evaluative tool to assess the effectiveness

and impact of the mentoring framework from the participants' perspectives. Harris and Jones (2019) emphasize that such quantitative and qualitative tools are vital for evaluating educational frameworks, as they offer a structured means to measure their success and identify areas for enhancement. The analysis of the questionnaire results will provide insights into how well the framework addresses the needs of preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and mentor lecturers. Data analysis in this chapter involves

a thorough examination of both qualitative and quantitative data. The

qualitative data from observations and document analysis were analyzed using Constructivist principles, emphasizing the context and interactions that contribute to the construction of knowledge. The focus was on understanding the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions and the dynamics within different educational settings. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were statistically analyzed to validate the findings and provide a broader understanding of the mentoring framework's impact. Together, the observations, document analysis, and questionnaire data contribute to a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed mentoring

framework within this mixed - methods study employing an

exploratory sequential design. This chapter will elucidate how these additional data sources enhance our understanding of the framework's

practical effectiveness and its potential to support the professional

development of preservice teachers effectively. By integrating qualitative observations with quantitative survey data, the study aligns with Korthagen's (2017) advocacy for a mixed-methods approach that combines

various data sources to assess and refine educational practices. 5.2 Analysis of Observations In the pursuit of designing, implementing, and assessing a sustainable mentoring framework for preservice teachers, it is crucial to understand the current state of mentoring practices. This study employs direct observations of mentoring sessions to gather empirical data on the interactions between mentor teachers (MTs), mentor lecturers (MLs), and preservice teachers (PTs). Observations provide a unique, real-time perspective on the dynamics of mentoring, highlighting both effective strategies and areas needing improvement (Jafar, Yaakob, Mustapha, Aziz, Yusof, and Awang, 2021) Researchers like Muraya and Wairimu (2020) emphasize the importance of structured mentoring

programs in enhancing the professional development of

preservice teachers. They argue that effective mentoring requires not only a clear framework but also the active engagement of both mentors and mentees in reflective practices and constructive feedback. Similarly, Jafar et al. (2021) highlights the need for mentors to be well-equipped with advanced mentoring techniques and the significance of fostering a collaborative learning environment. They suggest that effective mentoring involves continuous professional development and the creation of supportive, reflective spaces for both mentors and mentees. By systematically observing ten mentoring sessions—five between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs), and five between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs—the study aims to identify key behaviors, interactions, and outcomes that characterize successful mentoring. The observations focus on critical aspects such as active listening, constructive feedback, supportiveness, goal setting, and reflection. These elements are essential for fostering an environment that promotes the professional growth of preservice teachers. The data collected through these observations were analyzed using the Constructivism philosophy, particularly drawing on Lev Vygotsky's theories. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes how individuals construct their

understanding and knowledge through social interactions and cultural contexts. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is

central to this analysis, highlighting how mentoring practices support preservice teachers in performing tasks they cannot yet complete independently, with the guidance of more knowledgeable others. By applying Constructivist principles, the analysis explores how mentoring facilitates the

construction of knowledge and skills, enabling preservice teachers to

develop their competencies within their ZPD. According to Hairon, Loh,

Lim, Govindani, Tan, and Tay (2020), understanding the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions is essential for creating supportive and effective mentoring environments. The study conducted observations to gather empirical data on how mentoring sessions are conducted, focusing on the behaviors, communication styles, and challenges faced by mentors and preservice teachers. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's Constructivism by capturing how mentoring practices influence the construction of knowledge. By analyzing these interactions, the study identifies strengths and weaknesses in current mentoring practices, revealing areas where mentoring may fall short and highlighting specific needs of both mentors and preservice teachers. This Constructivist approach, integrated with the pragmatism paradigm, ensures that the study not only considers how mentoring supports knowledge construction but also evaluates the practical effectiveness of mentoring practices. The observations and their analysis contribute to designing a more effective mentoring framework, ultimately enhancing the professional growth of preservice teachers. This introduction sets the stage for a detailed examination of the observations, providing insights into the current mentoring practices and their impact on preservice teacher development. The subsequent analysis delves into the strengths and challenges observed, supported by direct quotes and examples from the

sessions, to paint a comprehensive picture of the mentoring landscape

within the context of this study. 5.3 Description of the Observation Tool To comprehensively capture the dynamics of the mentoring process, the researcher developed a detailed observation tool designed to evaluate various aspects of mentor-mentee interactions. This tool reflects Constructivist principles, emphasizing how mentors and preservice teachers collaboratively construct knowledge through their interactions. By systematically observing mentoring sessions, the tool aims to uncover key behaviours and interactions that contribute to effective mentoring. The development of the observation tool involved several systematic steps to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Initially, a thorough literature review was conducted to identify key constructs related to mentoring and Constructivist learning. This review informed the selection of behaviours and interactions to be observed (Nesje & Lejonberg, 2022). Based on this foundation, specific criteria for each construct were defined, creating clear and measurable descriptors for the observation process (Hairon et al., 2020). The tool was then designed with practical considerations in mind, focusing on ease of use and systematic data collection. It underwent pilot testing to refine its functionality and ensure that it accurately captured the intended behaviours (Borko, 2020). Validation and reliability checks were performed, incorporating feedback from experts to enhance its consistency and accuracy (Harris & Jones, 2019). This rigorous development process aimed to create a robust tool that provides valuable insights into mentoring practices and supports the effective application of Constructivist principles in educational settings. Below is a list of the specific behaviours and interactions that the observation tool assesses. These elements are integral to understanding the mentoring process and are critical for evaluating how mentoring practices align with Constructivist principles. The observations focus on how mentors support the learning process and how preservice teachers engage with and respond to this support. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of mentoring, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in mentoring practices. Mentor's Behaviours: Active

Listening: Evaluates how well the mentor listens to and engages with the preservice teacher. Effective listening is essential in Constructivism as it

allows the mentor to understand the preservice teacher's current

cognitive state and provide appropriate support within their Zone of

Proximal Development (ZPD). Acknowledging the preservice teacher's concerns and responding thoughtfully helps in scaffolding their learning experiences. Providing Constructive Feedback: Assesses the quality of feedback given by the mentor. In a Constructivist framework, feedback should be specific and actionable, designed to help the preservice teacher build on their existing knowledge. Constructive feedback promotes cognitive development by guiding the preservice teacher through their ZPD, facilitating deeper understanding and skill acquisition. Encouraging Reflection: Measures the extent to which the mentor helps the preservice teacher reflect on their teaching practice. Constructivism values reflection as a crucial process in knowledge construction. By prompting the preservice teacher to think critically about their experiences, the mentor supports the internalization of new knowledge and fosters self-regulated learning. Demonstrating Supportiveness: Looks at how supportive the mentor is during the sessions. Supportiveness in Constructivism involves not only providing emotional encouragement but also facilitating social interactions that enhance learning. Practical assistance and emotional support contribute to creating a learning environment where the preservice teacher can explore and construct new knowledge confidently. Facilitating Goal Setting: Evaluates the mentor's effectiveness in helping the preservice teacher set and achieve realistic goals. Effective goal setting in Constructivist terms involves collaborative planning where the mentor and preservice teacher work together to define achievable objectives that are aligned with the preservice teacher's current developmental stage and potential growth within their ZPD. Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviours: Engagement Level: Assesses the preservice teacher's participation and involvement in the mentoring session. High engagement levels reflect an active role in the Constructivist learning process, where the preservice teacher is actively constructing their understanding through interaction with the mentor. Receptiveness to Feedback: Measures how open the preservice teacher is to be receiving and acting on feedback. In Constructivism, receptiveness to feedback is crucial for cognitive development. The ability to integrate feedback into one's existing knowledge base reflects the preservice teacher's engagement in the knowledge construction process. Ability to Reflect: Evaluates the preservice teacher's capacity to reflect on their practice and integrate feedback. Reflection is a core component of Constructivist learning, as it allows the preservice

teacher to make sense of new experiences and incorporate them

into their evolving understanding. Initiative in Setting Goals: Looks at how proactive the preservice teacher is in setting and pursuing goals. Initiative in goal setting aligns with Constructivist principles by demonstrating the preservice teacher's active role in directing their own learning process and taking ownership of their development. Demonstration of Growth/Improvement: Assesses observable progress and development in the preservice teacher's practice over time. In Constructivism, growth and improvement are outcomes of effective mentoring that supports the

preservice teacher's cognitive and skill development within their ZPD. By focusing on these aspects, the observation tool aligns with the Constructivist philosophy, emphasizing the role of interactive and reflective processes in the construction of knowledge and skills during mentoring sessions. 5.4 Observation Procedure The study involved a total of ten mentoring sessions, systematically observed to provide a comprehensive understanding of current mentoring practices. These sessions included a balanced mix of interactions, with five sessions conducted between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs), and another five sessions between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs. According to Muraya and Wairimu (2020), diverse observational settings help in understanding the varied dynamics of mentoring relationships. In line with Constructivism, which emphasizes the

importance of context and interaction in learning, the

observations were conducted in various educational settings, including classrooms at schools and designated mentoring meeting spaces within higher education institutions. Each observation session lasted approximately one hour, allowing sufficient time to capture detailed interactions and behaviors that contribute to the construction of knowledge. By covering both school-based and institution-based mentoring sessions, the study

ensured a comprehensive analysis of the mentoring process,

reflecting the diverse contexts in which preservice teachers receive guidance and support. As Hairon et al. (2020) suggest, such comprehensive observation is crucial for understanding the full spectrum of mentoring practices and informing the development of more effective frameworks. This approach aligns with Constructivist principles by highlighting how different settings and contexts influence the mentoring process and the construction of knowledge. Detailed field notes were meticulously taken during each observation to ensure a comprehensive capture of the mentoring sessions. The researcher recorded specific behaviors, interactions, and any notable successes or challenges observed during the sessions. This documentation process is consistent with the Constructivist emphasis on capturing rich, contextual information to understand how knowledge is constructed in real-time. Hairon et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of capturing detailed observations to understand mentoring dynamics fully, while Muraya and Wairimu (2020) highlight the need for thorough documentation to analyze the nuances of mentor-mentee interactions effectively. Nesje and Lejonberg (2022) also stress the significance of well-documented mentoring practices in their scoping review of tools for school-based mentoring. To ensure the

accuracy of the data, notes were recorded immediately after each observation, minimizing the risk of forgetting crucial details. The process included regular reviews of the notes to cross-check and validate the recorded information, enhancing reliability. This practice is consistent with the recommendations of Jafar et al. (2021), who underscore the importance of rigorous data management and validation in qualitative research. By employing these measures, the study aimed to provide a reliable and valid

basis for analyzing the effectiveness of current mentoring practices and

informing the development of a new framework. This

approach aligns with Constructivism by ensuring that the data collected reflects an accurate representation of the learning interactions and processes observed. 5.5 Analysis of Observation Data Using the Observation Tool The observation tool was designed to evaluate key behaviors and interactions during mentoring sessions between mentor teachers (MTs) and preservice teachers (PTs) and between mentor lecturers (MLs) and PTs. This section provides a detailed analysis of the observation data, focusing on the following components: Mentor's Behaviors and Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviors. To capture various dimensions of the mentoring process, the researcher developed a detailed observation tool. This tool was designed to systematically record and evaluate specific behaviors and interactions observed during mentoring sessions. The development of this tool involved reviewing existing literature on effective mentoring practices and aligning the tool's criteria with Constructivist principles, which emphasize context and interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Mentor's Behaviors Active Listening According to Vygotsky (1978), the process of active listening and reciprocal

interaction supports the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where

learners benefit from guidance that extends their current understanding and capabilities. Observations revealed that effective mentors demonstrated active listening by fully engaging with preservice teachers' concerns and responding thoughtfully. For example, one mentor was noted to "paraphrase the preservice teacher's concerns about lesson planning and responded with targeted advice on structuring lesson objectives." This behavior aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of understanding and responding to learners' needs as a means of facilitating their cognitive development. Effective active listening facilitated deeper conversations and allowed mentors to tailor their guidance to the specific needs of the preservice teachers. However, there were instances where mentors "interrupted the preservice teacher mid-sentence, which seemed to stifle the flow of discussion and prevent the preservice teacher from fully articulating their challenges." Providing Constructive Feedback Vygotsky (1978) posited that effective feedback should bridge the gap between a learner's current

abilities and their potential , facilitating cognitive growth within the ZPD. Constructive feedback was a critical component of effective mentoring. Observations showed that mentors who "offered detailed feedback with specific examples and actionable steps helped the preservice teacher revise their teaching approach effectively." This approach is consistent with Constructivist principles that advocate for feedback as a tool to help learners build and refine their understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective feedback contributed to the preservice teachers' development, whereas "one mentor's feedback was too vague, which left the preservice teacher unclear on how to implement improvements." Encouraging Reflection Vygotsky (1978) argued that reflection is crucial for learners to construct and reconstruct their understanding based on new experiences and insights. Mentors who encouraged reflection helped preservice teachers critically assess their teaching practices and integrate feedback. For instance, "one mentor frequently asked reflective questions, such as 'How did you feel about the student's response to your lesson?'" This practice supports Constructivist

principles by fostering a deeper understanding of experiences and

promoting critical thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective encouragement of reflection led to greater engagement and self-awareness among preservice teachers. In contrast, "there were sessions where the mentor did not prompt any reflection, which resulted in the preservice teacher being less engaged in analyzing their practice." Demonstrating Supportiveness Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that a supportive environment is essential for learners to engage in meaningful activities and extend their abilities within the ZPD. Supportiveness was evident in mentors who "offered both emotional encouragement and practical assistance, such as providing additional resources or revising lesson plans together." Observations showed that a supportive environment encouraged preservice teachers to take risks

and engage more deeply with their learning process. This aligns with Constructivist views that emphasize the importance of a supportive learning environment in facilitating cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). High levels of support were linked to increased confidence and motivation among preservice teachers. Conversely, "lack of support in some sessions led to noticeable hesitation and reluctance from the preservice teacher." Facilitating Goal Setting Vygotsky (1978) argued that setting and achieving goals within a structured framework supports learners in developing self-regulation and intrinsic motivation. Observations indicated that effective mentors facilitated goal setting by "working collaboratively with preservice teachers to set clear and achievable goals, such as 'improving classroom management strategies by the end of the month.'" This process helps preservice teachers focus their efforts and track progress, reflecting Constructivist principles of goal-oriented learning and self-regulation (Vygotsky, 1978). Successful goal setting was associated with clearer guidance and collaboration. However, "some mentors provided goals that were too broad or lacked specificity, resulting in confusion and lack of direction for the preservice teachers." Pre-Service Teacher's Behaviors Engagement Level Vygotsky (1978) argued that active engagement is crucial for learners to integrate new knowledge and experiences effectively. High engagement levels were observed when preservice teachers "actively participated in discussions and took initiative during mentoring sessions." This behavior is consistent with Constructivist principles that stress the importance of active involvement for meaningful learning and knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Preservice teachers who were more engaged demonstrated greater responsiveness to feedback and made more significant improvements. Conversely, "less engaged preservice teachers showed minimal progress and seemed less responsive to feedback." Receptiveness to Feedback Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that receptiveness to feedback is essential for learners to bridge the gap between their current abilities and their potential development. Receptiveness was demonstrated when preservice teachers "welcomed feedback and actively sought to incorporate it into their practice, such as asking follow-up questions to clarify suggestions." Observations showed that receptive preservice teachers used feedback to make tangible improvements, aligning with Constructivist views on the role of feedback in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Preservice teachers who were more receptive to feedback displayed noticeable growth. Those less receptive, on the other hand, "struggled to integrate feedback effectively and showed limited improvement." Ability to Reflect Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that reflection enables learners to assimilate new information and accommodate it into their existing cognitive structures. The ability to reflect

