THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISORS ON THEIR ROLE AS MENTORS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE IN ZIMBABWE

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the doctoral degree qualification Philosophiae Doctor in Education (PhD Education)

in the

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
BLOEMFONTEIN

September 2017

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DECLARATION

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I, Raviro Chipato, declare that the thesis entitled **THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISORS ON THEIR ROLE AS MENTORS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE IN ZIMBABWE** is my own work and has not been submitted by me at any other University/Faculty. I cede copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

Signature R Chipato Date……………………………….

Mrs R. Chipato

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Mr Muungani Tanikwa, and my late mother, Mrs Agnes Ndanatsiwa Tanikwa. You departed on the same day, and that was God’s will. You have always celebrated my achievements. I am sure this would have been your greatest celebration.

To my granddaughters, Kayla Arianna Matanga and Mazvitaishe Sifovo, you have been my source of strength. God bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Glory be to God the Almighty for keeping me in good health to complete my study successfully. My profound gratitude goes to my committed supervisor, Prof L.C. Jita for the expert academic and professional guidance throughout this study. I will forever cherish your dedicated support.

My gratitude also goes to Prof Mokhele-Makgalwa for leading us in proposal writing. Dr S. Akpo and Dr M. Tsakeni, I thank you heartily for your sterling effort in teaching me how to analyse data; your ideas were an eye opener.

Many thanks go to Dr G. Mumhure, Dr E. Rutoro, Dr D. Zireva and Mr Mazire for their advice and insights after thoroughly reading my work. It was pleasantly surprising to see how much colleagues could share and enrich each other.

My sincere gratitude goes to my Personal Assistant, Mrs Hildah Makura; you managed my calendar with expertise second to none. You meticulously checked and typed my work. You were keen to listen when I explained my issues, and that encouraged me to work on.

My profound gratitude goes to Dr T. Jita: thank you for constantly checking up on me and checking on my progress in order to keep the light on in difficult times; your effort is greatly appreciated.

To my two children, Tendai and Estina Chipato, thank you for being a phone call away for support. My *“muzukuru”* Kayla Ariana Matanga, you were also there asking all the unrelated questions but it kept me sharp and awake. To Mazvitaishe Sifovo, you were also a source of courage as you came into the family and stood by our side through thick and thin. Without family support and understanding, I would not have made it this far.

I would like to appreciate the support accorded to me by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education through:

1) The office of the Permanent Secretary for allowing me permission to carry out the study
2) The Provincial Education Director for granting me permission to conduct the study in Masvingo Province

3) The District Education Officer (Masvingo District) for granting me permission to carry out my study in Masvingo District primary schools
4) School Heads for allowing me to access teacher mentors
5) The teacher mentors (school-based supervisors) for accepting to provide information for this study by participating in interviews and focus group discussions

I am grateful to the office of the SANRAL Chair in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education as well as the Research Directorate at the University of the Free State for financial support and guidance.

To the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, I sincerely thank you for the financial support, may the Almighty Lord continue to make you a torchbearer in education.

Finally, thanks to my language editor, Mr Thomas Gama, your commitment is greatly appreciated. It has been marvellous to read my own work after your meticulous editing at each stage.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

2-5-2	Two terms in, five terms out and two terms in
3-3-3	Three terms in, three terms out and three terms in
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CBI	College Based Instruction
CE	Certificate in Education
CK	Content Knowledge
DEO	District Education Officer
Dip Ed	Diploma in Education
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FPS	Farm Primary School
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information Communication Technology
K-12	Kindergarten to 12th grade
MEd	Masters of Education
MOHTE	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education
OBCBI	Observation and College Based Instruction
PE	Physical Education
PED	Provincial Education Director
RPS	Rural Primary School
SMART	Specific Measurable Achieved Result based Time based objectives

T3	Three years teacher training
TIC	Teacher-in-Charge
TP	Teaching Practice
TPDE	Teaching Practice with Distance Education and Vacation Course

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore school-based supervisors' perspectives of their role in mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe. More specifically, the study was intended to gain insights into how school-based mentors understood what mentoring is, what their mentoring roles are, how they enacted their mentoring roles, types of support they provided student teachers on teaching practice, challenges and opportunities they encountered and what could be done to improve the mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum. This study contributes new knowledge to the ongoing discourses about initial teacher professional development.

In order to investigate school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring student teachers during practicum, the study adopted a qualitative research approach and a case study research design. Using data from in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion with seven purposively sampled mentors together with document analysis of mentors' written feedback for their mentees over a period of eighteen months, the study draws on cognitive apprenticeship as a lens to understand school-based mentors' perspectives on mentoring student teachers on teaching practice.

The study established that school-based supervisors understood mentoring as a hierarchical relationship between a mentor and a mentee with the former as a senior partner. Mentors' conceptualisation of mentoring was shaped by their background and experience in mentoring student teachers on practicum.

It was established that mentors believed that any qualified teacher was eligible to become a mentor. School-based supervisors do not consider mentorship training as a prerequisite for effective mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum. The study revealed that school heads use their discretion in the selection and appointment of mentors at their stations. The selection of a mentor was not based on any formal criteria and that teachers were not consulted during the selection and appointment process.

It emerged from this study that school-based mentors play several critical mentoring roles such as provision of guidance, nurturing, leading and supervision of pre-service teachers on teaching practice. School-based supervisors enacted their roles through modelling, observation and providing constructive feedback.

The study found that mentors faced challenges such as student teachers' lack of readiness for teaching practice, inadequate information about the teacher training programme and what they were expected to do, as well as inadequate support from their school authorities and the teacher training colleges. The study concluded that mentors used their own experience in mentoring student teachers on teaching practice.

The study uncovered that mentoring had several opportunities for school-based mentors such as the construction of lasting professional and social relationships with their mentees and professional growth. Mentors enjoyed the privilege of being given first preference to attend the limited professional development sessions offered by colleges and district education authorities. School-based supervisors learnt from their mentees how to incorporate information communication technology in teaching and learning. The mentees taught their mentors and pupils non-traditional games such as baseball, tennis and rugby.

The mentors' understanding, perspectives and practices were understood and/or explained in terms of how they were trained and the prevailing conditions in the country. In Zimbabwe, any qualified teacher is eligible to become a mentor. Mentorship training is not prioritised in terms of selecting and allocating student teachers to mentors. It is assumed that any trained teacher is capable of guiding student teachers on teaching practice. The mentors were not provided with any guidance in mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum. The study established that mentors used their own experience and the occurrences at their stations to guide their mentees.

The study recommended that mentorship training should be compulsory for all school-based supervisors. Teacher training colleges and schools should provide ongoing professional development for mentors. The Department of Teacher Education of the University of Zimbabwe should come up with a comprehensive policy document to guide colleges and schools on how to provide mentorship effectively to student teachers during their practicum.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher, mentee, student teacher, perspectives, mentor. mentor teachers, school-based supervisors, teaching practice. practicum. field-based teaching. attachment, supervision

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CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Countries throughout the world have introduced educational reforms that aim at improving the quality of education for all learners. In many developing countries, the Jomtien Convention (1990) became a clarion call for governments to take the demand for “quality education for all” seriously and to introduce the required reforms in education. For these reforms to be successful, it is necessary to have quality teachers (Mswazie & Gamira, 2011; Zvobgo, 1996). The quality of the education system in each country is dependent upon the quality of teachers within that system and the quality of teacher education policies in operation (Zvobgo, 2000). As a result, reforming teacher education has been an important component of the broader education reform agenda in many countries across the globe. Not surprising, it is in the context of trying to improve general education for all that Zimbabwe embarked on a teacher education curriculum review in 1985 (Zvobgo, 2000; Gatawa, 1998). The aim was to balance the quantity-quality dilemma in the preparation of teachers. This review led to a number of improvements in the teacher preparation programme, one of which was the introduction of school-based mentors to work with pre-service teacher education students for longer periods than had previously been the case. Even though the school based mentoring system has been around for a while now, there is very little we know about the way mentors enact their mentoring roles, or their perspectives towards the mentoring system, and the challenges and opportunities they face during mentoring, especially in Zimbabwe and many other developing countries.

Quality pre-service teacher preparation is a prerequisite for effective education reform and should be derived from quality teacher education policies. Various countries follow different pre-service teacher preparation models. The majority of these programmes have teaching practice as a major component (Maphalala, 2013; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). Furlong, Hirst and Pocklington (1988) argue that in many countries teaching practice occupies a critical position in teacher preparation. Kasambira (2001) also asserts the same point that teaching practice is the most important experience in the entire teacher education programme in Zimbabwe.

Graham (2006) proposes two critical components that are necessary for the success of teaching practice, viz., the mentor teachers who guide the mentees and the environment in which mentoring is done. Emphasising the importance of the teaching practice component and mentoring, Maphalala (2013:126) regards mentoring as one of the most influential strategies in the education of student teachers. Ngara and Ngwarai (2012: 461) concur that, "mentoring has been increasingly recognized as a key strategy in professional training and development in education". It is against this background that the preparation of pre-service teachers in Zimbabwe currently involves a strong component of school-based learning (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2006).