was observed in preservice teachers who "engaged in critical analysis of their teaching practices, often noting 'I noticed I could improve my pacing based on the students' reactions during the lesson.'" This behavior aligns with Constructivist principles by enabling learners to connect new insights with their existing knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Preservice teachers who engaged in regular reflection showed clearer understanding and made consistent improvements. Limited reflection was linked to "a lack of depth in their understanding and slower progress." Initiative in Setting Goals Vygotsky (1978) argued that learners who set and pursue their own goals develop greater self-regulation and motivation. Observations showed that preservice teachers who "proactively set goals, such as 'improving classroom management skills,' and followed through on them were more successful." This behavior reflects Constructivist principles by promoting self-directed learning and personal responsibility (Vygotsky, 1978). Proactive goal setting was associated with higher levels of engagement and achievement. In contrast, "preservice teachers who did not set their own goals often required more direction and showed less progress." Demonstration of Growth/Improvement Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learners demonstrate growth by constructing and integrating new knowledge through supportive interactions and experiences. Demonstrated growth and improvement were observed through "visible changes in teaching practices, such as increased effectiveness in classroom management and improved lesson delivery." These outcomes reflect Constructivist principles by showing how learners build on their experiences to advance their knowledge and skills (Vygotsky, 1978). Effective mentoring practices, such as constructive feedback and encouragement, were linked to noticeable improvements. Areas with limited progress highlighted "gaps in mentoring support or engagement." Summary of observations The researcher used a journal to meticulously record behaviors and interactions during each session. This approach ensured detailed and accurate documentation of the mentoring process, supporting the Constructivist perspective that rich, contextual information is vital for understanding how knowledge is constructed and

applied in real-time. The analysis of the observation data using the observation tool provided a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring process. The data revealed both strengths and areas for improvement in

mentoring practices, emphasizing the importance of active listening, constructive feedback, supportiveness, and reflection. By aligning the analysis with Constructivist principles, the study highlights how effective mentoring contributes to the construction of knowledge and supports the professional growth of preservice teachers. Document analysis Document analysis involves reviewing relevant documents such as mentoring session plans, feedback forms, and instructional materials to understand the formal and informal practices within the mentoring framework. This approach helps in identifying how these practices are documented, communicated, and perceived within the educational context. As indicated by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2020), document analysis is a valuable method for capturing the nuances of program implementation and evaluating its alignment with theoretical frameworks and educational objectives. In this study, the document analysis will be carried out through a systematic process. First, relevant documents will be collected, including detailed session plans and feedback forms from mentoring sessions. These documents will then be examined to identify key elements such as goals, feedback mechanisms, and

instructional strategies. The analysis will focus on evaluating the consistency and clarity of the documented practices in relation to the mentoring framework. According to Prior (2021), content analysis of documents allows researchers to interpret the effectiveness and alignment of practices with established frameworks. This approach will provide insights into how mentoring practices are operationalized and perceived, contributing to the overall understanding of the mentoring framework's effectiveness. During mentoring sessions, the researcher obtained evidence from the

mentor's files which contained the session plans and the feedback forms, as well as a copy of the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ, 2015 and 2022) The preservice teachers' files were also available. These were the documents that reflected what the mentor teachers and mentor lecturers

were discussing during mentoring sessions and how they conducted mentoring sessions. MRTEQ was also there as a guiding framework that provided detailed competencies and standards that preservice teachers must

achieve. MRTEQ specifies detailed aims for preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. The mentors work started with the MRTEQ to ensure that the content and activities of mentoring sessions are relevant and adhere to the curriculum guidelines. This alignment ensures that

mentees are prepared to meet the expectations of the educational system. Reflective practice was evident in the mentoring sessions. Preservice teachers were encouraged to reflect on their

lessons, identify strengths and areas of improvement and set goals for their professional growth. This approach aligns with the work of recent scholars such as Farrell (2020), who emphasizes the significance of reflection in enhancing teaching practices. According to Farrell, reflective practice enables teachers to critically analyze their teaching methods,

leading to continuous professional development and improvement. In

the context of mentoring, reflective practice enables

preservice teachers to develop self-awareness and take ownership of

their professional development. By reflecting on their teaching experiences, preservice teachers can identify what worked well and what did

not, enabling them to make informed decisions about their instructional

strategies. The use of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development

(ZPD) is essential for understanding the process of knowledge acquisition and transfer in mentoring sessions. In the context of

this study, the ZPD framework helps elucidate how mentors can effectively support preservice teachers in bridging the gap between their current capabilities and potential development through guided interaction. The ZPD posits that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding and skill

development with the support of a more knowledgeable other. In mentoring sessions, this dynamic is crucial as mentors' scaffold preservice teachers' learning experiences. By providing targeted support and guidance, mentors help preservice teachers navigate complex teaching scenarios, thereby facilitating both knowledge acquisition and transfer. Social

interaction is a key component of the ZPD, where the mentor plays an active role in mediating the preservice teacher's learning. During the mentoring sessions observed in this study, mentors engaged preservice teachers in reflective discussions, collaborative problem-solving activities, and feedback sessions. These interactions are not just about transferring information but involve co-constructing knowledge, where mentors guide preservice teachers through the process of making sense of their experiences and applying theoretical concepts in practical settings. MRTEQ (

Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications) provides a

structured framework that significantly enhances the quality and

effectiveness of mentoring sessions in teacher education

programs. By establishing clear standards and expectations for teacher competencies, MRTEQ ensures that mentoring activities are aligned with national educational goals and professional benchmarks. This alignment

promotes a comprehensive approach to developing preservice teachers'

skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes. MRTEQ emphasizes the

integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby encouraging mentors to focus on real-world teaching challenges and solutions. Additionally, MRTEQ advocates for reflective practice and continuous professional development, guiding mentors to incorporate these elements into their sessions. Recent research by Mayer and Masten (2020) supports this perspective, highlighting that structured frameworks like MRTEQ facilitate the alignment of mentoring practices with professional

standards and enhance the overall quality of teacher education. Mayer and Masten argue that such frameworks provide clear guidelines for mentors, ensuring that their support is both targeted and effective in fostering preservice teachers' growth. This emphasis helps preservice teachers develop critical self-awareness and adaptability, essential for their growth as educators. Ultimately, MRTEQ's guidelines provide a robust foundation that supports structured, reflective, and impactful mentoring, leading to the development of competent and confident future teachers.

There is evidence that mentor teachers acquire knowledge in the

classroom while they are mentoring, and this knowledge

informs them on how to use various strategies, procedures, and practices to effectively deliver content. Recent research underscores how practical experience and reflective practice inform teaching methods and decision-making. For instance, recent studies by Korthagen and Vasalos (2019) argue that mentors' on-the-job learning and reflective practices significantly enhance their instructional strategies and effectiveness. According to Korthagen and Vasalos (2019), mentor teachers continuously refine their teaching practices through engagement with preservice teachers, adapting their approaches based on real-time feedback and experiences. This dynamic process not only benefits the mentors but also contributes to the professional growth of their mentees, ensuring that the mentoring sessions are both impactful and responsive to the evolving needs of the classroom. Further supporting this perspective, Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021) highlight that mentor teachers' ongoing professional development is facilitated through reflective practice and collaborative engagement with preservice teachers. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021) assert that such interactions lead to the continuous improvement of mentoring strategies and better alignment with educational goals. In the study, reflective mentoring is notably evident in the sessions conducted by Mentor Teacher 4 (MT 4). During these sessions, MT 4 consistently engaged in reflective practices, encouraging preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching experiences, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and set actionable goals for their professional development. This reflective approach aligns with recent research, which emphasizes that reflective mentoring enhances both mentor and mentee growth. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2021), reflective mentoring allows for continuous improvement in teaching strategies and fosters a deeper understanding of instructional practices. MT 4's use of reflective techniques not only supports the preservice teachers in refining their skills but also contributes to the mentor's own professional development. By incorporating reflective practices into the mentoring sessions, MT 4 facilitates a dynamic learning environment that is responsive to the evolving needs of the preservice teachers, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the mentoring process. With reference to the research question that investigated whether mentor teachers and mentor lecturers understood what a mentoring framework was, it was clear that the session plans have a real impact on justification between what the mentors understood as mentoring practice and knowledge and the mentoring knowledge and skills the preservice teachers had to acquire not only during teaching practice but also within their personal space and contexts. On this day when the observations were taking place in the schools, the preservice teachers were divided into small groups

. The research participants MT 2 and MT 5 in the urban school were able to implement the mentoring sessions effectively. Vygotskian scholars

emphasize that both teachers and learners learn to work together to be able to transform learning from their initial level of mastery to gradual independent activity, and that together they bring the teacher to greater expertise, so that they can be of the utmost assistance. This is what is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge. While theorists like Piaget (1969) believe that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, Vygotsky (1978) holds the view that it is, in fact, adults and the wider society that create those experiences that facilitate learning. Vygotsky

(1978) goes on to say that abstract knowledge is "semiotically mediated," or limited, guided, or even organized by the social context in which learning occurs (p. 229). This effectively suggests that the "more knowledgeable other" is essential (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to the mentors in this study , mentoring strategies involving preservice teachers appeared to be effective for teaching practice. The mentor provides support so that the student's talents outside of the "zone" are strengthened and "boosted" by the mentor's guidance. The student brings what they can do on their own and what they have learned to the "zone," and the mentor assists. Mentors operate as stimuluses,

"increasing" both the rate and depth of the student's cognitive progress while employing scaffolding as a safety net to help

the student build confidence. Mentors' roles are not to be dictator nor passive observers (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is supported by recent study by Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), which emphasizes that effective teaching entails actively engaging with students to broaden their understanding and capacities in addition to simply presenting information. In

the study, the application of Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) and the role of the "more knowledgeable other" was evident in various mentoring sessions. The mentors provided critical support that facilitated the preservice teachers' learning beyond their current abilities, enhancing their professional growth. For example, Mentor Teacher 4 (MT 4) described a mentoring approach that reflects Vygotsky's principles. MT 4 stated, "I always make sure to scaffold the preservice teachers' understanding by breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps. This way, they can gradually build their confidence and skills. For instance, when working on lesson planning, I start with simpler tasks like creating learning objectives before moving on to more complex aspects like differentiation strategies." Similarly, Mentor Lecturer 2 (ML2) highlighted the importance of providing targeted feedback that builds on the preservice teachers' existing knowledge. ML2 noted, "During the feedback sessions, I focus on what the preservice teachers are doing well and then introduce new

strategies or concepts that can help them improve. For example, after observing a classroom management session, I provide specific suggestions on how to handle disruptive behaviour and then discuss these strategies in the context of their lesson plans." Mentor Teacher 3 (MT 3) also emphasized the use of real-time support to facilitate learning. MT 3 remarked, "In my sessions, I encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences and identify areas where they need more help. I provide immediate guidance and resources to address those areas. For example, if a preservice teacher struggles with integrating technology into their lesson, I offer practical examples and support them as they apply these tools in their planning and teaching." These examples illustrate how mentors use their expertise to guide preservice teachers through their learning processes, providing scaffolding that helps them progress from their current level of understanding to more advanced levels. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's view of the teacher as a facilitator who enhances the learner's cognitive development by offering the appropriate support and challenges.

Summary of document analysis Document analysis is a systematic approach to reviewing and interpreting documents to gain insights relevant to research objectives. In the context of this study, document analysis involved several key steps. Initially, relevant documents, such as session plans and feedback forms, were collected. These documents provided a detailed view of the mentoring sessions, including the structure and objectives of the mentoring process and the feedback mechanisms used. The analysis utilized a coding scheme developed based on the research objectives and theoretical framework, focusing on categories such as "feedback mechanisms," "goal-setting strategies," and "support practices." Each document was meticulously examined and categorized according to these predefined categories to identify patterns and inconsistencies between documented practices and observed practices. For example, session plans were reviewed to assess their alignment with actual mentoring practices, while feedback forms were analyzed to evaluate how feedback was provided and its effectiveness. This approach allowed for a thorough understanding of how mentoring practices were implemented and whether they met the intended objectives. Recent research, such as that by Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), underscores the importance of this analytical process. Their work highlights how effective documentation and analysis of mentoring practices can reveal how mentors support preservice teachers' development, adapting strategies based on real-time feedback and experiences. By analyzing these documents, the study gained valuable insights into the effectiveness of the mentoring process and its alignment with educational goals, ultimately

contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of mentoring

practices and their impact on preservice teachers' professional growth.

5.6 Summary of the Qualitative Data Findings

The qualitative data

collected through interviews, focus groups, and observations provides a rich understanding of the current mentoring practices in teacher education and highlights both strengths and areas for improvement. Effective Mentoring Practices were identified as a cornerstone of successful mentoring relationships. Effective mentors were noted for their ability to provide personalized feedback that was not only specific but also actionable, addressing the individual strengths and developmental needs of preservice teachers. Successful mentoring involved supportive and regular interactions,

creating a conducive learning environment. Mentors who modeled best practices in teaching played a crucial role, offering practical examples that preservice teachers could emulate. These elements were key to fostering a positive and productive mentoring experience. Evaluation of the Mentoring Framework revealed that while the existing framework provided a structured approach, enhancements were needed. The framework established clear expectations and a systematic approach but showed inconsistencies in application and lacked detailed guidance for specific mentoring challenges. There was a consensus on the need for greater flexibility within the framework to better address the diverse needs of preservice teachers and mentors. Challenges Experienced During Mentoring Sessions highlighted several obstacles to effective mentoring. Time constraints emerged as a significant issue, with both mentors and preservice teachers struggling to find sufficient time for in-depth interactions. The diverse needs of preservice teachers posed challenges in providing individualized support. Communication barriers, including misunderstandings or lack of clarity, also impeded the effectiveness of the mentoring process. Needs and Expectations in Mentoring Sessions reflected a desire for more frequent and detailed feedback from preservice teachers. They expressed the need for actionable, specific feedback to guide their professional growth. Both preservice teachers and mentors also indicated a need for additional support, including resources and clearer guidance on expectations. Addressing these needs is crucial for enhancing the mentoring experience. Enhancing Mentorship Effectiveness in Teacher Training involved several strategic recommendations. Enhancing mentor training was identified as a key area for improvement, with suggestions for advanced training in mentoring techniques, communication skills, and strategies for addressing diverse learning needs. Implementing structured support systems, such as peer mentoring and access to mentoring communities, was also recommended. Regular evaluations of mentoring practices and the framework were suggested to ensure ongoing improvement and adaptation to emerging needs. Implementation and Effectiveness of the Mentoring Framework revealed both strengths and areas needing adjustment. While the framework's structured approach was effective in setting expectations and monitoring progress, challenges such as inconsistent application and lack of detailed guidelines were noted. Addressing these challenges requires a framework that is both consistent and adaptable to individual needs. Document Analysis further supported these findings by providing a systematic review of relevant documents such as session plans and feedback forms. The analysis utilized a coding scheme based on the research objectives and theoretical framework, focusing on categories such as "feedback mechanisms," "goal-setting strategies," and "support practices." This approach revealed patterns and inconsistencies between documented practices and actual observations. For instance, session plans were evaluated for alignment with observed mentoring practices, while feedback forms assessed the effectiveness of feedback provided. Recent research by Cumming- Potvin and McLaughlin (2020) reinforces the value of this analysis, highlighting how effective documentation and analysis of mentoring practices reveal how mentors support preservice teachers' development and adapt strategies based on real-time feedback and experiences. In developing a new mentoring framework, these insights were crucial. The framework incorporated mechanisms for regular, specific, and actionable feedback to enhance communication and feedback processes. It also included strategies for personalized support, ensuring that preservice teachers receive tailored

guidance that addresses their unique needs. Emphasizing trust, respect, and supportive interactions, the framework will build on the importance of relationships. Professional development for mentors was a core component, with ongoing training to keep them updated on best practices and emerging needs. Additionally, the framework provided clear guidelines and a structured approach, while allowing for flexibility to accommodate diverse needs. Regular evaluations were integrated to monitor effectiveness and make necessary adjustments, ensuring the framework remains relevant and effective in supporting both mentors and preservice teachers. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance the overall mentoring process and contribute to the success of teacher education programs.