The Zimbabwean primary school pre-service teacher education follows a 2-5-2 programme. In this programme, the pre-service teachers spend two initial terms at the college of education, five terms on teaching practice and the last two terms back at the college (Chakanyuka, 2006; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). The duration student teachers spend on teaching practice is indicative of the priority that is placed on the school-based component of the teacher education programme. This period spans over five terms (20 months) of the three-year course (36 months). The centrality of student teaching practice to their professional training is therefore not in dispute (Maynard, 1997, McMahan *et al.*, 2015). It is therefore vital to understand the mentors' experiences during the teaching practice period. To date, not enough work has been done that explores this component of teaching practice in Zimbabwe and other developing countries (Samkange, 2015). This study seeks to correct this oversight by focusing on the experiences of school-based supervisors or what is often referred to as teacher mentors.

Specifically, the study will fill in this gap by focusing on the role of school-based supervisors during teaching practice and the way they understand and enact their role. I propose to study this phenomenon from the mentor teachers' own perspectives. The next section provides the background of this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This section focuses on the evolution of pre-service teacher preparation models in Zimbabwe since the attainment of independence in 1980. Zimbabwe, similar to many other newly independent nations, introduced educational reforms to try and shape its own destiny (Zvobgo, 1999). The new government adopted education as a basic human right and this led to an unprecedented increase of enrolments in primary schools. From 1980–1995, the number of primary schools rose from 2401 to 4297, and enrolment increased from 81 586 to 2 260 367 (Chivore, 1990; Zvobgo, 2000). Such a massive increase in enrolments had a critical impact on the number of qualified primary school teachers. Many schools were established, leading to a critical shortage of qualified teachers to teach in these schools. Zimbabwe had five government primary teachers' colleges and three mission teachers' colleges with rather limited enrolments. It became necessary for new teacher preparation models to be put in place to quickly address this problem. It is against this background that a new model of primary teacher training was introduced.

In 1981, Zimbabwe saw the inception of the Zimbabwe integrated national teacher education course (ZINTEC). This was a 4-year programme for training pre-service primary teachers (Chanakira, 1998; Chivore, 1994; Zvobgo, 1999). The new programme was designed to fast-track teacher training for the primary school sector. Student teachers spent the initial 16 weeks at college (residential phase) during which students were exposed to the theories of teaching and primary school curriculum subjects. The next phase comprised 176 weeks of teaching practice in schools. Student teachers staffed full classes with no mentors for the entire period. The last 16 weeks were spent in college (final residential phase) where they wrote their qualifying examinations (Chanakira, 1998; Chivore, 1994; Zvobgo, 2000).

The programme was later reviewed, though it remained a 4-year programme. It now had 32 weeks as its initial residential phase, 160 weeks teaching practice and the final residential phase of 16 weeks. It was further modified in 1998 to 32 weeks of first residential period, 144 weeks for teaching practice and 32 weeks for the final residential phase (Chanakira, 1998; Chivore, 2000; Ministry of Education, 1997).

The above models clearly show the emphasis on teaching practice as one critical component. However, it could be argued that the reason for the emphasis on teaching practice was partly to alleviate the shortage of teachers in primary schools (Zvobgo, 2000).

Parallel to the ZINTEC programme, was the conventional 4-year primary pre-service teachers' course. Students spent their first and third years in college; whereas the second and fourth years were spent on teaching practice during which student teachers again staffed full classes with no mentors (Chanakira, 1998; Chivore, 1994). The focus was also partly to alleviate the shortages of teachers. The latter programme was offered from 1981 to 1987, after which it was reviewed, and from 1988 to 1994 was converted to a 3-year programme. In this modified programme, student teachers spent one year in college, one year doing teaching practice and the final year was residential (Chanakira, 1999; Zvobgo, 2000). This major characteristic of all programmes is that they had no mentors and student teachers staffed classes full-time on their own. The inception of mentoring in teacher preparation programmes in Zimbabwe came after the review of the teacher education programme by UNESCO (Chanakira, 1998). Student teachers were now attached to experienced primary school teachers (mentors) for a period of one year in both the conventional course and the ZINTEC one (Zvobgo, 2000). Mentoring was intended to improve the quality of student teachers' experiences and it was a response to worldwide theoretical debates on teacher preparation with respect to the importance of mentoring students on teaching practice.

Tables 1.1-1.4 below show the evolution of the Zimbabwean teacher education models from 1981–1987 (Chanakira, 1998).

Table 1.1: ZINTEC's original structure, 1981-1987

YEAR	TERM I	TERM II	TERM III
1	CBI	TPDE	TPDE
2	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
3	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
4	TPDE	TPDE	CBI

CBI: College based instruction

TPDE: Teaching practice with distance education and vacation courses

Table 1.2: Conventional colleges (1981-1987)

YEAR	TERM I	TERM II	TERM III
1	CBI	CBI	CBI
2	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
3	CBI	CBI	CBI
4	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE

CBI: College based instruction

TPDE: Teaching practice with distance education and vacation courses

Table 1.3: Modified ZINTEC programme, 1988

YEAR	TERM I	TERM II	TERM III
1	CBI	CBI	TPDE
2	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
3	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
4	TPDE	CBI	CBI

CBI: College based instruction

TPDE: Teaching practice with distance education and vacation courses

Table 1.4: Modified conventional programme, 1988

YEAR	TERM I	TERM II	TERM III
1	OBCBI	CBI	CBI
2	TPDE	TPDE	TPDE
3	CBI	CBI	CBI

OB: Observation

CBI: College based instruction

TPDE: Teaching practice with distance education and vacation courses

In 2001, Dr Samuel Creigton Mumbengegwi was appointed Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education. At a principals' meeting on 9 August 2001 at Harare Polytechnic, with all principals from the 14 teachers' colleges. Dr Mumbengegwi declared that primary teachers' colleges were going to follow the ZINTEC model, which he termed a homegrown product as it had started at independence. As the responsible minister, he then became the prime mover of the 2-5-2 programme, which was adopted by all primary colleges in January 2002. He was implementing the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training in Zimbabwe (Presidential Commission, 1999).

The policy directive from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (2001) instructed all primary school teachers' colleges to follow a similar programme of teacher training. The focus of the policy was two-fold: first, to unify the diverse teacher education programmes in the country and, second, to increase student teacher enrolments in primary school teachers' colleges as each college was expected to enrol two streams per year (MOHTE, 2001; Mswazie & Gamira, 2011). The new programme is now popularly referred to as the 2-5-2 model (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Mswazie & Gamira, 2011). All primary school teachers' colleges were compelled to enrol more than one intake per year. Students would spend the first two terms in college, five terms on teaching practice, with each student attached to a mentor, and the last two terms as the final residential phase to complete the programme. When Zimbabwe adopted this new programme for the primary school pre-service teacher preparation, mentors were introduced during the student teaching practice period.

Although there has been an evolution in the primary school pre-service teacher preparation programme, Zvobgo (1996) and Kasambira (1993) argue that no significant changes were noted in the structure and content of the curriculum of teacher education programmes. There has also not been any drastic change or drastic departure from the 1997 curriculum framework, which was informed by the work of the committee on three years teacher training (T3 education). Throughout, the focus on pre-service teacher preparation seems to have been more on relieving teacher shortages rather than improving the quality of teacher education.

The new unified programme established a mentor-mentee context. The student teacher was now to be supervised, guided, directed and supported by the mentor (Hobson *et al.*, 2012; Chakanyuka, 2006; Marimo, 2014). Liu, (2014) concurs that when student teachers learn to teach, they need expert guidance, coaching, advice, hints and suggestions from a mentor. The new 2-5-2 programme was in line with the philosophy of apprenticeship or on the job training. School-based supervisors (viz., the teacher mentors, teachers-in-charge [TICs] and the head), supervise student teachers during teaching practice (Chivore *et al.,* 2015). This study intends to understand how mentors perceive their roles.

As a former lecturer, and now a principal of a college of education, I have a personal understanding of the programme, but not from the perspective of mentors. This study will help to open up a broader understanding of mentorship from the perspective of mentors. At a personal level, this understanding will help me to explore and consider possible and relevant interventions for the improvement of the teacher education programme at my institution.

My background as a college lecturer for more than 20 years and a principal at a primary school teachers' college for close to a decade has motivated me to undertake the present study on the perspectives and role of teacher mentors in teacher preparation education. A panoramic understanding of mentoring, especially from the school-based supervisors' perspective, will help me and other college administrators to consider and implement relevant interventions in order to influence the quality of mentoring of student teachers during teaching practice, thus improving the quality of learning for all.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Why is it that governments throughout the world spend plenty of resources in the preparation of pre-service teachers yet the quality of teachers remain low? Part of the answer to this question lies in the understanding of the teacher education programmes on offer. In their endeavour to produce high quality teachers for learners, governments use different models. In Zimbabwe, pre-service teacher preparation follows the 2-5-2 model, i.e., two terms in college, five terms on teaching practice and the last two terms in college. Clearly, school-based supervisors play a key role in teacher training, in part because of the amount of time they spend with the trainees (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Chakanyuka, 2006; Hobson *et al.*, 2012). However, not much has been documented about how mentors perceive their roles or the nature of challenges and opportunities they face in mentoring.