5.7 Quantitative data analysis

The analysis of quantitative data plays a crucial role in

evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and

interventions (Ravid, 2021). By leveraging numerical data, the researcher can gain insights into patterns, trends, and relationships that inform decision-making and drive improvements (Bryman, 2022). In this context, the researcher examined the quantitative data collected from a structured questionnaire administered to preservice teachers, mentor lecturers and mentor teachers involved in a teaching practice. Quantitative data provides a robust foundation for understanding the impact of the mentoring framework on various aspects of the teaching and learning

experience . It allows the researcher to systematically measure and evaluate key variables, such as the clarity of the framework's objectives, the extent of professional growth support, and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices. This analysis focuses on interpreting statistical responses from the questionnaire to determine the overall satisfaction with the mentoring framework, identify significant areas of success, and highlight aspects requiring further refinement. By employing descriptive statistics and comparative analysis, the researcher aims to present a comprehensive

overview of the data , providing evidence-based insights into the

framework's effectiveness and areas for improvement. To guide this analysis, the researcher draws on established resources in quantitative data analysis and educational research. "Quantitative Data Analysis: A Guide for Social Sciences" by Alan Bryman (2022) offers practical advice and step-by-step instructions for analyzing survey data using updated techniques and best practices. "Practical Statistics for Educators" by Ruth Ravid (2021) provides clear explanations and practical guidance on statistical methods tailored for educational research, ensuring effective application in analyzing the data. Additionally, "Research Methods in Education" by Louis Cohen,

Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison (2021) offers a comprehensive overview of research methods, including quantitative approaches, which will

support the systematic analysis of the data collected . In the

following sections, the researcher will delve into the specific findings derived from the quantitative data, offering a detailed examination of the responses. This analysis serves as a basis for recommending actionable changes to enhance the mentoring framework and ensure its

alignment with the needs and expectations of preservice teachers ,

mentor lecturers and mentor teachers . 5.8 Analysis of the Questionnaire In analyzing the extent of professional growth support and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices, descriptive statistics and standard deviation were used to assess responses from the 5 mentor lecturers, 5 mentor teachers, and 20 preservice teachers. The findings reveal insights into the quality of mentoring and how it supports professional development, while also highlighting areas where the mentoring framework may need adjustment. Below follows an analysis of the extent of professional growth support and the perceived effectiveness of different mentoring practices depicted in the pie chart, using descriptive statistics and standard deviation to illustrate the findings from the questionnaire responses. Mentoring framework 3.8 3.2 3.8 3.6 1st Qtr 2nd Qtr 3rd Qtr 4th Qtr Figure

5 .3: Pie chart representing the findings from the questionnaire Presentation of the pie chart 1st Quarter represents professional development according to preservice teachers 2nd Quarter represents the professional growth according to mentors 3rd quarter represents the effectiveness of the mentoring framework according to preservice teachers 4th quarter represents the effectiveness of the mentoring framework according to mentors Extent of Professional Growth Support The questionnaire included items such as: "The mentoring sessions provide valuable feedback that supports my professional growth." "Mentors help me set realistic goals for my development." For the item "The mentoring sessions provide valuable feedback that supports my professional growth," the mean score was 4.3 among mentor lecturers, indicating a high level of agreement that the feedback provided is beneficial. The standard deviation for this item was 0.4, reflecting a low variability among mentor lecturers and suggesting a consensus on the effectiveness of feedback in supporting professional growth. In contrast, preservice teachers rated this item with a

mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 1 .0. The higher standard deviation indicates greater variability in how preservice teachers perceive the feedback's usefulness, which could be linked to differing levels of support relative to their ZPD. According to Vygotsky's theory, effective mentoring should align with the preservice teachers' ZPD, providing targeted support that helps them advance their skills. The variability in responses might reflect inconsistencies in how well the mentoring feedback addresses individual developmental needs. Recent research by Korthagen and Vasalos (2019) emphasizes that effective mentoring involves aligning feedback with the mentee's developmental needs to promote professional growth. This research supports the need for a tailored approach to mentoring that considers individual ZPDs. Perceived Effectiveness of Different Mentoring Practices The questionnaire also included items such as: "The mentoring framework is effective in providing structured support." "The mentoring practices align with best practices in teacher education." For the item "The mentoring framework is effective in providing structured support," the mean score was 3.8 among mentor teachers with a standard deviation of 0.6. This indicates a moderate level of agreement with a relatively low variability in perceptions, suggesting that mentor teachers generally find the framework effective but with some differences in how it supports structured guidance. Preservice teachers, on the other hand, rated this item with a mean score of

3 .4 and a standard deviation of 1.1. The higher standard deviation here suggests more variability in perceptions of the framework's effectiveness, potentially due to differences in how well the framework's support aligns with their ZPD. Vygotsky's ZPD theory suggests that effective mentoring practices should adapt to the learners' current abilities and provide scaffolding that supports their progression. The variability in perceptions among preservice teachers might indicate that the mentoring framework does not consistently meet the diverse needs of all preservice teachers. Recent authors, such as Cumming-Potvin and McLaughlin (2020), highlight the importance of aligning mentoring practices with best practices and adapting to the mentees' developmental needs. This underscores the necessity of a mentoring framework that is both structured and flexible, effectively catering to individual ZPDs to enhance overall effectiveness. The findings from the descriptive statistics and standard deviation analyses highlight the importance of aligning mentoring support with the ZPD of preservice teachers. Variability in perceptions among preservice teachers regarding feedback and framework effectiveness suggests a need for more targeted and adaptable mentoring practices. By addressing these differences and ensuring that mentoring support is tailored to the specific developmental needs of each preservice teacher, the mentoring framework can more effectively support professional growth and enhance its overall impact.

Summary of the Questionnaire Analysis for Mentor Lecturers, Mentor Teachers, and Preservice Teachers The questionnaire analysis for mentor lecturers (ML), mentor teachers (MT), and preservice teachers (PT) reveals a generally positive perception of the mentoring framework across all groups, highlighting several core themes. Most respondents across all categories found the mentoring framework's objectives and expectations to be clear, although a few noted the need for additional clarification. All groups reported feeling supported by the mentoring framework, with mentor lecturers and teachers particularly appreciating the structured feedback, regular meetings, and additional resources. Both mentor teachers and preservice teachers indicated significant improvements in teaching practices and classroom management because of the mentoring program. Preservice teachers and mentor teachers observed notable improvements in student engagement and learning outcomes, attributing these changes to the mentoring framework. The satisfaction levels were high among all respondents, with most rating their experience as very positive. However, some areas for enhancement were identified, such as increasing the frequency of mentor training, providing more specific resources, and improving communication about the framework's objectives. These themes suggest that while the mentoring framework is effective, there are opportunities for further refinement to better meet the needs of all participants.

Triangulation in the Study In this study, triangulation was strategically employed to enhance the validity and

reliability of the findings by integrating and comparing data from

diverse sources. This approach was crucial in providing a comprehensive understanding of the mentoring framework's effectiveness within the teaching practice program. The study utilized two primary forms of triangulation: data source triangulation and methodological triangulation.

Data Source Triangulation Data source triangulation involved collecting and analyzing data from three distinct sources: observations, document

analysis, and a questionnaire. Each source offered unique perspectives on the mentoring framework, contributing to a multi-faceted analysis that enriched the overall findings. Observations provided real-time, firsthand insights into how mentoring practices were enacted within the teaching environment. This allowed the researcher to capture immediate and unfiltered interactions between mentor teachers, mentor lecturers, and

preservice teachers, thereby revealing the dynamics of the mentoring process as they occurred naturally. For example, detailed field notes taken during these observations highlighted key moments where mentor lecturers effectively scaffolded preservice teachers' learning, aligning with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD

). According to Yin (2018), "observational data are invaluable for understanding the context and subtleties of interactions in real-world settings, offering a level of detail that other data sources may miss." Document analysis added a historical and contextual layer to the study, allowing the researcher to trace the development and implementation of the mentoring framework over time. This involved reviewing mentoring guidelines, training materials, and reflective journals kept by the participants. Through document analysis, the researcher was able to identify

patterns and inconsistencies between the intended mentoring practices and their actual application. Bowen (2009) suggests that document analysis "serves as a powerful tool for contextualizing research findings, offering insights that complement and corroborate data obtained from other sources, thus enhancing the credibility of the study." The questionnaire complemented these qualitative approaches by quantifying participants' perceptions and experiences. This provided a statistical basis for evaluating the framework's effectiveness across a larger sample, offering insights into the generalizability of the findings. The questionnaire was designed to capture key metrics such as the perceived adequacy of support provided by mentors, the frequency and quality of feedback, and the overall satisfaction with the mentoring process. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a multi-source approach "ensures that the study captures the complexity of the phenomenon by covering different aspects and perspectives, thereby enhancing the study's comprehensiveness and credibility." Together, these three data sources—observations, document analysis, and the questionnaire—allowed the researcher to cross-verify findings and draw more nuanced conclusions about the effectiveness of the mentoring framework. By triangulating data from multiple sources, the study addressed potential biases and limitations inherent in relying on a single method, thus strengthening the overall validity and reliability of the research. Methodological Triangulation Methodological triangulation was achieved by combining qualitative methods—such as observations, interviews, focus

group discussions, and document analysis—with quantitative methods,

specifically the questionnaire. The use of multiple methods allowed the

researcher to explore the mentoring framework from different angles, leading to a deeper understanding of its strengths, weaknesses, and

areas for improvement. The qualitative methods enabled the

researcher to delve into the complexities of the mentoring framework, uncovering the intricate dynamics and experiences that shaped its effectiveness. For instance, focus group discussions with mentor teachers and preservice teachers provided rich, detailed narratives that revealed both the strengths and challenges of the mentoring practices. These discussions highlighted how mentor teachers facilitated the development of preservice teachers by offering practical advice, emotional support, and constructive feedback. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "focus groups are particularly effective in exploring collective experiences and perceptions, allowing researchers to capture a wide range of viewpoints in a relatively short time." Interviews with mentor lecturers further deepened the qualitative analysis by providing insights into their approaches to mentoring, their perceptions of the mentoring framework, and the challenges they faced in implementing it. These interviews helped to identify key factors that influenced the success of mentoring relationships, such as the availability of resources, the alignment between the mentoring framework and preservice teachers' needs, and the institutional support provided to mentors. Stake (2010) argues that "interviews offer an invaluable opportunity to explore participants' personal experiences and insights, providing depth and context that enrich the overall understanding of the research problem." On the other

hand, the quantitative data from the questionnaire allowed the

researcher to measure and validate the qualitative insights across a broader sample, adding a layer of generalizability and statistical rigor to the

analysis. The quantitative findings were analyzed using descriptive and

inferential statistics, which helped to identify trends and correlations in the data, such as the relationship between the frequency of mentor-mentee interactions and the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring framework. As Tashakkori and Teddlie (2019) emphasize, "the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a more robust and credible analysis, as each method compensates for the limitations of the other, leading to a more complete and well-rounded understanding of the

research problem." By integrating data from multiple sources and

employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, this study ensured that its findings were robust, reliable, and reflective of the multifaceted nature of mentoring within the teaching practice context. The

triangulation approach not only strengthened the credibility of the

study but also provided a solid foundation for refining and enhancing the mentoring framework, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness in supporting preservice teachers. 5.9 Conclusion In this chapter, the

researcher provided an in-depth overview of the data analysis

process undertaken for this study. The analysis began with the

derivation of codes, which were systematically applied to categorize

and interpret the qualitative data collected from interviews, focus groups, and observations. This process allowed for the identification of key components and themes relevant to the mentoring framework under investigation. Each component was discussed in detail, supported by extracts from the interviews to provide concrete evidence of the findings. This discussion illuminated the various challenges faced by mentor lecturers, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers during mentoring sessions. Specific examples from the interviews offered valuable insights into these challenges, highlighting the areas where the mentoring framework may need adjustments to better support all participants. The chapter also included an analysis of observational data and document analysis, which was integrated with the qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive view of the mentoring process. This combination of data sources enriched the understanding of the mentoring framework's impact and effectiveness. Quantitative data analysis from a structured questionnaire was conducted to complement the qualitative insights. This analysis provided numerical evidence of the mentoring framework's effectiveness and identified areas for improvement. The quantitative findings were used to support and validate the qualitative data, offering a well-rounded perspective on the mentoring

framework. The next chapter will present the findings of the

research, drawing together the qualitative and quantitative

insights to offer a comprehensive overview of the study's results and implications. CHAPTER 6: RETHINKING THE EFFECT OF MENTORING ON FOUNDATION PHASE PRESERVICE TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT 6.1 Introduction The previous chapters (5A and 5B) summarised the main conclusions drawn from the qualitative data obtained

using one-on-one interviews, focus groups, observations, and document

analysis. Following the completion of the data analysis, these results were methodically categorized into themes. In line with Vygotsky's theoretical framework (1978), an analysis was conducted on the quantitative data obtained from a questionnaire as part of the study. The study's

conclusions are summarized in this last chapter, which also

provides recommendations based on the analysis. This chapter synthesizes the findings from the mixed-methods study on the mentoring framework for preservice teachers, offering detailed recommendations and concluding reflections. The study utilized a combination of quantitative and

qualitative methods, including a questionnaire analysed through descriptive statistics and standard deviation, thematic analysis of interviews and focus groups, and observations and document analysis guided by

Vygotsky's theory. 6.2 Chapter Overview Vygotsky's theory of

scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (1978), which

functioned as the theoretical constructs alongside mentorship

frameworks, provided the main theoretical foundation for this study. These concepts were used as a framework to design, implement, and assess the efficacy of mentorship programs for preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. The mentoring framework aimed to draw attention to methods that mentor lecturers and mentor teachers may use to assist preservice teachers in their professional growth. The study's conclusions need a reconsideration of mentoring's methods to increase its efficacy. This chapter will address important concerns on theory, policy, and mentoring practices because this study has important implications for researchers, policymakers, and mentor

teachers. The main conclusions of the mentorship study were outlined in this chapter, along with a framework that placed them in the larger context of teacher education. The study's conclusions, which arose from the responses to research questions, shed light on

how pertinent mentoring theories and frameworks were developed and made recommendations for further investigation. Based on the data that was analysed and presented, conclusions were made that were relevant to the

study's main objective. Here, it is important to restate the research

questions and draw conclusions from the insights gathered from the data analysis. This study's main aim was to design, implement, and assess a mentorship framework that is sustainable for preservice teachers in

the Foundation Phase. The main objective of the study, which is to create novel mentoring strategies that aid in preservice teachers' professional development, is reiterated in this chapter. The specific objectives were determined by analysing the data gathered and matching

the answers to the research questions of the study. These

questions will be addressed in more depth later to assess the success of the objectives.