For many countries, mentoring has become a critical strategy for pre-service teacher professional growth and development (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). Mtetwa and Thompson (2000) and Ochanji *et al.* (2015) point out that in the past twenty years, teacher preparation has moved from a typical institution-based to a field–based model. Pre-service teachers do teaching practice under the guidance of experienced teacher mentors (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Maphalala, 2013; Clarke, 2012).

Over the years, countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, United States of America, China, Korea, Netherlands, Botswana and Germany have conducted systematic research on mentoring and its implications on their teacher preparation programmes (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Hobson *et al.*, 1985; Wang, 2001). These countries have thus provided the required leadership on researching the issue of mentoring. In most African states, serious mentoring programmes are relatively new phenomena that started intensely from the 1980s and then accelerated after the Jomtien Conference (1990). Often, mentoring has been introduced as a strategy intended to increase the supply of teachers in times of need (Feiman-Nemser, 1990). However, the voice of the mentor is quite limited in these studies.

Mentor teachers have become prominent players in initiating student teachers into the teaching profession in a real (contextual) teaching-learning situation (Maphalala, 2013). Mentors bring practical knowledge of teaching to complement the student's theoretical knowledge acquired from college. According to Greek mythology, a mentor is a trusted friend (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Rawlings, 2002). Mentors are therefore critical in teaching practice. Nyaumwe and Mavhunga (2005) view supervision of student teachers on teaching practice as the mentor's key role. Furthermore, Maphosa and Ndamba (2012) view the mentor's role as that of a steering and performance oriented advisory role. While many scholars agree on the vital role that mentors play in giving pre-service teachers the guidance and advice they need, little is known about what actually happens during the mentoring teaching practice sessions (Kasambira, 2001). Aspfors and Franson (2015:84) argue that even though little research has been done on mentors' education, mentoring is now an international trend. Similarly, Pandey and Chhaila (2014) assert that all kinds of organisations, private or public, large or small, global or local, irrespective of the product they manufacture and the service they deliver, practise some form of mentoring, whether formal or informal. It is the intention of this study to unpack the experiences of the school-based mentors from the perspectives of the mentors themselves.

In this study, I propose to investigate school-based supervisors' perspectives on the supervision of pre-service teachers during teaching practice. Not much is known about how school-based supervisors implement their roles in the supervision of pre-service teachers during teaching practice. In addition, very little is known about the experiences of school-based supervisors and the challenges and opportunities they face during the mentoring duration. A study of this nature is important to highlight the challenges and opportunities faced by mentors, while at the same time informing relevant authorities about possible policy alternatives and improvements. Findings from this study will hopefully inform policymakers and other relevant stakeholders on how best to structure school-based mentoring and support the school-based mentors in their role as supervisors of student teachers during teaching practice in Zimbabwe. This may enhance the quality of the pre-service teacher preparation. The study sought to uncover school-based supervisors' perspectives on their role during teaching practice, especially in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe.

1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question of this study is: *What are the school-based mentors' perspectives and practices of mentoring during teaching practice in Zimbabwe?*

1.4.1 Research questions

To respond to the above central research question, five sub-questions were proposed**.**

The following sub-questions provided a focus for this study.

1) What are the perspectives of Zimbabwean school-based supervisors (mentors) on mentoring primary school pre-service teachers?

2) How do school-based supervisors understand and enact their roles?
3) What are the challenges and opportunities for mentors in this mentoring system of teacher education?
4) How can the perspectives and practices of school-based mentors be understood and/or explained?
5) How can school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice be improved?

1.5 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This study is aimed at uncovering and understanding school-based supervisors' perspectives of their roles in mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers during teaching practice in Masvingo district schools in Zimbabwe. I used a qualitative case study to collect rich descriptive data on how mentors perceive their supervisory role as school-based supervisors. I investigated the above to explore how school-based supervisors understand their role.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are to:

- explain how school-based supervisors conceptualise mentoring.
- document the understanding and practices of school-based supervisors during their mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers.
- identify challenges and opportunities faced by school-based supervisors in mentoring primary school pre-service teachers.
- develop an explanation of how school-based supervisors (mentors) understand and make sense of their role and practices.
- explore school-based supervisors' suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of mentoring.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by the cognitive apprenticeship theory. Piaget first propounded the theory that Collins, Duguid and Brown (1989) and others later developed. This theory focuses on the idea of learning in context and has three components, namely the cognitive, associative and autonomous. Cognitive apprenticeship theory utilises the following key components: situated learning, zone of proximal development, scaffolding, modelling, mentoring, coaching, shared understanding, articulation and reflection. This theory provides opportunities in this study for a clear understanding of how mentors perceive their roles in mentoring primary school pre-service teachers.

Cognitive apprenticeship seeks to engage learners in real world scenarios in which they act and interact to achieve useful outcomes (Brill, Kim & Galloway, 2001). McLellan (1994) argues that cognitive apprenticeship is one example of situated learning that involves learner participation in a community of practice developed through activity and social interaction in ways similar to craft apprenticeship. Cognitive apprenticeship consists of learning that is facilitated by the interaction between an expert and a novice in the process of completing a task intended at developing perceptive skills through authentic practical involvement (experience) (Collins *et al.*, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this study, the expert (school-based supervisor) and the novice (pre-service teacher) interact for the purposes of developing the latter professionally.

This study used cognitive apprenticeship theory (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989) to understand school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice. The theory holds that situated learning takes place in specific contexts or settings. Contexts or settings here refer to the cultural, historical and institutional factors that influence people's everyday lives (Brown *et al.*, 1989; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1998). For this study, the student teacher is within the school setting and classroom where s/he practises actual teaching in a real classroom situation. Collins *et al.* (1987) argue that the abstract nature of teaching skills makes it difficult to apply them in real world situations. Enkenberg (2001) criticises institutionalised learning, as learning tends to occur separately from expert practices, which are vital to real world performances.

Vygotsky (1978) came up with the concept of zone of proximal development. He suggests that learning tasks should be challenging enough to the learner depending on his/her current knowledge state, yet at the same time, it should not be too difficult to achieve. Learning should allow movement, depending on the nature of the activity (task) (Dennen, 2000). The concept encourages guided participation. The zone of proximal development of the learner, as s/he acquires new skills, goes hand in hand with the learner's development. This process takes place through social interaction between the learner (mentee) and someone who is more experienced (mentor).

The concept of scaffolding draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978). Scaffolding involves the breaking down of complex situations into manageable activities and tasks for easy mastering (Rogoff, 1990). Furthermore, during its implementation, the expert teaches the novice the required skills and gradually withdraws as the learner takes over control of his/her learning (Collins *et al,* 1989). This calls for a shared understanding between the mentor and the mentee in the learning situation. Thus, the mentor and the mentee come into the classroom with different understandings and, through interaction, develop a shared meaning of the teaching-learning process.

Modelling is another key element of cognitive apprenticeship. Modelling here means showing how a process unfolds and giving reasons why it happens that way (Collins, 1991). Tharp and Gallmore (1998), and Bandura (1978) agree that modelling consists of a demonstration followed by an imitation, and is normally used to assist learners in developing practical skills. In this study, the mentor demonstrates to the mentee (pre-service teacher) who then imitates the actual teaching, and develops the required competences. Therefore, the major responsibilities of the mentor in modelling are to structure situations of expert practice and show expert thinking.

Mentoring and coaching are also critical components of the apprenticeship model. In these professional development relationships, a more experienced participant assists a less experienced one to develop their career (Dennen, 2000). According to Parsloe and Wray (2000), mentoring and coaching mean almost the same thing, although a mentor provides support of a more general nature and a coach focuses on specific skills. In this study, the school-based supervisor (mentor) assists the primary school pre-service teacher to develop into a professional.

Lastly, there is need for articulation and reflection throughout the process. Articulation is an act of giving utterance or expression (Merriam, 2001). As noted by Collins *et al* (1987), there are three types of articulation, namely inquiry teaching, thinking aloud and critical student role. Brill *et al.* (2001), note that articulation enables learners to make learning explicit through language and a variety of strategies such as discussions, demonstrations, modelling and presentations. Hence, in this study, the mentor and mentee as well as the class should be actively involved in the teaching-learning process. In addition, reflection permits the mentees to, "compare their own problem-solving processes with those of an expert, another student and ultimately, an internal cognitive model of expertise" (Collins *et al.*, 1987:483). The school-based supervisor should provide the student with opportunities to learn from past experiences and significant others. The mentees should therefore look back and analyse their performances so that they improve towards the standard of the expert, in this case, the mentor.

1.8 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach, specifically a case study design, was adopted to address the critical research questions of the study on the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe. The qualitative research approach enabled me to gather "rich descriptive data" to develop an in-depth understanding of what mentors' roles are, how they enact their roles as well as the challenges and opportunities they face in mentoring from mentors' own perspectives (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The choice of this approach was informed by the cognitive apprenticeship theory, which focuses on contextual learning (Collins, Duguid & Brown, 1989). The theory provides an opportunity in this study for a clear understanding of how mentors perceive their roles in mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers. In addition, there seems to be consensus in literature that a qualitative research approach is the best for investigating human behaviour and learning (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2015; Flick, 2014; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011).