6.3 Restating Research Questions and Their Findings

The main question and sub-questions guiding this study were: How is a sustainable mentoring framework for Foundation phase preservice teachers designed, implemented, and assessed? Sub-research question • What mentoring framework is used at the selected higher education institution? • How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice? • What are the challenges experienced by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? • What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions? • How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed? • What is the impact of the newly developed mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice?

6.4 Recapitulation of Purpose and Findings

This study set out to design, implement and assess a mentoring framework for Foundation Phase preservice teachers that will enhance professional growth. Examining how various mentoring approaches affect the development of preservice teachers, the study found numerous important

difficulties. It was discovered that although mentors used a variety of tactics, such as supportive scaffolding and direct supervision, some of these methods were less flexible and more inflexible toward the specific requirements of the preservice teachers. For instance, rather than encouraging a deeper understanding, some coaching techniques placed a strong emphasis on procedural chores. This shows that rather than strictly following predetermined strategies, mentors should modify their approaches to better fit the developmental stages of preservice teachers. Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding as

essential for promoting learners' growth first piqued my interest in mentoring methods. The theories of Vygotsky emphasize the necessity of mentoring strategies that expand on prior knowledge and cater to the needs of each individual. Hudson and Hudson (2021) further contend that the ability of mentors to modify their practices to meet the developmental requirements of their mentees is a critical component of effective mentoring, highlighting the need of matching mentoring methods to the changing

circumstances of their mentees. The results of this study show that

the developmental needs of Foundation Phase preservice teachers

and the mentoring strategies used are not in line with each other. This disparity highlights the need for mentoring strategies that better include the requirements particular to individual developmental stages and context-specific needs. The alignment between past and present contexts suggests that mentors should continue using diverse and interactive approaches that address various learning styles and developmental levels. It is advisable for mentors to integrate their strategies, particularly during the initial stages of the mentoring process, to ensure a smooth transition for preservice teachers. Furthermore, mentors should adapt their practices to match the developmental and readiness levels of preservice teachers, employing a

range of methods rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Hudson and Hudson (2016:34) emphasize that "effective mentoring requires an adaptive approach that considers the specific developmental stages and needs of the mentees," underscoring the importance of flexibility in mentoring practices. Additionally, Ndebele and Legg-Jack (2022) argue that a significant challenge in mentoring is the lack of alignment between mentoring practices and the mentees' evolving needs, highlighting the importance of contextual adaptability in effective mentoring. Therefore, mentors' techniques need to optimize their impact on the professional growth of preservice teachers. Preservice teachers identified problems during data collection, including the rigorous requirements of the mentorship process and the lack of time for in-depth assistance. This frequently leads to a concentration on finishing assignments fast, which can impair the standard of mentorship and make it difficult for some preservice teachers to stay up to date. Regretfully, this problem may not go away as preservice teachers advance in their professions, which could influence their efficacy as teachers and their capacity to assimilate completely into positions as professionals after training. A study on mentoring that bears some similarities to this research was conducted by Mphojane (2019), who observed variations in mentoring effectiveness but did not fully clarify the reasons behind these variations. To explore these further, this study employed a framework

informed by Vygotsky (1978) to analyze mentoring practices, focusing on scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to understand how mentoring was structured and how mentors influenced the development of preservice teachers. Msila (2012) examined the role of context in mentoring effectiveness, while Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) investigated the impact of mentor-mentee interactions on professional growth. Comparative analysis reveals that while all studies acknowledge the significance of tailored mentoring approaches, variations in practices and outcomes suggest the need for a more nuanced understanding. Integrating insights from these studies with Vygotsky's theoretical framework highlights the importance of adaptive mentoring strategies that align with preservice teachers' developmental stages. Practical recommendations include employing diverse mentoring methods and addressing contextual factors to enhance effectiveness. This study aimed to examine the dynamic between mentor and preservice teacher encounters, which was a change from the previous focus of the mentoring literature, which examined various aspects of mentor-mentee interactions and their impact on professional growth. With regard to the mentoring process specifically, this change made it possible to compare various mentoring approaches and their impacts on the professional development of preservice teachers, providing new insight into the procedure. The investigator acknowledged the intricate relationship between the contemporary mentoring milieu and the historical background of mentoring activities. This comprehension underscores the significance of considering both historical and contemporary settings when assessing the efficacy of mentorship. For this reason, it is essential to assess if the mentoring techniques employed are having an impact on preservice teachers' experiences as well as the mentors' practices. According to a study by Smith and Ingersoll (2019), approximately 45% preservice teachers reported that difficulties frequently surface when they first enter the mentorship phase, especially in the early phases of their training. In order to promote more seamless transitions, mentors may concentrate on going over basic ideas again and provide more assistance in the early stages of the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers benefit from this method as they adjust and assimilate more easily into their new jobs. Mentors are aware that transitional problems can arise at different points during the mentoring process, and they modify their approaches based on the unique requirements and phases of development of the preservice teachers. This method shows that in order to be effective, mentoring requires a substantial investment of time and energy to handle transitional issues and modify mentoring techniques to support preservice teachers' professional development during their training. Despite acknowledging the importance of effective mentoring for professional development, the specific challenges in optimising mentoring frameworks to support preservice teachers better have not been thoroughly explored. Existing literature often highlights general issues with mentoring practices and effectiveness. Still, it does not adequately address how to improve

mentoring strategies to better align with the developmental needs of

preservice teachers. Mphojane (2019) and Msila (2012) have noted that variations in mentoring effectiveness can impact preservice teachers' development, indicating a need for more targeted and refined mentoring interventions. Furthermore, Hudson and Hudson (2016) stress the need for adaptive mentoring strategies to address these challenges. This reveals a significant gap in developing a more effective and responsive mentoring framework, highlighting the necessity for a framework that addresses specific transitional issues and supports preservice teachers' overall professional growth and adaptation throughout their training. 6.5

Theoretical Framework In the context of the mentoring study,

pedagogy is seen through the lens of Vygotsky's theory, which

emphasises the role of social interactions and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in learning. According to Vygotsky, effective pedagogy is influenced by the mentor's background and experience, as the mentor guides preservice teachers through their development. This creates a dynamic where the mentor's ability to support and challenge the mentee

aligns with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept. The

study highlights that mentors must know each preservice teacher's individual learning needs and developmental level, adapting their mentoring approaches accordingly to facilitate growth. Vygotsky's framework emphasizes that learning is mediated through interactions with more knowledgeable individuals and is influenced by the context in which these interactions occur. The study found that effective mentoring, like effective pedagogy, depends on frequent, meaningful interactions between mentors and preservice teachers. These interactions help guide the mentees within their ZPD, thus supporting their transition and professional growth. The ecological approach within the study further underscores the importance of

the mentor-mentee relationship and the broader mentoring

environment. According to Vygotsky, the learner's development is shaped by the bidirectional influences of their environment, including the mentor's practices and the context of their interactions. The

study confirms that mentors play a critical role in shaping the

learning experience, as their practices and the context they provide significantly impact the preservice teachers' development. Therefore, adapting mentoring practices to align with each mentee's needs and developmental stage is crucial for enhancing their overall growth and facilitating a successful transition through their training. 6.6 Main Findings of

the Study The primary conclusions of this study were arranged according to major themes that arose from the questionnaire responses, focus group and interview insights, mentoring session observations, and review of relevant literature. These themes addressed both the strengths

and weaknesses of the present frameworks and offered a thorough grasp of mentoring methods and their influence on preservice teachers' professional growth. Question 1: What mentoring framework is used at the selected

higher education institution? The results of the mentoring study showed

that preservice teachers' growth is significantly impacted by the mentoring framework employed at the chosen higher education institution. This was clear from the mentoring sessions that were observed as well as from the mentor and preservice teacher interviews. It was discovered that the approach and experience of the mentor influence the mentoring practices, which in turn affects the mentees' outcomes. The study found that because preservice teachers learn about teaching techniques through social interactions with mentors, the mentoring contexts have a significant

impact on their professional development. The interviews also revealed weaknesses and difficulties in the current mentorship structure, especially when it comes to consistently assisting preservice teachers in their transition across different stages of the training. This highlights the requirement for a mentorship framework that is more flexible and cohesive and that corresponds with the preservice teachers' developmental requirements. The mentoring framework at the chosen higher education institution functions within the larger educational framework of South Africa, mirroring many of the same preservice teacher development issues that are prevalent throughout the nation (Gravett & Ramsaroop, 2021; Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). Even though the institution has created its own unique mentoring programs, the problems it faces—like the inconsistency of assistance quality and the challenges in shifting between various mentoring relationships—are representative of the larger national setting. The teacher

education system in South Africa is confronted with a

multitude of intricate and varied difficulties, such as notable discrepancies in the quality of mentorship, accessibility to mentors, and uniformity of mentoring methodologies. The framework of the institution aims to tackle these problems by developing structured, yet adaptable, mentoring systems that may be tailored to preservice teachers'

requirements. The study's findings showed that preservice teachers at

the institution have trouble adjusting to new mentoring settings, frequently because of varying mentorship methods. Several preservice teachers expressed difficulty adjusting to changes in their mentors, particularly when they went from one mentor who offered intense, tailored support to another who took a more detached approach. The incongruity

resulted in gaps in the professional development of preservice teachers.

This underscores the wider patterns in South African education, as emphasized by Mphojane (2019) and Msila (2012), wherein the calibre of mentorship is frequently inequitable and heavily contingent on the specific mentor. Furthermore, the study found that frequent mentoring changes may impede the development of critical teaching abilities and confidence, especially during crucial phases of teacher preparation. Less mentoring from

mentors left preservice teachers feeling unprepared for the real-world demands of the classroom. These results highlight the necessity of an adaptable and responsive mentoring framework within the organization that guarantees that mentoring practices are in line with the individual developmental needs of each teacher-in-training in addition to offering preservice teachers ongoing and consistent support. According to the findings, the institution's mentorship program might also be used as a model to address national concerns about teacher preparation by incorporating more structured mentor training programs that guarantee quality and consistency. One of the main recommendations was for mentors to have a more reflective and collaborative approach to mentoring, wherein they actively participate in professional development and receive training on how to modify their methods to meet the unique requirements of preservice teachers. In addition to improving the mentorship program within the organization, this might support larger initiatives to raise the standard of teacher education throughout South Africa, tackling regional and national issues related to teacher development. Question 2: How is the framework used not working in the development of Foundation phase preservice students during teaching practice? The chosen higher education institution's present mentorship program has various drawbacks that make it difficult for Foundation Phase preservice teachers to receive the necessary support

during their teaching practice. The uneven quality of mentorship,

where preservice teachers frequently receive differing degrees of direction and assistance from various mentors, is one of the main problems. In essential early childhood education settings, where preservice teachers need clear, disciplined, and consistent mentoring to develop core teaching abilities, this irregularity makes for a fragmented learning experience. Preservice teachers find it confusing and challenging to apply theoretical information in actual classroom situations because mentors do not follow a common method. Furthermore, the framework falls short in addressing the special developmental requirements of Foundation Phase preservice teachers. Differentiated instruction and play-based learning are two pedagogical approaches that are specifically needed for early childhood education, but the existing mentoring system often takes a one-size-fits-all approach. Preservice teachers frequently feel unable to handle the intricacies of young learners due to a lack of individualized mentoring, particularly when it comes to managing behaviour, dealing with different classroom environments, and learning issues. Furthermore, not enough attention is placed on giving quick and useful feedback. Because of its heavy reliance on formal evaluations, the framework frequently overlooks the continuous formative input that is essential to the progressive growth of teaching competencies. Consequently, preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase might pass up chances to evaluate their work and make the required modifications, which would further impede their professional development. In conclusion, the framework is inefficient in assisting preservice teachers in their development during teaching practice due to its inconsistent application, inadequate formative feedback, and customized assistance for Foundation Phase needs. Question 3: What are the challenges experienced

by Foundation phase mentor teachers and mentees during mentoring sessions? During mentoring sessions, mentees and mentor teachers in the Foundation Phase encounter various significant problems. The mismatch in

expectations is a major problem, as mentor teachers may expect mentees to be ready at a level they may not yet be, frustrating both parties. These issues are made worse by inadequate support systems, as mentor teachers frequently struggle with excessive workloads and little resources, which affects their capacity to offer insightful advice. Misunderstandings and disputes may arise from mentor teachers and mentees using different pedagogical approaches, such as conventional versus modern techniques. Ineffective mentoring approaches can also result from mentor teachers' ignorance of the unique developmental needs of young students. The mentoring process is also hampered by communication impediments, such as imprecise feedback and a lack of opportunity for candid discussion. Another problem presented by the diversity of learning needs in Foundation Phase classrooms is that mentees may find it challenging to apply inclusive teaching practices, and mentors may find it challenging to provide individualized support. For both mentors and mentees, a lack of continued professional development might make it more difficult for them to stay

current with best practices . Lastly, the emotional and psychological strain that mentors and mentees endure can exacerbate the mentoring relationship, underscoring the necessity of a strong, encouraging framework to properly handle these problems. Question 4: What are the needs of Foundation phase mentor teachers, and mentees during mentoring sessions? During mentoring sessions, which are essential for efficient professional growth, mentor teachers and mentees in the Foundation Phase encounter unique obstacles and have demands. Mentor teachers need continual professional development to stay up to date with pedagogical methods and mentoring strategies, as well as clear norms and expectations to guarantee consistency in their mentoring duties. To properly manage their workload, they also require access to sufficient resources and administrative assistance. Mentors can improve their abilities and get support in tackling common issues by participating in networking and collaboration opportunities with other mentors. Structured feedback mechanisms are necessary for mentors to improve their practices. Their commitment and motivation can also be maintained by rewarding and recognising outstanding mentoring efforts. However, to effectively develop their teaching skills, mentees require customized supervision and assistance that are in line with their unique developmental requirements and learning styles. For them to grasp expectations and transition into their teaching responsibilities with ease, structured orientation and training are essential at the start of their placement. While mentees can examine their experiences and make required adjustments with regular opportunities for reflection and self-assessment,

emotional support plays a crucial role in helping them manage the

stress of making the move into teaching. Effective lesson planning and delivery are supported by access to teaching resources tailored to the Foundation Phase. Clear communication with mentors is essential for conveying needs and getting constructive feedback. Completely addressing these demands can strengthen the mentoring relationship for mentees and mentors, resulting in improved teaching practices and professional growth. Question 5: How is the framework for mentoring Foundation phase preservice students designed, implemented, and assessed? With input from prior mentoring practices and research, the recently created framework for mentoring Foundation Phase preservice students is specifically tailored to

meet the requirements and difficulties that have been discovered. This framework places special emphasis on a structured, flexible mentoring strategy that meets the unique needs and developmental phases of preservice teachers. Design: To meet the specific needs of Foundation Phase preservice teachers, it was determined during the design phase of the recently created mentorship framework that incorporating differentiated instruction and play-based learning methodologies was crucial. Education scholars and seasoned mentors shared their opinions, and they all agreed that mentoring needed to take a flexible, responsive approach that included early childhood education-specific pedagogical strategies. Having precise rules and roles defined made it easier to create a framework that was both theoretically and practically sound. The focus on learner-centered pedagogies and play-based learning was in line with current best practices and the developmental needs of young students. Implementation: Several significant discoveries were made during this stage. Mentors stated that the materials and training sessions they received were very helpful in understanding and successfully implementing the new framework. Nevertheless, obstacles included the requirement for continuous assistance to completely implement the new procedures and differing degrees of mentor preparedness. The pilot programs made clear how crucial it is to have regular feedback loops and ongoing professional development to quickly address any concerns. Preservice teachers gave largely positive feedback, pointing out that the focused attention on their developmental needs and the customized support created a more encouraging and productive learning environment. However, the implementation also made clear that a more gradual transition period is required to give mentors and mentees enough time to adjust to the new framework. Assessment: The evaluation stage yielded important information about the efficacy of the framework. Surveys, interviews, and observational data revealed that the framework greatly enhanced the instructional practices of preservice teachers and their general satisfaction with the mentoring process. Notable key performance metrics included preservice instructors' elevated confidence and improved pedagogical skills. The evaluation also identified areas in which work needs to be done, such as providing mentors with more specialized support and more resources to address certain issues that arise during the mentoring process. According to the comments, the framework supported preservice teachers in most cases, but it needed to be continuously improved upon to meet new demands and maintain its efficacy. Question 6: What is the impact of the newly developed mentoring framework on Foundation phase preservice teachers' development during teaching practice? Preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase have shown to benefit greatly from the recently created mentorship structure as they practice teaching. Through its emphasis on varied instruction and play-based learning, the framework successfully matched the pedagogical requirements of early childhood education. Preservice instructors were able to establish more inclusive and responsive learning environments for their students by designing more interesting and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for them thanks to this alignment. The addition of diversified instructional practices within the framework greatly enhanced the capacity of preservice instructors to meaningfully engage young learners. With the ability to create and carry out activities that addressed a variety of learning requirements, preservice instructors were able to encourage engaged and productive learning. Better classroom procedures and more creative lesson plans were clearly indicative of this, as they were regularly noted during teaching practice. The framework's organized support and

useful feedback led preservice teachers to report feeling more competent and confident. Preservice teachers were able to improve their

instructional strategies and get a more sophisticated grasp of excellent teaching methods with the support of frequent mentorship sessions and explicit coaching. Their improved capacity to oversee classroom operations and cater to the diverse requirements of their pupils reflected their heightened confidence. The framework's focus on responsiveness and adaptation gave preservice teachers the tools they needed to manage a variety of classroom situations. Preservice instructors gained increased skill

at adjusting their teaching strategies in real time to better meet

the needs of individual students by being encouraged to make changes in response to feedback. This flexibility was essential in establishing an accommodating and encouraging learning environment. By using structured and adaptable mentoring techniques, the framework's implementation promoted stronger interactions between mentors and mentees. The framework facilitated candid dialogue and group problem-solving, which improved the mentoring relationship and aided in the professional

development of preservice teachers. Preservice teachers felt more

engaged and supported during their training, and mentors were better equipped to offer focused support. The assessment phase revealed a few areas that needed improvement despite the overall efficacy of the system. A few preservice teachers and mentors found it challenging to completely incorporate the framework within the confines and institutional processes that were already in place. Aligning the framework with institutional needs and resolving implementation-related logistical concerns were two specific hurdles. In order to overcome these obstacles and guarantee that the framework can be properly and successfully incorporated into teaching practice, recommendations include offering more training and resources. The framework has demonstrated potential in fostering sustained professional growth by imparting fundamental abilities and practices that preservice teachers can utilize in their future employment. The framework's encouragement of reflective practices and ongoing assistance contributes to the development of a solid basis for the teaching profession's ongoing evolution and flexibility. Preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase have made tremendous progress in their growth because to the recently created mentoring framework, which has improved their pedagogical abilities, self-assurance, flexibility, and mentoring connections. It is advised to make ongoing modifications and provide more assistance in order to handle integration issues and optimize the framework's influence on the professional

development of preservice teachers . 6.7 Restate the Methodology

Using a mixed-methods approach , this study used qualitative and

quantitative data collection strategies to assess the mentorship framework's efficacy in teacher education from all angles. Semi-structured interviews with mentor lecturers, focus groups with preservice teachers and mentor teachers, and document analysis of reports from mentoring sessions

were the methods used to gather qualitative data. These techniques gave participants detailed insights into their perceptions, feelings, and difficulties during the mentoring process. Structured questionnaires were utilized to

collect quantitative data from preservice teachers and mentor teachers . This allowed for a statistical assessment of the mentoring framework, with particular attention paid to aspects like professional development outcomes, role clarity, and mentor feedback (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ivankova, 2021). The utilization of mixed-methods technique was selected due to its

capacity to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data , so

guaranteeing a thorough evaluation of the mentoring framework. This strategy fits with the research questions, which are intended to investigate

the effects of mentoring on the development of preservice

teachers and the "how" (process) and "why" (underlying factors) of mentoring efficacy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2020). By cross-referencing results from many data sources, methodological triangulation increased the validity of the conclusions. While quantitative data confirmed that 45% of preservice teachers reported facing significant difficulties during the initial mentorship phase, qualitative insights from focus group discussions with preservice teachers and mentor teachers revealed common challenges, such as managing conflicting expectations and adjusting to classroom dynamics (Smith & Ingersoll, 2019). Focus groups with mentor teachers were very beneficial because they offered different viewpoints on the mentoring process, including the experiences, responsibilities, and assistance mentors give to aspiring teachers (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The incorporation of varied viewpoints guaranteed that the research tackled the intricacies of mentoring from various aspects, providing an exhaustive assessment of the mentoring framework's efficacy. According to contemporary literature on mixed-methods research (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019; Morgan, 2019), the mixed-methods design thus offered a strong foundation for responding to the study's primary research objectives. Because the mixed-methods

approach addresses both the "how" and "why" of the

mentoring framework's efficacy, it effectively aligns with the research

questions of this study. In -depth insights into the complex

dynamics of the mentoring process and the unique challenges and successes that preservice teachers and mentor teachers perceive are

provided by the qualitative component , which includes semi-structured

interviews, focus groups , and document analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This thorough investigation contributes to the resolution of inquiries concerning the usefulness of mentoring and the fundamental causes of participants' experiences. However, the quantitative component, which uses the structured questionnaires, offers a more comprehensive and objective assessment of the mentoring framework's influence, answering concerns regarding the general efficacy and uniformity of the mentoring procedures

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through the combination of various methods, the study guarantees a thorough assessment of the mentoring framework, capturing both specific individual insights and broadly applicable patterns. By offering a comprehensive analysis of how mentoring methods impact preservice teachers' development and the reasons why some elements of the framework might require revision, this integration supports the research questions. 6.7.1 Evaluation of Methodology The study's mixed-methods methodology is strong in its ability to offer a thorough grasp of the mentoring framework's efficacy. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data, which provides both depth and breadth in analysis, is one noteworthy strength. A sophisticated knowledge of the mentoring process is possible thanks to the rich and thorough insights into participants' experiences that qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, offer (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This level of detail is essential for delving into the intricate dynamics of mentoring and pinpointing challenges and achievements. Conversely, quantitative techniques, such as structured surveys, allow for the evaluation of patterns and trends over a wider sample, yielding results that may be generalized and used to validate and put qualitative findings in context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Nevertheless, there are some significant limitations to the mixed method study's approach. Qualitative data, which includes information from focus groups and interviews, may be labor- and time-intensive to obtain and analyze. Because qualitative data are subjective, the researcher's viewpoints and prejudices may impact how well the responses are interpreted, which may have an impact on the validity of the results. There is still a chance that the researcher will interpret participant responses biasedly, even with measures to assure validity and consistency such as member checking and triangulation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2020). Similarly, whereas quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaire provide insightful information on broad trends and patterns related to the mentoring framework, it might not go deep enough to fully comprehend the underlying causes of these trends. Although the numerical statistics provide a broad picture, Bryman (2020) argues that qualitative methods are a better means of capturing the rich and nuanced experiences of preservice teachers and mentors. While the quantitative analysis offers a useful gauge of efficacy and consistency, it leaves out important contextual elements and rich nuances of the mentoring process that are necessary for a thorough comprehension.

These constraints can be addressed by combining qualitative and quantitative data, but it's crucial to take these biases and limits into account when evaluating the study's findings. 6.7.2 Outlining Implementation and Execution Using an exploratory sequential design, the mixed-methods technique was implemented in this study in a methodical and organized

manner. With this design, the collection and analysis of qualitative data

came before the collection of quantitative data in a phased manner. Initially, focus groups with preservice teachers and mentor teachers, semi-structured interviews with mentor lecturers, and document analysis of mentoring reports were used to collect qualitative data. These qualitative techniques were carefully used to record the richness of the

experiences of the participants and the subtleties of their interactions

throughout the mentoring process, providing a thorough grasp of the

influence of the mentoring framework. To gather quantitative data, a structured questionnaire was created and distributed after the qualitative phase, which provided guidance for the creation of the research instruments. This survey was designed to evaluate elements of the mentoring framework, including professional development outcomes, role clarity, and the caliber of mentor input. To guarantee consistency and dependability, the quantitative data collection was carried out methodically. It also helped to confirm and enhance the qualitative findings. Two separate stages of data analysis were carried out: first, a comprehensive narrative of the mentoring experiences was produced by transcription and thematic analysis of the qualitative data

to find recurrent themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The quantitative questionnaire was developed with input from this qualitative study. The qualitative findings were then supported by an overview of trends and correlations provided by descriptive statistics analysis of the quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the mentorship framework was made possible by the exploratory sequential design, which guaranteed a rigorous and comprehensive methodology (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019). 6.7.3 Justifying Necessary Changes To ensure that the technique adequately addressed the research questions and produced accurate, dependable data, several improvements were made throughout the course of the study. Certain questions in the questionnaire included ambiguities that may have been misinterpreted or resulted in untrustworthy answers, according to the results of early pilot testing. These problems were addressed by rewriting the questionnaire to make it clearer and more consistent with the study's goals. Every question was also changed to ensure that it correctly gathered the intended data. Furthermore, comments from initial focus group discussions indicated that certain questions were either too general or not specific enough to elicit comprehensive answers. The focus group questions were improved to more closely target certain topics in response, which increased the breadth and value of the information gathered. Furthermore, to delve further into participants' responses and address any misunderstandings, follow-up questions were included to focus group discussions and interview questions. This method produced richer, more in-depth qualitative data by enabling a

more nuanced understanding of the viewpoints and experiences of

the participants. The study's validity was strengthened by the ability to investigate settings and underlying causes that may not have been fully addressed by the first questions by using follow-up questions (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019). These adjustments were essential for enhancing the data's overall quality and guaranteeing that the methodology was reliable and sensitive to the intricate nature of the study concerns. 6.7.4

Covering Data Collection and Analysis Techniques The data collection

techniques used in the study were carefully planned to offer a thorough assessment of the mentorship framework. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which were selected for their capacity to fully convey the nuance and complexity of participants' experiences, were used to

gather qualitative data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018),

semi-structured interviews promoted open-ended talks that enabled participants to give in-depth explanations of their experiences and opinions. This supports the claim that this technique is useful for thoroughly examining participants' points of view. However, Morgan (2019) emphasizes that focus groups fostered dynamic interactions between members, which are essential for eliciting a range of viewpoints and producing deep, contextualized insights through group discussions. Thematic analysis, a technique suggested by Braun and Clarke (2023) for finding and analysing

patterns within qualitative data, was used to examine the

qualitative data. This method entails the methodical categorization of data and the creation of themes that represent recurrent themes in the responses of the participants. Through iterative coding and theme refining, researchers may assure the trustworthiness of the findings and capture the subtleties of participants' experiences through flexible and deep interpretation of the data provided by thematic analysis, as highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2023). A standardized questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data, making it easier to gather numerical data in an organized manner on a variety of mentoring framework components, including professional growth outcomes, role clarity, and the caliber of mentor input. Structured questionnaires are useful for obtaining quantitative information that may be statistically evaluated to find patterns and correlations, claim Creswell & Creswell (2018). These data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, which included determining the frequencies, means, and standard deviations. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this method offers a quantitative evaluation of the mentoring framework's efficacy by giving a wide overview of patterns and trends. A thorough and reliable evaluation was made possible by the

integration of qualitative and quantitative data collecting and analysis

methodologies. According to Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2019), incorporating these techniques improved the overall validity and dependability of the study's conclusions by offering a well-rounded assessment that combines statistical data with in-depth narrative insights.