I purposively sampled the setting and participants of this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Creswell (2012), Magwa and Magwa (2015), Patton (2002) and Ritchie and Lewis (2013), purposive sampling is employed to select information rich participants on a particular phenomenon. On the setting, Masvingo province, specifically Masvingo district, was chosen as it has three primary school teachers' colleges and schools that cater for all school categories of rural, urban and farm schools. All three colleges offer the 2-5-2 programme under the scheme of association with the University of Zimbabwe (Department of Teacher Education

[DTE] handbook, 2015). Seven primary schools (two urban, two farms and three rural) and seven mentors with over three years' experience were selected. The mentors were chosen because they were directly involved in mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers from the three primary school teachers' colleges in Masvingo district of Masvingo province. The selected mentors were deemed to have the information I needed to address this study's critical questions.

Interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were instruments used to collect qualitative data to answer research questions for this study. Seven mentors were interviewed; all seven participants were involved in one focus group discussion held at the Great Zimbabwe Hotel outer venue. The focus group discussions and interviews were critical for providing rich, detailed qualitative data on how mentors understand the roles of mentors as school-based supervisors, how they enact their roles, challenges and opportunity they faced in mentoring and how mentoring could be improved (see research questions 1 to 5).

I also interrogated one supervision report picked from a teaching practice file of each of the seven student teachers who were supervised by the seven mentors. The information collected using the three instruments was critical for the purposes of triangulation. It clearly spelt out how mentors understand and perceive their roles as school-based supervisors.

Qualitative data generated for this study through interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed, coded, sorted, categorical analysed and presented as an integrated whole in Chapter 4 (Magwa & Magwa, 2015; Flick, 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2012). The data generated through document analysis needed no translation as it was in the written language of participants. Authentic participants' views were provided through thick descriptions of the generated data. Ethical issues for this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was initially prompted by a reflection on my own experiences as a mentee on teaching practice without a real mentor for nine weeks in 1978-1979. My curiosity has also been shaped by my experiences as a mentor for 6 weeks in 1981, soon after my certification as a teacher in 1980. I was not trained for the task of mentoring pre-service teachers and the ideas I got of mentoring were mostly developed through trial and error. The type of mentoring I provided to student teachers was mostly focused on making the mentees reflect my own teaching (to be copycats, so to speak). I tried my utmost to fashion the mentee to be a replica of myself. Clearly, as a mentor, I never gave my mentee much of a chance to be an individual. This troubling reflection has partly prompted my interest in researching school-based mentorship, especially from the perspectives of mentors themselves.

Later on in life, I also had experiences in student teacher mentorship as a college-based supervisor from 1982 to 2005. In my current position as a principal of a teachers' college that is responsible for training primary school teachers, I have had more time to reflect on all those experiences from the perspective of a manager and policymaker. At different points in my career, I have come up with different views and perspectives of mentorship at each stage. The present study therefore is a continuation of my own journey in reflecting on the phenomenon of student teacher mentoring and supervision during school-based teaching practice in general. The study will help me make better sense of the roles of mentors as well as their challenges and opportunities in defining and executing their roles. In addition, this study will also shed insights on a phenomenon that is less studied in many developing countries, Zimbabwe included, especially the complexities of mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice from the mentors' perspectives.

I hope that the findings of the study will also be of value to other principals of teachers' colleges and to the DTE at the University of Zimbabwe as a licensing institution. In addition, I hope it will be valuable to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development as the parent Ministry, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, to policymakers in general, to school-based supervisors themselves, to education lecturers in the colleges and, ultimately, to the pre-service student teachers. The study will inform these key stakeholders about the status of mentoring in schools during teaching practice.

Furthermore, the study will not only be important in Zimbabwe, but to other countries as well since mentoring has become a critical component in pre-service teacher training globally. This study hopes to contribute to the ongoing discourse about preparing quality pre-service teachers by contributing new knowledge to the field of pre-service teacher professional development. Wang (2001) cautions that without quality mentoring we risk having novices learning to teach without producing quality teachers. Therefore, this study hopes to contribute to the ongoing discourses about preparing quality pre-service teachers by providing new knowledge to the field of pre-service teacher professional development during teaching practice.

While much is known about mentoring, relatively little is known about mentors' professional needs. Hobson *et al.* (2009) recommend the need for more studies that are aimed at collecting information on the perceptions of mentors about their mentoring roles.

In the case of Zimbabwe, for example, some mentoring workshops have been organised by teachers' colleges, the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education, and VVOB (a Flemish non-governmental organisation) for the school-based supervisors. It is unclear to what extent these workshops have served the required needs of school-based mentors, what those needs are and what the perspectives of mentors are on those workshops. The proposed study seeks to understand school-based supervisors' experiences from their own perspective. This focus, thus, highlights the importance of the study as it seeks to incorporate "another prominent voice", which was largely neglected in many studies on mentoring and supervision of student teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014).

Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) agree that classroom-based mentors have limited knowledge of the process of mentoring and the specific roles they are expected to undertake. Wang (2001:72) could have been making a case for the present study when he argued that it is important to identify how mentors conceptualise mentoring and their experiences in conducting the kind of mentoring practices that are expected of them.

This study also seeks to draw the attention of other researchers to the need to focus on the experiences of school-based supervisors during teaching practice as an aspect of teacher education that has not yet been fully documented in the literature.

1.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is a case study; thus, it has limitations consistent with any case study research (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

The findings cannot therefore be generalised to all mentors in the district or the country. Even though the research findings are not generalisable, the research will open up avenues for further research and provide answers to some problems related to mentoring which can be adapted to and/or provide lessons for other mentors and districts.

Secondly, the researcher is a college principal, and is known to most of the mentors who participated in the study. This might have influenced their responses during interviews and focus group discussions. However, this limitation was countered by asking the same questions in different data gathering methods for triangulation. In addition, the limitation was countered by utilising information from different instruments such as document analysis, one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion. On the other hand, knowing the participants may have influenced the study for the better in that the respondents were more willing to discuss and elaborate on their responses and were comfortable and familiar with me from our previous interactions. I was, however, cognisant and reflexive of the possible power dynamics that could have been at play during the data collection processes.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to the Masvingo district primary schools where primary school pre-service teachers from three primary school teachers' colleges in Masvingo province are deployed for teaching practice. Three colleges and seven primary schools (two urban, three rural and two farms) participated in this study. The mentors were purposively selected to include only those who are experienced and have been actively involved in mentoring for at least three years. These participants were sampled out to include information rich participants (Creswell, 2014; Magwa & Magwa, 2015).

Each participant was involved in a one-on-one interview, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes. In addition, a focus group discussion of 1½ hours was conducted with all seven participants. Through the focus group discussion, I was able to acquire a panoramic understanding of the views of mentors on their roles as school-based supervisors from their own perspectives. The mentors' supervision reports were also examined in an effort to evaluate how they enacted their roles as supervisors. This enabled me to have a broad understanding of how mentors perceive and enact their role in mentoring pre-service primary school teachers during teaching practice, through the way they enacted this supervision role in writing. All participants were given a chance to answer questions from the focus group discussion protocol. This approach afforded them the chance to share ideas, explain themselves as well as display their understanding of their supervisory role.

1.12 FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

All teachers' colleges in this study offer the 2-5-2 programme for primary school pre-service teacher preparation where student teachers went out to schools for teaching practice for five terms. Pre-service teachers were under mentors who are expected to guide, support, direct and supervise them. This long period provided me with a large population from which to pick a sample of experienced mentors in the 2-5-2 programme. As a principal, I also have access to the schools since they collaborate with the college in the preparation of teachers. This means I could engage with participants and moderate the focus group discussions without any major challenges.

1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following key terms are defined for use within this study.

1) *Pre-service teacher/mentee/student teacher*: A mentee is a novice who receives guidance and support from a more experienced individual in the same field or trade (Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Leshem, 2012). In this study, the mentee is the student teacher who receives guidance and support from the school-based teacher (mentor). A pre-service teacher is a college student involved in a school-based field experience (Moyo, 2002). For this study, the term primary school pre-service teacher/mentee/student teacher will be used synonymously.

2) *Mentor/mentor teacher/school-based supervisor*: According to Wetzel, Hoffman and Maloch, (2017), a mentor is a normative teacher designated by the head to help and guide the new teacher and trainee teachers. Advancing the same understanding of a mentor, Perunka and Erkkila (2013), in their study from Finland, say that, “mentor means a supervisor who is supporting a mentee during his/her teaching practice”. In this study, the mentor is the class teacher under whom the mentee is placed. This mentor teacher is expected to supervise the student teacher/mentee with the goal of supporting and guiding the growth and development of the primary school pre-service teacher. In this study, the three terms, namely mentor, mentor teacher and school-based supervisor are used interchangeably.

3) *Teaching practice/practicum/field-based teaching/attachment*: Teaching practice in Zimbabwe is work integrated learning that is described as a period of time during which student teachers work in schools in order to apply theory into practice (Kiggundu & Nayumuli, 2009; Musingafi & Mafumbate, 2014; Marimo, 2014; Samkange, 2015). Musingafi & Mafumbate (2014) further describe teaching practice as a practicum where student teachers get the opportunity to practise the art of teaching in preparation for the real world of the teaching profession. In Zimbabwe, this phase is a practical component of the teacher-training programme, which culminates in the final certification of the student teachers. For this study, teaching practice/practicum is taken to mean the five terms of the 2-5-2 primary school pre-service teachers training when pre-service teachers are placed into primary schools under the supervision of the mentor teacher.