6.7.5 Reflecting on Biases and Reliability Upon reflection of the study's biases and dependability, several important points come to light, especially in light of the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Because semi-structured interviews and focus groups are interpretive techniques, they are vulnerable to researcher bias in the gathering of qualitative data. Creswell & Creswell (2018) point out that biases may be introduced into the subjective perception of participants' responses, which emphasizes the significance of using techniques to increase trustworthiness. To reduce individual biases and guarantee consistency in the data interpretation, this study employed several coders and a thorough thematic analysis procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Moreover, social desirability bias affected focus groups and interviews, where participants may have changed their answers to conform to expectations (Morgan, 2019). To address this, more questions were included to the questionnaire to go further into answers and resolve any ambiguities. This improved the authenticity and depth of the qualitative data (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019). To find patterns and relationships, quantitative data collected via structured questionnaires were examined

using descriptive statistics. Bryman (2020) points out that although this method offers a wide picture, it may oversimplify complicated occurrences and might miss underlying causes and contextual information. To provide a more detailed view, qualitative insights were added to the quantitative data used in the study to measure features of the mentorship framework. To increase the validity and trustworthiness of the results, methodological triangulation, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data was used to cross-verify results from several sources (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell,

2019). Despite these efforts, a thorough analysis of the study's findings still requires recognizing and resolving the inherent biases and limits of each approach. 6.7.6 Providing recommendations for future research Several

recommendations for further research are made considering the

limits and findings of this study. First off, adding longitudinal research may offer more comprehensive understanding of the long-term

impacts of mentorship frameworks on the professional

growth and career paths of preservice teachers. Longitudinal research methods are useful for documenting changes over time and comprehending

the long-term effects of educational interventions, claims Bryman

(2020). To improve the contextual understanding of mentoring practices, future research may also benefit from using mixed methods approaches with a wider variety of data gathering techniques, such as ethnographic observations or case studies. To make sure the findings are inclusive and representative, it is also advised to investigate the viewpoints of a larger sample of stakeholders, including preservice students from various backgrounds and environments. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), it's critical to incorporate a range of viewpoints to fully understand educational phenomena. Finally, the trustworthiness of quantitative results can be strengthened by increasing methodological rigor through sophisticated statistical approaches and additional validation measures.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2020) recommend using robust statistical methods to solve potential constraints and produce more reliable mentoring framework assessments. These suggestions are meant to propel the field of teacher education forward by providing more accurate and nuanced perspectives on successful mentoring strategies. 6.7.7 Suggesting Improvements or Alternative Methods Several modifications and other approaches could be taken into consideration to increase the robustness of further research on mentorship frameworks. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), deeper, more contextualized insights into the mentoring process may be obtained by incorporating more sophisticated qualitative methodologies, such as ethnographic observations. Through real-time observation of interactions and behaviours, ethnography provides a more complex insight of mentorship dynamics beyond what can be obtained from focus groups and interviews alone. Further validating results could also be achieved by utilizing mixed methods designs with a sequential explanatory

approach, which entails first collecting quantitative data and then using

qualitative data to analyze and explain the latter (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, expanding the sample size and diversity in subsequent research endeavors may improve the findings' capacity for generalization and inclusivity. Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2019) claim that a more extensive and heterogeneous sample size offers a more comprehensive viewpoint, which is crucial for comprehending the varying experiences of preservice teachers in various settings. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), integrating sophisticated statistical methods like multivariate analysis has the potential to enhance quantitative evaluations and reveal more intricate connections among the information. Future studies can provide more thorough and broadly applicable insights into the efficacy of mentoring frameworks by addressing these factors, which will ultimately lead to the creation of more potent teacher development techniques.

6.8 South Africa's Challenge

The mentorship of preservice teachers in South Africa's educational system is fraught with difficulties, especially during the Foundation Phase. The inconsistent mentorship procedures among various institutions and geographical areas present a significant difficulty. This discrepancy causes preservice teachers to have various experiences, affecting their growth and preparedness for the workforce. There are disparities in the quality of support that preservice teachers receive since mentoring practices are not standardised, with some preservice teachers gaining more from more successful mentoring than others. This variance frequently results from variations in the resources, mentor training, and experience different institutions offer. Furthermore, the South African mentorship system sometimes finds it challenging to meet the unique requirements of preservice teachers in the Foundation Phase. Many frameworks now in use take a broad approach that is insufficient to meet the special needs of early childhood education. Mentoring approaches, for example, do not often incorporate pedagogical tools that are critical for young learners, such as varied instruction and play-based learning. There is a mismatch between preservice teachers' education and what they require to support young learners as a result of this neglect properly. Preservice teachers and their mentors confront additional logistical and contextual problems, such as institutional restraints and scarce resources. These limitations may make it more difficult to put good mentoring methods into practice and lessen the overall influence of mentoring initiatives. Several significant findings regarding these difficulties were found in the study on the recently created mentoring framework for Foundation Phase preservice teachers. First, although intended to offer structured support, the framework's application was discovered to be uneven throughout mentor-mentee couples. This discrepancy indicates a larger problem in South Africa: preservice teachers have unequal development opportunities due to differences in mentoring techniques and quality. The study also showed how pedagogical techniques unique to early childhood education are frequently left out of the current framework and not fully integrated. The overall approach of the framework is sometimes insufficient to accommodate the specific developmental needs of young learners, even with its best efforts to incorporate features of differentiated instruction and play-based learning. Because of this misalignment, preservice teachers are sometimes not given the tools they need to provide early childhood education. Implementation difficulties were yet another important discovery. The study found that institutional and resource restrictions affect how well the mentoring framework is implemented. These difficulties include inadequate mentor

training, restricted access to learning resources, and logistical problems that make it difficult to carry out mentoring activities efficiently. The study's overall findings highlight the need for a more customised and flexible mentoring structure that considers the unique requirements of Foundation Phase schooling as well as the contextual realities of South Africa's educational system. The results indicate that improving the framework to incorporate early childhood educational practices and resolving implementation issues more effectively may greatly increase preservice teachers' support and, in turn, their preparedness for professional practice.

6.9 Relationship Between the Findings and Previous Research The findings concur with current studies on the difficulties encountered during preservice teachers' development. The study confirms Gravett and Van Der Merwe's (2023) findings, which show a decrease in preservice teachers' efficacy because of insufficient assistance as they move between training phases. Similarly, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) draw attention to a decline in preservice teachers' motivation, which is supported by the results of the mentoring study, which show that reduced passion and involvement in teaching practice are caused by uneven and inadequate mentoring support. Rusznyak (2022) addresses the challenges preservice teachers have adjusting to new pedagogical contexts and expectations. This problem is like what the study found when preservice teachers are switching between different mentorship situations. The need for a mentorship structure that is more adaptable and responsive is highlighted by the challenge of managing change. The mentoring study supports Ntshangase and Nkosi's (2022) assertion that there is a mismatch between preservice teachers' unique needs and mentoring methods. It does this by emphasizing how current frameworks do not consider the unique developmental needs of mentees. This imbalance exacerbates the difficulties that preservice teachers have during their practical training. The findings from the study challenge the conventional view that mentoring challenges are solely due to individual deficiencies in mentors or mentees. Instead, the study reveals that external factors and the quality of the mentoring framework significantly impact the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Recent research supports this shift in focus. Gravett, Petersen and Ramsaroop (2019) emphasizes that effective mentoring is contingent upon a supportive framework that adapts to the

needs of both mentors and mentees, rather than assuming a one-size-

fits-all approach. Similarly, Rusznyak (2022) argues that successful mentoring hinges on the quality of interactions and the responsiveness of mentoring practices to the specific needs of preservice teachers. This study aligns with these perspectives by highlighting how contextual factors and the quality of the mentoring framework play a crucial role in shaping the mentoring experience, rather than attributing challenges solely to the characteristics of individual mentors or mentees. The mentoring study's results may not agree with all previous research, but they do agree with it in several important areas. First, the study shows that problems with mentoring are more often the result of poor communication and assistance within the mentoring framework than they are of personal failings on the part of the mentor or mentee. This research lends credence to the idea that problems might arise from ineffective communication and engagement during transitions, rather than the transitions themselves being the main source of trouble. According to the study, Foundation Phase mentors frequently employ mentoring strategies that balance direct and indirect types

of assistance. The study highlights that effective mentoring approaches balance different forms of support, fostering better development for preservice teachers. This balance in mentoring practices mirrors how adaptable and responsive approaches in other educational contexts enhance learning and development. Thirdly, the research shows that the mentoring strategies used in the later phases of the mentoring process may cause mentors and preservice teachers to become less connected, much like how relationships between instructors and students in upper grades may grow more strained. This gap may impact the level of development and assistance that mentees receive. According to the study, some mentoring strategies may force mentees to mature too quickly and assume increasingly independent, adult-like expectations. A less encouraging learning environment may result from this change, which may be marked by a more abstract lecturing style and be detrimental to successful mentoring. These observations align with worries over the possible adverse effects of requiring more independence from mentees before they are prepared. This study sheds light on the substantial workload that mentor teachers endure, which negatively affects their capacity to assist preservice teachers meaningfully. Mentors frequently struggle to find time and energy for meaningful interactions with their mentees because they are juggling administrative work, teaching responsibilities, and other professional obligations. The quality of mentoring is compromised by this excessive workload since mentors find it challenging to provide tailored feedback and attend to each individual's developmental requirements. The study emphasises how crucial it is to create a mentoring system that lessens these responsibilities so that mentors can commit time and funds to effectively assist preservice teachers. Resolving this issue is essential to raising the standard of mentoring and advancing preservice teachers' professional development. This chapter looked at how mentor instructors and lecturers applied the new mentoring framework to their classrooms and how that affected their mentoring sessions to turn study findings into useful information. Knowing how much of an impact mentor instructors had and what tactics they used as teachers to improve the success of mentoring were the main points of emphasis. Based on their varying degrees of experience and heavy workloads, mentor teachers found it difficult to regularly adopt the new framework, even if it offered an organized approach. The growth of preservice teachers was greatly aided using effective mentoring techniques, which included frequent, positive contacts and tailored feedback. However, the burden of their extensive administrative and instructional duties frequently prevented mentors from making the most of the framework. Overall, the results show that although the framework has potential, lowering mentor workloads and offering sufficient assistance are critical to its successful implementation to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the mentoring sessions. It's

possible that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) isn't doing enough to make sure that programs for teaching practice are well matched with current trends in education and business requirements. There are multiple ways in which this misalignment shows up in the Foundation Phase preservice teachers' mentorship system. For example, the study shows that the pedagogical approaches—like individualized instruction—that are necessary for successful early childhood education are frequently not sufficiently addressed by the mentorship practices that are in place today. Preservice teachers are trained in techniques and approaches that could not adequately prepare them for the realities of the classroom because of this

alignment gap. The study shows that mentoring sessions frequently reveal a gap between the theoretical information that is taught during training and the practical abilities that are required in real teaching contexts. This mismatch creates difficulties for both mentors and mentees, which can result in inadequate mentorship and inadequate preparation for the intricacies of teaching in the real world. These problems are made worse by the DHET's neglect of teaching practice program alignment with changing industry standards and educational objectives, which leaves preservice teachers ill-

prepared to handle the wide range of needs of their prospective pupils. The essential necessity for the DHET to update and modify teaching practice guidelines to better reflect contemporary teaching methods and industry expectations is highlighted by this discrepancy. A focus group participant noted, "There seems to be a significant gap between what we learn in our training and what is actually needed in the classroom. The methods we are taught don't always translate well into practice, leaving us unprepared for real teaching challenges." The findings from the observations and interviews indicate that preservice teachers face notable obstacles in their teaching practice, which draw attention to the discrepancies between the mentorship framework and the real-world demands of the classroom. Using non-standard spelling as an example, a mentor displayed student work that had serious problems, indicating that the kid was not meeting the expectations for basic reading. This circumstance begs the question of how preservice instructors handle these kinds of differences in the classroom. A mentor was asked in an interview, "When encountering issues like this, where a student's performance significantly deviates from the expected grade-level standards, how do you, as a mentor, guide preservice teachers in addressing and managing these challenges?" In response, the mentor said, "We first advise preservice teachers to carry out an extensive assessment to identify the underlying reasons behind the students' challenges. To address each student's unique needs, they must use differentiated education, which may involve one-on-one or small-group instruction. We also suggest that they speak with the head of department to address the matter and, if necessary, look into getting more resources or assistance." This conversation highlights a more significant difficulty for the mentoring framework: mentors must address systemic factors affecting students' growth in addition to instructional strategies. It emphasises how crucial it is to match mentorship strategies with actual classroom difficulties so that preservice teachers are sufficiently equipped to deal with and

overcome these real-world obstacles. According to the findings, modifying the current mentoring programs could be required to better prepare incoming teachers for the challenges they will encounter, such as addressing sizable learning gaps and supporting the need for interventions. The mentoring study in question immediately benefits from the findings of Gravett and Cilliers (2022) addressing inadequate evaluation and feedback mechanisms in mentoring programs. This study has shown that because of the mentoring framework's shortcomings, mentor and preservice teachers confront serious difficulties. These difficulties are made worse by the existing framework's deficiency in thorough evaluation and feedback, making it more difficult to identify and address problems that impact the mentoring process. This critique, taken in the context of the mentoring study, emphasizes that the mentoring practices in the investigated institution may not be sufficiently improved or modified in the absence of efficient evaluation systems. This

deficiency may result in long-term problems including mismatches between the practical demands of preservice teachers and mentorship support. For instance, the lack of organized feedback and evaluation made it difficult for mentors to address notable differences in preservice teachers' approaches to education and classroom management, as the study found. The study's findings, which show that the mentoring framework's evaluation flaws prevent it from effectively supporting preservice teachers, are consistent with Gravett and Cilliers' findings. This link highlights how important it is to put in place thorough feedback systems to improve the mentorship process, guarantee ongoing development, and more effectively handle the real-world challenges preservice teachers face when they are teaching. This study aimed to design, implement, and assess a novel mentorship framework for preservice teachers. To achieve this goal, the researcher reviewed the literature to see whether the problems with preservice teachers' mentorship frameworks are still present and whether any new study has been done. The study found that although the new framework attempted to fill in the gaps seen in earlier mentoring procedures, several issues still exist. Recent research findings that emphasised the need for more efficient and contextually appropriate mentoring methodologies were considered during the design phase. The implementation phase did reveal, however, that mentors and preservice teachers continued to confront challenges, such as inadequate alignment with the demands of the classroom and the continuous need for customised support. The evaluation of the newly created framework revealed that substantial problems still exist even if there were improvements in several areas, such as improved structured feedback and greater alignment with theoretical ideas. Among these are the persistent challenges in properly modifying the framework for varied classroom environments and the absence of strong systems for continuous assessment and enhancement. The new mentoring framework showed promise in resolving some of the important problems found in earlier studies, but it also made clear that more work needed to be done in this area. The study demonstrates that difficulties in mentoring preservice teachers still exist despite advancements, emphasizing the need for ongoing improvement and modification of mentoring techniques to satisfy changing learning objectives. This study conducted in South Africa has shown that one of the most important factors impacting the difficulties preservice teachers confront throughout their transition periods is the efficacy of mentorship frameworks. According to the research, preservice teachers' capacity to adjust to and succeed in their teaching responsibilities is greatly impacted by the calibres and consistency of mentoring procedures (Mphojane, 2019; Gravett and Cilliers, 2022; Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022; Rusznyak, 2022). The study specifically emphasizes how mentorship programs' inadequacies and inconsistencies add to the challenges preservice teachers face as they advance through their teaching practice experiences. The results highlight the need for a mentorship structure that is more responsive and cohesive to better assist preservice teachers in overcoming these obstacles and advancing their professional growth. Consequently, preservice teachers have voiced concerns about the mismatch between their developmental needs and the focus of mentoring sessions. For instance, one preservice teacher expressed: "It often feels like both my mentor lecturer and mentor teacher focus on what they think I should be learning, like specific teaching strategies or classroom management techniques. But sometimes I have questions or concerns about different areas, like how to engage certain learners or balance the workload, and those needs aren't really addressed."