4) *Supervision*: This distinct professional activity involves observation, evaluation and feedback aimed at facilitating the supervisee’s self, assessment and acquisition of knowledge and skills. This is done through the supervisors, instructing, modelling and mutually solving problems (Creaner, 2013; Moyo, 2002). It is safe to say that supervision takes into account the effort of the school officials (in this study the school-based teachers) towards improving the quality of learning and wellbeing of the supervisee. For this study, supervision

entails all the activities that the mentor (school-based supervisor) performs in the development and growth of the primary school pre-service teacher.

5) *Perspectives*: These refer to mentors' views, beliefs, opinions, understanding and attitudes. These also include mentors' challenges and opportunities as well as how mentoring could be improved to enhance quality of teacher preparation programmes.

1.14 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis comprises five chapters.

Chapter 1

This chapter presents the orientation and background to the study. It specifically focuses on the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, significance of the study, research questions, aims, objectives of the study as well as the chapter summary.

Chapter 2

This chapter provides a detailed review of related literature on school-based mentors' roles. The chapter mainly focuses on mentoring and its critical significance in pre-service teacher preparation, it zeros down to primary school pre-service teacher preparation in Zimbabwe. The chapter also explores the various models of the pre-service teacher preparation programmes in Zimbabwe. The theoretical framework for the study is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3

This chapter describes the research methodology used to conduct this study. The focus was on the research approach, design, sampling procedures and instruments. Data collection procedures and how it will be managed and presented, including the issues of validity and reliability, are provided. The ethical considerations were adopted to protect the privacy of participants. Clearance procedures are explained to participants.

Chapter 4

In this chapter, qualitative data generated from seven schools and seven mentors in Masvingo district who participated in this study is presented. Detailed descriptive summaries are used to present the data. Outlines of the major themes that emerged from the data are also presented and clarified.

Chapter 5

The chapter provides the findings and conclusions of the study. Their implications for policy and teaching practices are discussed. Furthermore, the relevance and effectiveness of mentoring process in the primary school pre-service teachers' preparation in Zimbabwe were explored. Gaps in the research are highlighted in order to open avenues for further research.

1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided an orientation and background to this study. I began by focusing on the pre-service teacher preparation models and described how the world has focused on the on-the-job training in all teacher preparation programmes. In the background to the study, the evolution of the primary school pre-service teacher preparation evolution was explored. From 1980 to 1988 teacher education programmes on preparation of primary school pre-service teachers aimed at alleviating primary school teacher shortage. This section revealed that the quality of teachers did not improve much as student teachers had to be full time teachers. In 1995, primary school pre-service teachers were placed under a mentor during teaching practice; however, not much improvement was noted on teachers' instructional practice.

In 2001, the government of Zimbabwe gave a directive to unify all primary school pre-service teacher education programmes to the 2-5-2 model. The Department of Teacher Education took the chance to improve on quality by utilising the long period on teaching practice as a critical moment of marrying theory and practice under the supervision of school-based supervisors.

The problem statement for this study was discussed in this chapter. Mentoring has been poised as playing a vital role in the training of teachers the world over, including in Zimbabwe. Undoubtedly, literature has shown that little is known about the perspective of mentors on their role as school-based supervisors, yet these play a significant role in the training of teachers during teaching practice. Furthermore, if mentoring is not done effectively, the quality of education for all learners will remain poor.

The significance of the study was also examined. The study is aimed at contributing new knowledge of mentoring and the ongoing debate and discourse on the importance of school-based supervisors as critical players in the training of primary school pre-service teachers. The main research question and the vital sub-questions that guide this study are part of this chapter. Research aims and objectives of the study are also presented. The theoretical framework that guides the study has been discussed as the major focus of the study.

The study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. It was appropriate to the study as it generates qualitative data from school-based supervisors' perspectives on their roles as mentors in Zimbabwe. The limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed in detail. Key terms used in the study have been explained and the layout of the thesis was outlined. The next chapter presents the reviewed literature relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature on school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring pre-service teachers during their teaching practice. The literature review helped to situate the study into the global and local contexts. In the process, I was able to borrow concepts, approaches and methodologies utilised by other researchers who studied the mentoring of pre-service teachers during their practicum in various contexts. The review starts by focusing on teacher preparation in general and pre-service teaching practice in various countries. The rest of the chapter is then organised following the order of this study's research objectives. This was intended to make it easier for me to compare the results of this study with findings from other studies and contexts in Chapter 4.

2.2 INITIALTEACHER PREPARATION

The initial preparation of teachers continues to attract the attention of governments and teacher educators throughout the world. The consensus in the literature is that the quality of a country's education system is as good as the quality of its teachers (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The technological advancements and educational reforms being introduced in most countries have necessitated the development of relevant and high quality teachers (Akorede, 2014; Scanlon, 2008). The development of quality teachers capable of implementing the said changes starts from initial teacher development.

The initial development of teachers takes diverse formats across the globe. Traditionally, the initial development of teachers was the responsibility of teacher training institutions and their respective education ministries in most countries (Chakanyuka, 2006). Teacher training institutions focused on the development of the student teachers' content knowledge base and theories of teaching (Corrigan & Loughran, 2008). The belief was that such a teacher would then translate the theory learnt from college or university into practice.

Studies in teacher education and debates about the quality of teacher education graduates led to changes in the training of teachers in many countries. Teacher training institutions have been criticised for producing irrelevant teachers for the education system. A study by Akorede (2014) on pre-service teacher education established that teacher education was in transition. The same study uncovered that teacher education was largely irrelevant to the prevailing realities in society and schools. The study recommended that teacher education be closely related to what goes on in society and schools. In addition, the study also recommended that the teacher education curriculum be revamped and that "such courses should incorporate the developmental stages of pre-service teachers to enhance their learning. They should be educated in supportive and conducive environments in which they expect to educate and groom young students" (Akorede, 2014:88). In another study by Ngara and Ngwarai (2012:462) on pre-service teacher education in Zimbabwe, it was found that "the theory acquired [by student teachers] at colleges and universities was not only unhelpful but also dangerously misleading". In a recent study by Mpofu and Hove (2016) in Zimbabwe, it was found that the theories student teachers are exposed to in colleges and universities do not mean much if they do not guide practice. Furthermore, another study by Tuli and File (2009) on pre-service teacher education in Ethiopia revealed that teacher training institutions in the country ill-prepared teacher trainees for the world of work. The same study also established that there was a mismatch between teacher education and the realities of classroom practice. The professional competencies of the graduates were found to be deficient, their content knowledge unsatisfactory and they were weak in practical teaching. It was also established that university courses were irrelevant to the needs of teachers in schools.

Outside of Africa, Feiman-Nemser (2003) argues that new teachers need to learn relevant subject matter coupled with induction and mentoring in real classroom situations. Feiman-Nemser (2003:27) further argues that "with new teacher learning as our goal, induction becomes an educational intervention that addresses new teachers' learning needs while helping them develop principled teaching practice". A study by Morrison (2016) investigated Australian university-based teacher educators' understandings of the purpose of teaching practice and how these experiences were enacted. The study established that practicum helps student teachers to put theory into practice; develop teaching strategies/practices; provides opportunities for novice teachers to learn about the complexities of teaching and to develop an identity as a teacher.

In most countries, changes in the initial preparation of teachers have established teaching practice as a key component. A study by Field and Field (1994) in England and Wales revealed that teacher training had a mandatory 120 days field-based component. Teachers in schools were entrusted with a lion's share of the responsibility in terms of educating pre-service teachers into the profession. Gowrie and Ramdass (2012), in their study on the pre-service beginning teachers' beliefs and teacher preparation, also draw attention to the fact that teaching practice is mandatory in Trinidad and Tobago among many examples.

Teaching practice (TP) takes various formats in different contexts. Mpofu and Hove (2016:204) define teaching practice as "the period at which students put into practice the teaching skills that they learn at college". In this study, the terms teaching practice, practicum, field-based teaching and attachment are used interchangeably. In some contexts, similar to most states in the USA and Australia (Field & Field, 2009; Sokal, Woloshyn & Funk-Unrau, 2013), pre-service teachers are given their own classes and mentors frequently visit their classes to help them.

In Zimbabwe, student teachers on practicum were initially given full classes and university and college lecturers would regularly visit them to offer assistance. School heads were also responsible for supervising student teachers on attachment (Samkange, 2015). Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) found that from 1980 to 1995 some of the teachers' colleges' pre-service teacher education followed a new model called the Zimbabwe integrated national teacher education course (ZINTEC) (Chivore, 1993; Zvobgo, 2000). The pre-service teachers spent the first 16 weeks of their teacher-training course in college. This phase was intended to "equip students with basic teaching skills..." (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012:462). After this residential phase, student teachers were then deployed into schools for three and a half years. Student teachers on practicum were provided with "distance education materials, vocational courses, seminars and written assignments to beef up trainee teachers' content in theory of education and primary school curriculum teaching subjects" *(*Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012:462).

In 2002, all teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe were placed under the supervision of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education. All teachers' colleges were compelled to follow the same model of teacher training (2-5-2) with a strong teaching practice component (Samkange, 2015). Under the new teacher training model, student teachers spend the initial two school terms in college learning theories of education and content for the various subjects. This phase is then followed by twenty months (five school terms) on teaching practice and the last two terms in college (Mpofu & Hove, 2016). Student teachers on teaching practice under the new model are attached to the same class with a qualified teacher or mentor (Mpofu & Hove, 2016*)*. This study investigated these school-based supervisors' perspectives on their mentoring roles.

Literature places a high premium on the teaching practice component and is viewed as the most critical part of the pre-service teacher education course (Ambrosetti, 2014; Parker, 2010; Sokal *et al.*, 2013). According to Grossman (2010), teaching practice is also known as clinical experience and is critical to pre-service teacher development. According to Grossman (2010), teaching practice accords opportunities for student teachers to develop and hone their craft. Grossman (2010:2) further argues that, "novices need structured opportunities to gain experience in authentic settings of actual teaching practice". In addition, a study by Tuli and File (2009) on pre-service teachers' practicum experience in Ethiopia found that teaching practice provided a firm foundation for pre-service teachers' future professional development and a site where they can practise the art of teaching in real school contexts. Commenting on the importance of teaching practice, Monteiro and Vieira (2016) assert that practicum is important for promoting cohesion between theory and practice in student teachers. Cooper and Wheeler (2010) argue that teaching practice provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn as well as learn to work. In another study, Hamdan (2015) contends that field experiences were an integral part in the initial preparation of teachers in Saudi Arabia. This study also uncovered that student teachers learn more during practicum experiences rather than in their coursework. The student teachers who participated in Hamdan's study felt that their university courses did not adequately prepare them for actual classroom teaching. This refers to the theory-practice gap between pre-service teacher education courses and actual realities of classroom teaching. Therefore, it is no wonder that Chimhenga (2016) supports the view that teaching practice is a critical component in the initial development of teachers. Chimhenga (2016) argues that field experiences are important for the development of pre-service teachers as they provide opportunities for novice teachers to face real teaching situations. In another qualitative case study on practicum experiences, Tuli and File (2009:111) established that teaching practice provided a “flexible linkage and focus across the three learning domains in teacher preparation programs at higher education level – content knowledge, professional knowledge... and the knowledge and skills needed to function as capable and caring professionals in those schools”.

Emerging from the above review of related literature is that teaching practice has become central in teacher education programmes throughout the world and that the success of pre-service teachers’ teaching practice depends on the quality of mentorship they receive from experienced teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; DuFour, 2002 Hamdan, 2015; Parker, 2010). In support of this view, Tuli and File (2009:111) identified eight characteristics of a high quality practicum programme. First, it integrates theoretical knowledge and professional practice across the teacher education programme; that is, through integration of content knowledge, professional knowledge, pedagogical skills and insight. Second, it is implemented as a partnership between teacher training institutions, schools, school systems and relevant teacher professional bodies. Third, it provides clear stages for the development of skills, knowledge, attributes and dispositions student teachers acquire. Fourth, it accords a variety of experiences in real school contexts and varied students. Fifth, it provides clear assessment procedures for the student teachers. Sixth, it incorporates resource needs and implications in its assessment of pre-service teachers. Seventh, it is flexible and promotes innovation and last, it encompasses continuous evaluation and response. Therefore, teaching practice needs to be effectively programmed to enhance quality contextual learning. In light of the above, this study investigated school-based mentors’ perspectives on the mentoring programme of pre-service teachers during teaching practice in Zimbabwe. The next section focuses on how mentoring is conceptualised in various contexts.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF MENTORING

A growing body of literature recognises the importance of mentoring as a key strategy in pre-service teacher education programmes (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Wetzel, Hoffman & Maloch, 2017; Kerry & Mayes, 1995; Ochanji *et al.*, 2015). Sundli (2007) describes this growing popularity in mentoring pre-service teachers as a new mantra for education. However, in spite of increasing popularity of mentorship, many studies indicate that there are a range of definitions in the literature showing that currently there is no consensus regarding its precise meaning and functions (Genc, 2016; McMahan & Garza, 2017; Mudzielwana, 2014). In part, this study attempts to unpack the meaning of the term "mentoring" with reference to the initial development of pre-service teachers.

In a recent study by Wetzel *et al.* (2017), the term "mentor" refers to individual teachers who are given the responsibility of guiding and supporting pre-service teachers in their development of practical knowledge for teaching. In the same study, these scholars argue that historically, "mentor" was used to describe a trusted and faithful individual given the task of advising and protecting a novice entering a new practice or role. They traced the root meaning of the term "mentor" from Greek mythology. In Homer's Odyssey, Mentor was entrusted to take care and guide Odysseus' son, Telemachus, when he was away fighting in the Trojan War (Pennanen *et al.,* 2015). The term can now be used in education where experienced and expert teachers are given the role of guiding pre-service teachers on teaching practice in the development of teaching competences.

Many recent studies (Ambrosetti, 2014; Eryilmaz & Aypay, 2016; Alnajjar, 2016; Moses *et al.,* 2015) have shown that mentoring is a relationship between two people, a protégé and a mentor. Pennanen *et al.* (2015) argues that the word mentor has currently gained a fluid currency and may be used to refer to a person who plays the role of guide or advisor to a young and inexperienced person, a counsellor, a patron or sponsor. These scholars further argue that the term mentor suggests elements of authority, superiority and power. In their book, Kerry and Mayes (1995) argue that the common elements of mentoring include teaching and support, intentionally nurturing the novice, transmitting wisdom and role modelling.

Pennanen *et al.* (2015) argue that in a traditional sense, mentoring was used to describe the relationship between a protégé and a mentor. However, this has been vehemently criticised for projecting a conservative view of learning and a linear transmission of knowledge in asymmetrical power relations between people. Previous studies on mentoring have found a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is a senior partner (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Roff, 2012; Sempowicz & Hudson, 2012). Thus, Whitebook and Bellm (2014:14) state that, “mentoring is a relationship based on adult learning strategy intended to promote and support a teacher’s awareness and refinement of her professional learning process and teaching practices”.

Other studies have defined mentoring as support given by expert teachers to pre-service teachers that promotes and enhances the development of professional knowledge (Fink & Rensick, 2001; Gray, Wright & Pascoe, 2017; Heeralal, 2014; Helgevold, Naesheim-Bjorkvik & Ostrem, 2015). In his study, Orland-Barak (2014) argues that mentors are pre-service teachers’ local guides, educational companions and agents of change. In her study, Ambrosetti (2014) views mentoring as complex but a mutually beneficial relationship whereby a more experienced teacher provides professional support and guidance to a less experienced teacher. In their study on mentoring in Zimbabwe, Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) found that mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable competent person is paired or assigned to a novice for the purposes of helping him / her develop professional skills. What is, however, unclear from the study is how that support is provided, and what the challenges and opportunities are for the pre-service teachers to develop the much-needed teaching competences; a gap this study attempts to fill.

Several studies gleaned in the literature therefore reveal a range of conceptions about mentoring. According to Larson (2009), mentoring is traditionally defined as a process whereby an experienced and mature person provides information, advice and emotional support to a less experienced individual for a certain period of time. This, in a sense, equates favourably to what may be understood as the apprenticeship concept of mentoring. This may be justified because it emphasises the experience of the teachers as critical in guiding the novice. In their study of mentoring, Bradbury and Kobbala (2008) conceive mentoring as a form of apprenticeship, especially when referring to initial teacher education. Bradbury (2010) reinforces this conception by arguing that currently learning to be a teacher takes place largely because the novice teacher is exposed to skilful cooperating teachers. The experienced teachers draw on their experience and expertise to support student teachers develop professional knowledge and relevant teaching skills. However, in many of the studies reviewed, mentors have been given very little chance if any to express how and what they understand mentoring to be. They have not been given a chance to articulate their own perspectives.

Scanlon (2008) brings to the fore another way of conceptualising mentoring as a process of induction or socialisation. Pre-service teachers on practicum are inducted into the norms and practices of the school and school system. Similarly, Lai (2005) views mentoring as a process of skill acquisition, closely linked to technical activities. Mentoring understood this way also suggests that it is a process of enculturation in to the school world. For this way, mentoring is conceived of from a deficit perspective where student teachers on teaching practice in schools have nothing to contribute or change as they are expected to accept everything they are taught by their mentors.

The above conception of mentoring as induction sharply contradicts the conception by Bradbury (2010). The latter's conception advances the view that the mentor and the mentee bring something into the relationship, thus bringing in a new dimension of mentoring, as a collaborative and egalitarian relationship whereby expertise and professional knowledge brought in by both partners is more important than age and experience. This perspective regards mentoring as non-hierarchical since both partners view themselves as equals (Kafai *et al.,* 2008).

Closely aligned to the above is the critical constructivist perspective of mentoring. The critical constructivists argue that the aim of mentoring is the active and joint construction of knowledge and justification of ideas by mentors and their mentees in a collaboratively designed setting (Kincheloe, 2005). Aderibigbe (2013) further argues that mentoring promotes continuous collaborative investigation to understand better teaching and learning needs. Mentoring is thus viewed as collective praxis ingrained in a process of learning amongst teachers and learners. Aderibigbe (2013) additionally argues that in a critical constructivist mentoring process, the mentor and the mentee engage in efforts in examining pedagogical knowledge, sharing ideas and constructing new professional knowledge.