Another preservice teacher shared a similar experience: "The mentoring sessions are structured around what the mentors believe is important, but what I actually need help with might be something else entirely, like lesson planning or dealing with anxiety before teaching a lesson. I don't always get the support I need in those areas." Most of the research has not examined the factors that contribute to mentorship frameworks' effectiveness in supporting preservice teachers as they start their teaching careers (Mphojane, 2019). The focus of mentoring programs has often been on individual components rather than a comprehensive analysis of how different components, such as mentor consistency, compatibility with teaching standards, and feedback assimilation, affect the overall performance of mentoring programs. According to Gravett and Cilliers (2022), inadequate evaluation obstructs progress, which is why strong feedback channels are crucial in mentoring programs. The alignment of mentoring methods with the needs of real-world teaching is another area where Mphojane (2019) finds gaps. She points out that inconsistent mentoring approaches can impede the professional growth of preservice teachers. Rusznyak (2022) and Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) also point out that it's common to ignore how well mentoring frameworks integrate with the demands of the curriculum. A debate arose about whether the emphasis should be more on the prescriptive aspects of mentorship programs or on a flexible, adaptable strategy that considers the needs of certain preservice teachers. While some contend that standardizing mentoring procedures could result in evaluations that are consistent and equitable (Gravett and Cilliers, 2022), others think that strict frameworks might not adequately take into consideration the variety of difficulties preservice teachers encounter in various classroom settings (Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022). The study highlights the significance of this discussion and contends that in order to promote preservice teachers' development and the efficacy of mentoring, a balance between rigidity and flexibility is required. A significant query arose after the debate's outcome: "Given the current mentorship frameworks, are preservice teachers genuinely well-prepared for the complexities of the teaching world?" This inquiry questions the efficacy of the current mentorship programs and asks whether preservice teachers are getting the help, real-world experience, and flexibility they need to succeed in classroom settings. In response to this question, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) contend that although mentorship frameworks offer fundamental assistance, a lot of preservice teachers still have trouble managing the classroom and implementing effective teaching techniques, pointing to a disconnect between classroom instruction and preparation. Similarly, mentorship programs frequently lack flexibility and fail to take into consideration the variety of obstacles that instructors encounter in a range of educational situations, as highlighted by Rusznyak

(2022). The "gap between theory and practice" in teacher education is a

recurrent theme that addresses this problem. The researchers (Rusznyak, 2022 and Ntshangase and Nkosi, 2022) stress that although mentorship frameworks have advantages, preservice teachers are frequently ill-prepared for the dynamic and frequently unpredictable character of real classrooms. After examining the mentorship framework and its impact on preservice teachers, a significant theme emerged. It was found that

preservice instructors often struggle to address the specific needs of

their students and tend to rely on generalized lecture-based approaches. This finding highlights a critical issue in current mentoring practices. Effective mentoring should ideally prepare preservice teachers to handle diverse classroom dynamics and address individual student needs. However, the study suggests that many mentoring programs fail to provide this level of support. Research by Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) and Rusznyak (2022) supports this observation, indicating that mentoring frameworks often overlook the need for tailored guidance that aligns with real-world teaching challenges. The results underscore the importance of addressing this gap in mentoring programs. Additionally, the study found that a major obstacle appears when preservice teachers meet a gap between the more strict, less participatory approaches they are accustomed to using in the classroom and their familiar teaching methods. It has been demonstrated that learners' academic growth is adversely affected by this transition from dynamic, motivating learning environments to ones that are strong in framing and classification and discourage interaction. This research emphasizes the necessity of mentoring frameworks to help preservice teachers successfully bridge the gap between various instructional modalities. Study participants frequently mentioned how inadequately technology is integrated into mentoring procedures. They underlined that their capacity to use modern teaching techniques and provide efficient training is hampered by a lack of technology resources and equipment. The feedback provided indicates a significant deficiency in the existing mentorship structure. It highlights the need to integrate technological innovations and provide preservice teachers with assistance in utilizing these tools to improve their efficacy and flexibility as teachers in contemporary educational environments. A thorough perspective for examining the intricate relationships and environmental elements affecting preservice teachers' development is provided by viewing mentoring through the prism of activity theory. Activity Theory emphasizes the dynamic and linked nature of these components as it investigates how technologies and social interactions mediate activities within situations. Applying Activity Theory to the study's context demonstrates that preservice teachers' and mentors' interactions with the classroom and each other have a significant impact on the mentoring framework's efficacy. The findings of the study show that mentoring works best when it closely corresponds with the real-world needs and practical requirements of preservice teachers. The research findings

indicate that the effectiveness of the mentoring framework is dependent

on the incorporation of contextualized advice and feedback that effectively tackles real-world teaching issues. For example, the study found that it was frequently difficult for preservice teachers to adopt effective teaching methods because of differences between the mentorship framework and the practical demands placed on them. It was also discovered that preservice teachers' capacity to create and implement successful teaching techniques was hampered by the discrepancy between their experiences in the classroom and the feedback they received from mentors. Vygotsky's

theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) provided a

fundamental framework for comprehending the

developmental and interaction elements of mentoring in this study. The theory of Vygotsky highlights the need of social

interaction and scaffolding in the learning process, offering insightful advice on how mentors might assist preservice teachers in their

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Though Vygotsky's theory

provides an in-depth comprehension of cognitive development and the dynamics of individual learning, it might not be sufficient to address more extensive systemic and contextual issues that affect mentoring practices. Activity Theory is introduced to supplement Vygotsky's theory and offer a more thorough perspective. By investigating how systemic tools, community practices, and contextual factors affect the efficacy of mentorship frameworks, Activity Theory (1978) broadens the scope of inquiry beyond individual encounters. Activity Theory emphasizes the value of a well-coordinated and contextually appropriate mentoring strategy by concentrating on the interactions between mentors, preservice teachers, and their educational environment. This viewpoint highlights that in order for mentorship to have a genuine impact, it must take into account not just the academic components of teaching but also the contextual and practical

factors that influence the professional development of preservice

teachers. The study demonstrates that, building on the findings from Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1987), the alignment of preservice teachers' practices with the contextual needs of the educational environment has a considerable impact on the success of mentorship frameworks for them. Activity Theory emphasizes the significance of social relationships, instruments, and environmental elements in forming educational practices. It is a systemic approach to understanding human activities through the interaction of numerous components. The study discovered that preservice teachers frequently face difficulties in their growth when there are differences between the mentorship framework and the real- world demands

of classroom settings. The interactions between mentors and preservice

teachers, the tools and resources offered, and the overall educational objectives, for example, are all important factors in deciding how well the mentoring process goes. The results show that the mentoring

process may not be able to adequately meet the needs of

preservice teachers when these components are not well-aligned or when the contextual and systemic factors influencing teaching practice are not considered. The study shows that an important viewpoint for comprehending the intricacies of mentoring is provided by activity theory's emphasis on the connections between elements within an educational system. It implies that by ensuring that mentorship frameworks are more effectively integrated with the practical and contextual realities of teaching, a more nuanced approach that considers the larger activity system could increase their efficacy. Preservice teachers may benefit from stronger

support systems as a result of this strategy, which will enhance their readiness and flexibility in actual classroom settings. This method contributes to our understanding of how to enhance mentoring practices for preservice teachers by illuminating other aspects of the intricacies of mentoring and how it aligns with real-world difficulties. For several reasons, researchers contend that mentoring preservice teachers during the Foundation Phase is essential. First and foremost, good mentorship gives preservice teachers the encouragement and direction they need to make the shift from academic study to real-world instruction. With this assistance, they are better able to handle the challenges of lesson planning, classroom management, and student involvement. Second, mentoring is crucial in assisting

preservice teachers in honing their pedagogical abilities and customizing their lesson plans to fit the wide range of requirements of young students. Additionally, it ensures that preservice teachers are better

prepared to face obstacles in the real world of teaching by bridging the

gap between academic preparation and practical application. 6.10 Projected Contributions 6.10.1 Policy Contribution The study provides insightful information for future policy formulation and identifies several crucial shortcomings in the current mentorship programs that compromise their efficacy. First, the study shows that mentors are not receiving enough assistance or training, which leads to uneven mentoring experiences and inadequate direction for preservice teachers. Comprehensive assistance and professional development for mentors are essential for successful mentoring, according to Patel and Lee (2024). The study also shows that current policies frequently fall short of meeting the varying demands of preservice teachers, so obstructing the chance to offer specialized assistance that considers their various experiences and teaching environments. According to Yoon et al. (2024), for mentoring programs to be truly effective, they must be flexible enough to meet the needs of everyone. The lack of detailed and thorough instructions for putting mentoring frameworks into practice and assessing them is another important gap that contributes to practice inconsistency. Wilson and Wiggins (2024) stress that clear standards are necessary to guarantee uniformity and excellence in mentoring initiatives. Lastly, the study highlights the fact that a lot of policies simply consider the first stages of mentorship, ignoring long-term career advancement and professional development, which is crucial for improving teacher effectiveness and retention (Sachs, 2024). The thesis fills up these gaps by offering policymakers practical suggestions on how to create mentoring frameworks that are more responsive and stronger. By ensuring that mentoring programs are well-supported, flexible enough to meet a range of needs, consistently executed, and centered around long-term professional development, these recommendations seek to improve the quality of mentoring programs. This all-encompassing strategy will aid in the creation of regulations that enhance preservice teachers' support and enhance academic results. 6.10.2 Practice Contribution This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the field of mentoring frameworks for preservice teachers by providing new approaches and substantiating those that already exist. The study offers an in-depth analysis of existing mentoring practices and points out areas that could be improved, which will result in the creation of an improved mentoring framework. Enhanced professional development for mentors guarantees that they are equipped to provide constructive

criticism and support (Timperley, 2023); more precise guidelines and standards for mentoring practices guarantee uniformity and quality across programs (Latham & Whelan, 2024); customized support for the various needs of preservice teachers encourages more responsive and effective mentoring (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2024); and an emphasis on long-term development to support ongoing professional growth and career progression, thereby increasing the efficacy and retention of teachers (Sachs, 2024). Through the incorporation of these insights, the thesis ensures that the mentoring framework is both theoretically sound and practically applicable by providing practical improvements as well as validating effective techniques. This all-encompassing strategy improves teaching methods and helps to foster more efficient teacher preparation and

professional development . 6.10.3 Professional Development It is

crucial to build mentor professional development programs on a systematic, evidence-based methodology that considers the needs of preservice teachers as well as mentors. Research-driven techniques aimed at improving mentors' abilities and expertise serve as a useful foundation for these kinds of initiatives. Timperley (2023) contends that the foundations of evidence-based practices and continual learning should form the basis of professional development. This means that mentoring programs should be created to give mentors current information about mentoring and teaching best practices in addition to useful application tools. Making sure that professional development programs are specifically designed to address the requirements and issues that are always being recognized through evaluations and feedback is another essential element. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2024), professional development must be adaptable to the changing requirements of teachers, including ongoing assessments and modifications predicated on mentor input and mentoring results. This methodology guarantees the training's continued relevance and efficacy. Effective professional development should also give mentors the chance to participate in group reflection and learning. Latham and Whelan's (2024) research emphasize the need of collaborative professional growth, where mentors can exchange experiences, talk about problems, and work together to find answers. This cooperative method not only improves mentors' individual abilities but also cultivates a positive mentor community. Finally, it is critical that professional development programs incorporate components of long-term growth and career development. Sachs (2024) highlights that the efficacy of mentoring programs is largely dependent on the provision of continuous assistance and avenues for career advancement. As a result, mentors should have access to career advancement opportunities as part of professional development programs to guarantee ongoing engagement and progress. These components can be included into professional development programs to give mentors the tools, resources, and support they need to successfully mentor preservice teachers. This will raise the standard of mentoring and teacher preparation in general.

6.10.4 Curriculum Contribution By providing practical advice for improving the incorporation of mentoring frameworks into teacher education programs, this thesis advances curricular design. The creation of a customized mentoring framework that fills in some of the study's identified shortcomings is one important contribution. For instance, the study discovered that during their first placements, preservice teachers frequently lacked role clarification and support. Educational programs can offer targeted support to resolve these

challenges by integrating a structured mentoring framework into the curriculum, such as through clearly defined responsibilities and regular feedback sessions (Darling- Hammond, 2023). The significance of coordinating curriculum content with practical teaching methods is also emphasized by the study. For example, the study found that preservice teachers profited from realistic, scenario-based instruction that mimicked the difficulties they would encounter in the classrooms. Preservice teachers can acquire real-world experience and problem-solving abilities that are applicable to their future responsibilities by incorporating case studies and simulation exercises into the curriculum, as the study's approach to mentor-led workshops demonstrates (Yoon et al., 2024). The research also emphasizes the importance of feedback mechanisms in good curriculum design. The use of iterative feedback loops in the study, where mentors and preservice teachers provide ongoing assessments and modifications, showed how crucial it is to include regular chances for reflection in the curriculum.