The dominant view though emerging from the literature seems to explain mentoring as a process and a relationship where a less experienced teacher is attached to a more experienced teacher for purposes of learning and developing effective teaching skills and creating an environment conducive to learning and teaching. Smith (2007) found that mentoring develops the whole person and not just some parts. A study by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2012) established that mentoring has three key components, which are context, relationship and process. They further uncovered that mentoring is a relationship between a mentor and mentee in a school context for a given time. Other studies on pre-service mentoring established that the mentor-mentee relationship is non-hierarchical and reciprocal in which both participants have something to share and contribute (Heirdsfield *et al.*, 2008; Lai, 2006; Maphalala, 2013). Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) found that mentoring is now quite popular in initiating pre-service teachers into the profession.

Mentoring is conceptualised differently in the literature. However, despite the conceptual fussiness, there are certain common attributes. Emerging from the above and other literature is the view that mentoring constitutes a unique relationship between individuals (Austin, 2002). This suggests that no two mentorship types are similar, as each one has its own unique interpersonal exchanges and patterns of interaction that shape and define it. Jacobi (1991) for example found that some mentoring relationships are life altering, and others are superficial, quite short or even destructive.

Another common feature present in most mentorship relationships is that mentoring is a learning relationship. Literature shows that the goals of mentoring may be completely different, but in the final analysis, they all involve some form of learning (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Jacobi, 1991). All forms of mentoring involve the acquisition of knowledge. Mentoring occurs in highly effective and less effective relationships.

There is a another consensus in the literature above that mentoring is defined as a process (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hudson, 2010; Jacobi, 1991) and defined by the various types of support the mentor accords the mentee. There is growth in the relationship and generally mentoring is classified as psychological (e.g. friendship, support, acceptance) and instrumental or career related (coaching, advocacy, information, sponsorship).

Mentoring is reciprocal yet asymmetrical (Ambrosetti, 2014). Jacobi (1991) argues that although the mentor and the mentee benefit from the relationship, the primary aim is the growth and development of the novice. In a mentoring relationship, the mentee tends to benefit more than the mentor does. Jacobi (1991) asserts that mentees report of intangible (an increase in self-esteem, improved work or school attitudes) and tangible (quick promotion rates, improved academic and professional achievement) benefits. On the other hand, mentors generally report intangible benefits such as psychological satisfaction and a sense of professional renewal.

Finally yet importantly, mentoring is viewed as a dynamic process that unfolds over time. Jacobi (1991) argues that the impact of mentoring increases with the passage of time. This suggests that for mentoring to be effective, the issue of duration needs to be taken into account.

In a qualitative study conducted in Israel by Leshem (2012), it was found that mentoring has four types of relationships, namely evolving relationship, learning relationship, relationship of compliance and coaching relationship. An evolving relationship gradually develops into an agreement of acceptance. In this type of relationship, the mentor and the mentee learn to trust each other and accept that they may differ in their opinions and that they both develop and come to know and understand each other over time. According to Leshem (2012), a learning relationship is characterised by congruence of perspectives between the mentor and the mentee. More specifically, the relationship is dialogical with both partners learning from each other. In a relationship of compliance, the mentee unquestioningly accepts everything said or done by the mentor. In a coaching relationship, the mentor helps and supports the protégé through demonstrating how specific teaching skills are executed. There is thus an issue of modelling at play.

What seems to emerge from the above studies is that mentors are knowledgeable teachers entrusted to guide novice teachers in their professional growth. It is unclear from these studies whether any in-experienced teacher can be given the responsibility of mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum. In their study on mentoring, McMahan and Garza (2017) found that mentors are qualified teachers trained for a specific teacher development programme. Studies conducted by Chakanyuka (2006), Marimo (2014) and Samkange (2015) on mentoring in the Zimbabwean context established that mentors are experienced and certified teachers tasked to initiate student teachers on teaching practice into the teaching profession. In studies by Heeralal (2014), and Tok and Yilmaz (2011), it was established that mentors are teachers trained to handle a specific teacher development programme. Hudson (2013b) argues that for mentoring to be successful, mentors should be trained for the tasks they will perform. He recommended training of mentors as critical in order to enhance their communication skills and leadership roles. In their study, Tang and Choi (2007) found that mentors rarely received training to be mentors. Whether teachers selected as mentors in the context of Zimbabwe are trained or not remains a question to be answered by the participants involved in this study.

In their study on mentoring pre-service teachers in Kenya, Moses *et al.* (2015) made a distinction between the corporate model (traditional model) and the collaborative professional development model (improved collaborative model). These are the two commonly used models in most countries though with minor variations to suit their respective context.

The corporate model: According to Moses *et al.* (2015:313), the corporate model is “regarded as the basic and traditional model that has been used in many parts of the world. This model is still persistent in developing countries for various reasons. It is economical and can be managed...” In this model, pre-service teachers apply for schools they wish to do their teaching practice and the university/college coordinator posts them to those schools. The deployment of the student teachers is determined by the needs of the schools. Student teachers are selected for practicum according to the subjects “where there is a shortage” (ibid.). Below is a diagrammatic representation of the corporate mentoring model.

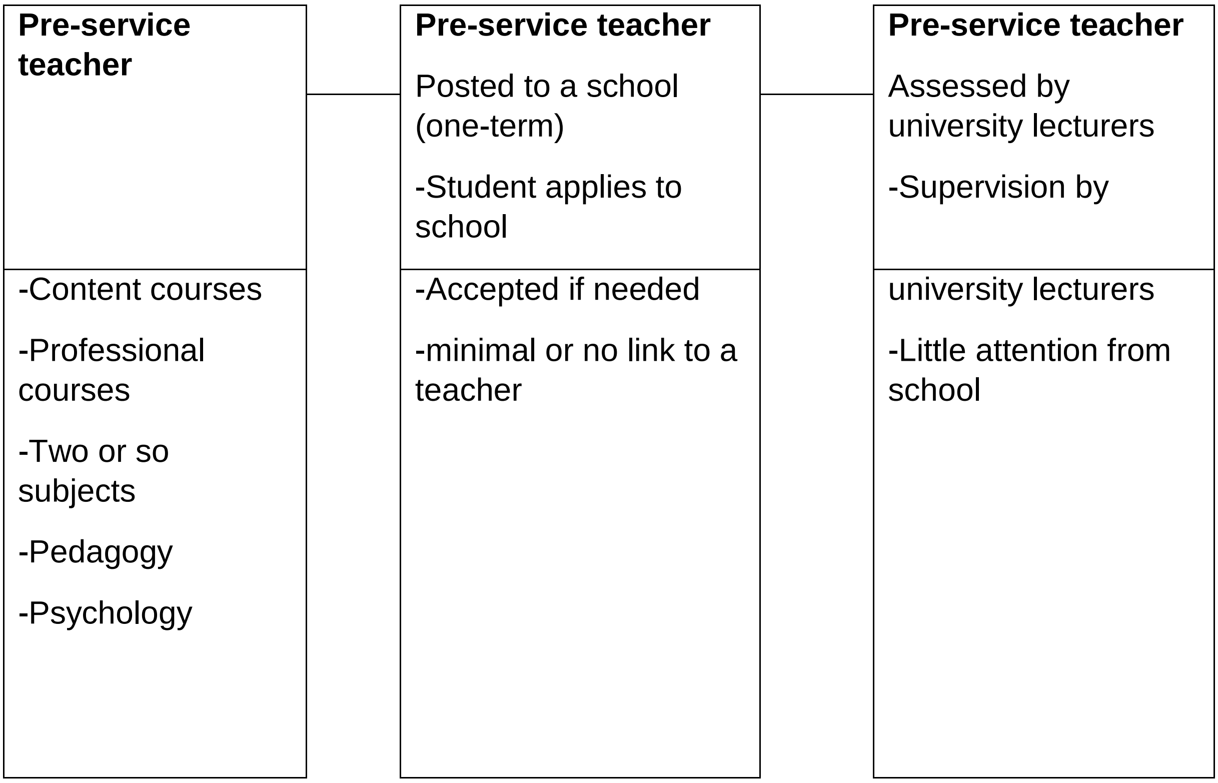
Pre-service teacher
-Content courses
-Professional courses
-Two or so subjects
-Pedagogy
-Psychology
Pre-service teacher
Posted to a school (one-term)
-Student applies to school
-Accepted if needed
-minimal or no link to a teacher
Pre-service teacher
Assessed by university lecturers
-Supervision by university lecturers
-Little attention from school

Figure 2.1: **The corporate mentoring model** (Adapted from Moses *et al.*, (2015:313)

According to this model, student teachers may be placed in schools where there is no other teacher in the subject area. The pre-service teacher is given a class on his/her own; hence, there may be no guidance. Moses *et al.* (2015:313) argue that under this model the student teacher receives minimum help and most of the time they learn through trial and error: "There is almost no interaction with the teachers in the administration. Even where there is a cooperating teacher who is supposed to guide the pre-service teacher, experience has shown that in some schools, the cooperating teacher simply takes leave and or abandons the practicing teacher to go it alone". Lecturers from the university or college directly assess the student teacher and the school administrators have almost nothing to do with the student teacher. This model was used in Zimbabwe from 1981 to 1995 during the ZINTEC period (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). This study investigates mentoring in Zimbabwe after 1995 when pre-service teachers were attached to the same class with a fulltime mentor.