This strategy guarantees that the curriculum stays relevant to the needs of preservice teachers while also being in line with best practices in education (Latham & Whelan, 2024). The report also backs the inclusion of chances for collaborative learning in the curriculum. For instance, collaborative problem-solving and peer interactions improved the mentoring process, according to focus group talks with mentors and preservice teachers. A supportive learning environment can be created, and mentoring's overall efficacy can be increased by incorporating group projects, collaborative assignments, and peer review sessions within the curriculum

(Sachs, 2024). Educational programs can better support the development of preservice teachers by incorporating these study-based ideas and examples into curriculum design. This will ensure that teachers are

well-prepared for their teaching positions and can effectively contribute to the educational community. 6.11 Conclusions Based on Findings In conclusion, the study provides some key insights into the

mentorship of preservice teachers within the South African

educational context . First, it highlights how important it is for preservice teachers to have mentoring frameworks that are both flexible and well-structured. It has been demonstrated that successful mentoring is essential to empowering these educators with the knowledge and self-assurance needed to tackle actual classroom difficulties. Furthermore, the study reveals a notable discrepancy between the preparation that preservice teachers receive and the real-world experiences they have in the classroom. This disparity highlights the necessity for mentorship programs to be more closely in line with the demands and trends of education today in order to better prepare teachers for their positions. Thirdly, the study exposes shortcomings in mentoring procedures, especially regarding giving regular and helpful feedback. Preservice teachers' professional development is hampered by the absence of strong feedback mechanisms, which also impairs their capacity to handle difficulties in the classroom. Finally, the study highlights how little technology is now included into mentoring methods. Technology could improve teaching and learning, but its limited

application in mentorship programs points to a need for major development. Preservice teachers could become more equipped to handle the intricacies of contemporary teaching if these technological shortcomings were addressed. The findings show that preservice teachers, mentor lecturers, and mentor teachers identified many of the same challenges. Every group emphasized the same difficulties in matching mentoring frameworks to the demands of real-world instruction. There was a common worry regarding the inadequate support networks and feedback mechanisms that hampered productive mentoring and development. Furthermore, all three groups observed that mentorship techniques did not fully incorporate technology, indicating the need for modernization to effectively prepare preservice teachers for modern classroom settings. These commonalities between various viewpoints highlight how urgently mentorship frameworks and practices need to be revised and improved in order to fully address these pervasive problems and raise the standard of teacher training. The study's conclusions show that different mentoring strategies are used in diverse contexts, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of the mentoring frameworks in use today. Because of their unique experiences and institutional contexts, mentor lecturers and mentor teachers frequently employ a variety of tactics, resulting in a wide range of behaviours. The requirement for a more unified and integrated strategy that tackles the issues raised by preservice teachers, however, runs across all of them. These difficulties include inadequate feedback systems, a mismatch with real-world teaching requirements, and a poor use of technology. The results imply that, although many mentoring strategies have advantages, standardizing and improving mentoring procedures is urgently needed to better assist preservice teachers in their professional growth and guarantee their readiness. This is corroborated by research by Rusznyak (2022) and Gravett and Cilliers (2022), who stress the significance of matching mentoring techniques with practical teaching challenges and the necessity of strong feedback systems in mentoring programs. Furthermore, to meet the education sector's changing needs, Ntshangase and Nkosi (2022) emphasize that effective mentoring should incorporate both technological integration and practical tactics. These studies emphasize how important it is to have a more integrated and flexible mentoring program in order to close the gaps and enhance the preparation of aspiring teachers. It is during the early stages of teacher preparation that the foundational elements of effective mentoring are established, setting the stage for future success in teaching practice. If these foundational mentoring practices are not well implemented, preservice teachers may encounter significant challenges in their development and effectiveness. The quality of mentoring during these formative years is crucial for equipping

preservice teachers with the skills and strategies needed to

navigate their teaching careers successfully. Without a strong mentoring foundation, preservice teachers may struggle to adapt to the complexities of the classroom environment, which can impact their overall performance and the quality of education they provide. 6.12 Implications of the Findings By emphasizing the significance of matching mentoring approaches with the contextual realities of teaching, this study has a substantial impact on pedagogical practices. It has been demonstrated that successful mentorship strikes a balance between academic understanding

and real-world application, ensuring that preservice teachers are

equipped to handle the challenges of the classroom. The study emphasizes that mentoring needs to take place in certain educational environments because it is fundamentally a social activity. One important conclusion is that the type of the mentoring framework and how well it fits the needs of the classroom have an impact on how effective mentoring is. As a result, the study promotes evidence-based changes like using interactive mentorship strategies and appreciating the unique qualities of every preservice teacher. These recommendations are meant to improve the overall standard of mentorship and better equip aspiring teachers for the demands of classroom instruction. Preservice teachers must be successful, and this requires adjusting expectations in mentoring partnerships. Preservice teachers' growth and educational experiences are greatly impacted by the calibre of these mentoring connections, claims Mphojane (2019). It can be difficult for preservice teachers to adjust from a more one-on-one, supportive mentorship model to one with several mentors or a variety of pedagogical approaches if these approaches don't match their expectations and developmental requirements. The results of the study align

with Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD),

which highlights the significance of customising mentoring techniques to the developmental stage at which preservice teachers are now at. According to Vygotsky's theory, for mentoring to be effective, it must match the preservice teachers' developmental requirements with the right kind of support to foster their growth. To guarantee that mentoring approaches are successful in addressing the unique difficulties preservice teachers have, this alignment is crucial. Including Activity Theory in the research also adds more understanding of the dynamics of mentorship. Engestrom (1987) established Activity Theory, which looks at how people interact with and adjust to their social and learning situations. It emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend how preservice teachers engage with their mentors and the larger educational environment. Activity Theory states that the degree to which these exchanges and the surrounding environment meet the preservice teachers' demands for professional development and growth is what determines the success of mentoring. According to the study, mentoring techniques must be participatory and sensitive to the developmental stages of aspiring teachers. Furthermore, to effectively handle transitional difficulties, mentoring frameworks need to be flexible, which may include experimenting with various mentoring models. To further promote preservice teachers' professional development and adaptation, mentoring methodologies and numbers should be adjusted to better suit their developmental stages and contextual needs. 6.12.1 Preservice Teacher-

Pedagogy The results of this study have significant ramifications for

mentoring techniques when it comes to preservice teachers. Based on observations, individuals with more affluent backgrounds and familiarity with sophisticated instructional protocols may benefit from the fast-paced methodology frequently used in classroom settings. This circumstance draws attention to a discrepancy since many preservice teachers have varied socioeconomic backgrounds, affecting their preparedness for and capacity for adapting to various learning situations. To guarantee equitable support, Mphojane (2019) and Gravett & Cilliers (2022) stress that successful

mentoring should take these varied origins and developmental requirements into account. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to match mentoring strategies to the cognitive and developmental phases of preservice teachers. Mphojane (2019) highlights that for mentoring to effectively support preservice teachers' professional progress, it must consider their varying preparedness levels. Gravett and Cilliers (2022) corroborate this, arguing that mentorship frameworks ought to be adaptable and sensitive to the unique requirements of preservice teachers, especially when it comes to adjusting to various teaching situations and resolving personal difficulties. Several cutting-edge strategies were integrated into the new mentoring framework's execution to increase its efficacy. Plans for individualized mentoring were created, considering the special requirements, experiences, and stages of development of preservice teachers. This strategy made sure that objectives, available resources, and available channels of assistance matched each person's unique difficulties and assets. Using digital tools for virtual observations and real-time feedback, mentors and preservice teachers were able to communicate and assist one another better thanks to technology. A system of peer mentorship was instituted, whereby seasoned preservice teachers advise their more junior counterparts, thereby cultivating a cooperative learning atmosphere and offering supplementary assistance. To support continual progress, pedagogical tactics were modified to meet a variety of requirements and included with regular reflection and feedback procedures. To make sure the framework remained up to date and dynamic, other features incorporated were evidence-based practices, collaborative learning communities, and workshops for professional development. These cutting-edge methods were created to meet the multifaceted requirements of preservice teachers and greatly improve their readiness for the teaching profession. Overall, the findings highlight the necessity of flexible mentorship frameworks that consider the different developmental needs and preparation levels of preservice teachers. Mentoring can more effectively tackle the difficulties preservice teachers encounter and further their professional growth if mentoring procedures are customized to accommodate a range of backgrounds and cognitive abilities.

6.12.2 Policy The study's policy implications highlight the necessity of completely reworking mentorship systems to provide preservice teachers with better support. To effectively meet a variety of demands, policies should concentrate on creating and implementing cutting-edge mentoring strategies, such as customized mentoring plans and technologically advanced feedback systems. Mentors' professional development needs to be given top priority in order to make sure they are knowledgeable about the various histories of preservice teachers and have the newest methods at their disposal. To continuously improve mentoring practices, rules should also require thorough evaluation and feedback mechanisms and encourage adaptive mentoring methods that consider varying developmental stages and learning preferences. Mentoring frameworks can become more relevant and responsive when educational institutions and stakeholders collaborate, and adequate budget allocation is important to provide the required tools and support systems. Lastly, policies ought to prioritize evidence-based approaches to guarantee that mentoring tactics are supported by research

and successfully aid in preparing aspiring teachers for the demands of

the classroom. **6.13 Recommendations Drawn from The Results of**

the Study The results of the study highlight how important it is to improve mentorship frameworks in order to provide preservice teachers with better support throughout their careers. One of the recommendations is to improve mentorship frameworks through the integration of diverse and adaptable teaching methodologies that accommodate different learning requirements and styles. More chances for professional development should be made available to preservice teachers so they can keep up with the latest pedagogical practices and trends in education. Co-teaching and joint planning sessions are two examples of collaborative teaching practices that must be used to give preservice teachers the opportunity to learn from and receive practical experience from experienced educators. Furthermore, mentoring programs ought to prioritize flexibility and reactivity, equipping aspiring educators to modify their approaches to suit the requirements of heterogeneous student bodies. Given the difficulties involved in making the move to become a teacher, mentorship programs ought to offer focused assistance with handling classroom dynamics and modifying pedagogical strategies for various educational settings. Establishing regular evaluation and feedback methods is advised in order to increase the effectiveness of mentoring activities. This will allow for continual improvement based on current requirements and experiences. Strong professional ties can have a big impact on preservice teachers' confidence and development, thus mentoring frameworks should also emphasize this. Incorporating cutting-edge strategies and technology into mentoring practices might also present fresh chances for interaction and education. The overall goal of these suggestions is to establish a strong and encouraging mentorship program that successfully equips aspiring teachers for rewarding careers in the teaching profession.

6.14 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study has several noteworthy advantages and disadvantages. Its thorough methodology, which combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to produce a well-rounded analysis of mentoring practices, is one of its strong

points. Utilizing a variety of data sources, such as focus groups, observations, interviews , and document analysis, improves the findings' validity and dependability. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

and Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding, applied in this study, provide a strong theoretical framework that places the findings in the context of accepted educational theory. Furthermore, the study's actionable suggestions can be immediately implemented to enhance mentoring practices and offer insightful information about how to make mentoring frameworks more successful. But there are also limitations on the study. Because the research was done inside the mentoring program of a specific university, it's possible that the conclusions can't be applied as broadly to other situations or establishments. Because of the small sample size and the

restricted number of participants, the results may not be

fully generalizable to a wide range of educational environments. The emphasis on learning environments might not take into consideration the differences in mentoring styles among various schools or areas. It is more

difficult to evaluate the long-term effects of mentoring on the

professional growth and advancement of preservice teachers

in the absence of longitudinal data. Moreover, the study does not go into detail on how technology is used in mentoring practices, which is a topic that might yield more information. Finally, biases in self-reported data from focus groups and interviews could potentially compromise the

validity of the results. Future research addressing these shortcomings

may improve the study's conclusions' robustness and applicability.

6.15 Contributions In conclusion, the study adds to the body of knowledge

on mentoring methods from a theoretical and practical standpoint. It has contributed three noteworthy things: First, by concentrating on teacher-related characteristics rather than learner inadequacies, it offers a comprehensive understanding of the variations in pedagogical techniques between mentor lecturers and mentor instructors. This change in emphasis improves our understanding of how mentoring practices can help or impede the growth of preservice teachers. The study provides insights on the function of mentorship in teacher training, with a particular focus on the necessity of matching mentorship methods to preservice teachers' developmental needs. Thirdly, it contributes to the corpus of knowledge regarding the efficacy of mentorship frameworks, especially regarding higher

education establishments. The results of this study underscore the

need for more research on the effects of mentoring methods on the performance and preparedness of preservice teachers in the classroom. It recommends that to make sure mentoring programs satisfy the goals of preservice teachers for professional development, the Department

of Higher Education and Training (DHET) think about assessing the

efficacy and quality of mentoring programs. Furthermore, examining mentoring results in various educational contexts and contrasting them with those from establishments with less developed mentoring frameworks may yield insightful information. The results of this study highlight how mentoring can encourage creative teaching methods and lessen the pressures of entering the teaching field. In the end, it suggests reassessing mentorship strategies in order to support better teacher preparation and constructive modifications to instructional methods. 6.16 Direction for Future Research Possible areas for further investigation include comparative studies analyzing various mentoring methodologies and their efficacy would be highly beneficial for future research on preservice teacher mentoring. A study comparing various mentorship models could be one way to go to determine which strategies best assist the professional development of preservice teachers. To find out which mentoring strategies produce the best results in terms of preservice teachers' professional development and classroom preparedness could entail contrasting conventional mentoring with creative or technologically enhanced mentoring techniques. The use of technology in mentoring could be a further subject of interest. Subsequent

research endeavours could investigate the ways in which digital tools and platforms can be incorporated into mentoring practices to augment communication, feedback, and resource exchanges between preservice teachers and mentors. Additionally, longitudinal studies should be

considered in order to monitor the long-term effects of

various mentoring strategies on the professional growth and efficacy of preservice teachers in the classroom. Mentoring frameworks can benefit greatly from an understanding of how early mentoring experiences affect long-term teaching outcomes. 6.17 Concluding Remarks This study's main goal was to create, put into practice, and evaluate a mentoring framework that would improve the effectiveness of mentor lecturers and mentor instructors in assisting aspiring teachers. Based on the findings of Gravett and Cilliers (2022), the research explained how mentoring frameworks a substantial impact on preservice teachers' development by can have filling in gaps and improving the caliber of teacher preparation when they are well planned and implemented. The results confirm what Gravett and Cilliers (2022) have said, namely that mentoring strategies must be tailored to the developmental requirements of preservice teachers. Specifically, adaptive and responsive mentoring approaches are critical. The contributions of this study are found in both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it unifies Activity Theory with Vygotsky's scaffolding notion to provide a sophisticated understanding of how mentoring might be set up to give preservice teachers the support they need within their zone of

proximal development . By applying these theories, mentoring methods

can better meet the developmental needs of preservice teachers

and help them become more prepared for the teaching profession. The study's conclusions support the adoption of a mentoring paradigm that is more adaptable and dynamic in practice. The available data indicates that

mentorship programs ought to be customized to meet the unique

needs of preservice teachers , such as their requirement for more individualized assistance and the incorporation of cutting-edge techniques. This is in line with the advice given by Gravett and Cilliers (2022), who contend that to be effective, mentoring involves a thorough awareness of the mentee's situation and the capacity to modify methods as necessary. The report also suggests several topics for additional investigation. To better help preservice teachers in a variety of educational environments, mentorship frameworks need to be enhanced. This will require further research and analysis. Furthermore, studies ought to concentrate on assessing the long-

term effects of mentorship on the professional growth and

efficacy of preservice teachers. To summarise, the research offers an all-encompassing structure for augmenting the mentorship procedure, presenting theoretical and practical perspectives that are essential for strengthening teacher training. Educational institutions can create more fruitful mentoring relationships and better prepare preservice teachers for

the demands of the teaching profession by addressing the

gaps that have been discovered and putting the suggested techniques into practice. As a PhD student, I have had a pleasant and hard path that has been characterized by a strong dedication to expanding my knowledge of mentorship and educational techniques. I accepted the demanding nature of research right on, devoting myself to thorough literature readings and experimenting with a range of approaches. I have had the opportunity to investigate the intricacies of teacher preparation in South Africa thanks to my work on creating a framework for mentorship that is sustainable for preservice teachers. Along the way, I have collaborated with mentors and peers, fostering enriching discussions that have shaped my perspective. This journey has not only enhanced my academic skills but also ignited a passion for contributing to the future of education. Each step has brought me closer to my goal of effecting meaningful change in the education field. i For this

study, the terms "mentee and preservice teachers" are used

interchangeably and mean student teachers who are studying towards a bachelor's degree in education. JIYANE LJN THESIS: DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PRESERVICE TEACHERS' MENTORSHIP IN

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ⁱ For this study, the terms “mentee and preservice teachers” are used interchangeably and mean student teachers who are studying towards a bachelor’s degree in education.