The collaborative professional model: According to Moses *et al.* (2015), the university/college coordinator is responsible for finding schools to place student teachers for their practicum in this model. Student teachers are placed in schools where there are mentors willing to guide the student teacher who is regularly supervised by college lecturers during routine supervisory visits. University/college lecturers regularly hold conferences with mentors and students. The mentor and the lecturer jointly arrive at the final grade to be awarded to the student during final assessment. Below is a diagrammatic presentation of the collaborative professional model.

Pre-service teacher	**Pre-service teacher** Placed in school with identified mentor	**Pre-service teacher** -Guided by a mentor -Supervised occasionally by lecturer
--Content courses -Professional courses -Two or so subjects -Pedagogy	-Student placed in school -Linked to a mentor	-Guided by a mentor most of the time -Mentor and lecturer hold conferences -Mentor and lecturer jointly arrive at the final grade

Figure 2.2: **The collaborative professional model** (Adapted from Moses *et al.*, 2015:314).

This study investigated mentoring of pre-service teachers in Zimbabwe using a model almost similar to the collaborative professional model. The only difference being that the mentors do not assess their mentees. It is however still not clear from this model how the mentors actually enacted their roles.

In their synthesis of research on mentoring, Gray and Gray (2010) uncovered that there is no fixed rule or criteria in selecting mentor teachers. These scholars, however, recommend that mentors need to be veteran and competent teachers with expertise, commitment and time to channel assistance to pre-service teachers. Similarly, in their study on mentoring, Freedman and Jaffe (1993) also found that in their context, mentors either volunteer to guide novice teachers or are simply appointed by principals. These scholars, however, argue that not every teacher can be a mentor. Acknowledging that there is no consensus on how mentors should be selected to lead pre-service teachers during teaching practice, they advised that those selected should possess certain skills and abilities beneficial to the development of novice teachers. To these scholars, those selected as mentors should be teachers who are people oriented, open-minded and flexible with the capacity to engage in collaborative work with new teachers. Similarly, Hudson and Hudson (2010) argue that mentors should be selected based on their competence or knowledge and ability to teach or interact with less experienced teachers such as pre-service teachers on teaching practice. In addition, Hudson and Hudson, (2010) maintain that teaching experience and qualifications also need to be considered when assigning teachers to mentor student teachers during practicum.

In his qualitative study on the mentoring of language pre-service teachers, Genc (2016) found that school heads had the mandate of selecting and assigning mentees to mentors. This study further established that school heads did not rely on sound criteria in the selection of mentors. In another study by Ambrosetti (2012), it was revealed that school heads chose mentors for pre-service teachers on practicum. Several studies indicate that those chosen to be mentors were classroom-based teachers (Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015; Heeralal, 2014; Hudson, 2013). Hobson *et al.* (2012:70) argue that mentors should be “selected for their deep expertise, extensive experience, and a planned match with candidates from the similar subject area and grade level”. In her qualitative study on mentoring in Australia, Ambrosetti (2014) found that classroom-based teachers are relied upon to be mentors for pre-service teachers on teaching practice. It was further established that teachers who are experienced and have demonstrated high level teaching skills were assigned to mentor pre-service teachers. However, Ambrosetti argues that being an effective teacher does not necessarily mean one will be an effective mentor.

There is no consensus in the literature regarding well-established rules and procedures on the selection of mentors to guide student teachers on teaching practice. In their study on mentoring relationships, Russell and Russell (2011:4), however, found six characteristics that need to be considered when selecting mentors for pre-service teachers and these are: (a) willingness to facilitate growth, (b) preparedness to share knowledge, (c) competences, (d) honesty, (e) ability to provide critical and constructive feedback and (f) ability to deal with inexperienced teachers. In his book on mentoring novice teachers, Jonson (2002) argues that the starting point in the selection of mentors is to consider qualifications, experience in teaching and ability to deal with adult learning. In addition, Jonson (2002) suggests that other issues to consider when choosing a mentor should be skilfulness in the transmission of effective teaching strategies, being knowledgeable and conversant with the primary school curriculum and personality traits such as wisdom, caring, nurturing and humour. Rowley (1999) provides a synthesis of qualities of an effective mentor: commitment to mentoring, accommodative, effective instructional leader, good interpersonal skills, effective communicator and role model. Upon the recommendation of The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010), mentors should be selected based on their expertise and extensive experience. However, a study by Wasonga, Wanzare and Dawo (2015) established that there are no hard and fast rules in choosing mentors for pre-service teachers on teaching practice. Consequently, these scholars argue in favour of selecting mentors with three to five years teaching experience, teaching the same grade level with the ability to teach others how to teach learners effectively. In their qualitative study on mentoring pre-service teachers in primary schools in Zimbabwe, Majoni and Nyaruwata (2015:3700) found that the school heads selected or assigned student teachers on teaching practice to mentors without consulting them. They also established that, “there was absence of criteria for selection of mentors who had ... student teachers”. These two scholars recommend that mentors should possess certain competences such as “understanding the learning process, and understanding the developmental needs of mentees...problem-solving skills, technical skills and recognising the mentoring boundary” (ibid). In another study on mentoring in Zimbabwe, Mpofu and Hove (2016) found that some student teachers were attached to school heads or deputy heads as relief teachers. In yet another study on mentoring in Zimbabwe, Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) found that attributes of an effective mentor were being knowledgeable of the teaching profession and teaching in primary schools, having wisdom, being warm, approachable and ethical. This suggests that the concerned school heads did not understand the purpose of the mentoring programme; hence, such student teachers benefitted little from their practicum as these administrators were usually away, leaving mentees on their own.

Mpofu and Hove (2016) advise that school administrators should not be assigned mentoring roles.

In a study by Wilder (1992), it was established that in the USA context, mentors were selected according to set criteria by each state. The study established that those selected to be mentors in each state were teachers who had demonstrated high level teaching competencies. An interesting finding from this study was that those selected to be mentors had to apply for mentoring posts and their applications were to be accompanied by supporting documentation. In most states mentors had to undergo a rigorous screening interview as part of the selection process. In states such as Arizona, Florida and North Carolina, soon after their selection, mentors were immediately trained for their new responsibilities. Wilder (1992) found that commonly listed topics in mentor training programmes included effective teaching, observing, classroom management, curriculum planning, how adults earn, supervision and support. The training also included issues concerning responsibilities and expectations of mentors and mentees. In another study by Brady and Broadbent (2007), it was established that there was no clear criteria on mentor selection. However, this study recommended that mentors should be selected based on specific attributes such as experience and not age, knowledge and awareness of latest developments in teaching, effective communication and competence in teaching. However, Ambrosetti (2014) has argued that excellent teachers are not necessarily good mentors.

According to Ross *et al.* (2010:10), one secret for effective mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum lies in the selection of coaches and mentors “who have the time and desire to work with novice teachers”. Their study established that when selecting mentors one should go beyond “skills and content knowledge but also have desire and commitment to work with a novice” (ibid). Similarly, in a study by Ackley and Gall (1992), in 22 states in the USA it was found that school principals had no standardised criteria for selecting mentors for pre-service teachers on practicum. Their study established that principals ranked highly general skills such as social process skills of interpersonal ease, listening skills and knowledge of educational content to be considered when selecting mentors. In the same study, principals said that mentors should have specific skills such as modelling, confidence building, trust/rapport and willingness to give support to mentees. This study investigates all these issues in order to determine how mentors of pre-service teachers on teaching practice are selected.

2.4 ROLE OF MENTORS

The consensus among scholars seem to be attaching pre-service teachers to experienced and expert teachers during practicum has a positive effect on novice teachers' professional growth (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Sheridan & Nguyen, 2015; Smith & Lynch, 2014). This section reviews literature on the role of mentors, mentoring practices and the various forms of support mentors receive in their various contexts. Mentors are important in the initial development of teachers as they are responsible for the induction of pre-service teachers, especially during practicum.

Hierdsfield *et al.* (2008) argue that the mentors' roles are often described in non-specific terms. Sundli (2007) uncovered that there are several terms used to describe the roles of mentors such as guide, advisor, sharer, supporter, counsellor, instructor and encourager. Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) contend that the role played by mentors in the initial development of pre-service teachers is not properly documented. Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014) found in their study that although mentors are critical in the initial development of teachers, the role of mentors remains unclear.

A study by Izadinia (2015) on pre-service teachers' evaluation of their mentors unpacked several roles mentors play such as carer, helper, sharer, support system, trouble shooter and counsellor. In another study on mentoring by Hudson and Hudson (2016), it was established that mentors play a critical supportive role, especially in terms of goal setting, enabling the development of reflective practices, modelling effective teaching strategies, giving feedback and guiding mentees. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010) recommended that mentors should play the important role of sharing their experiences with mentees, modelling effective teaching practices and providing clear advice and expectations to novice teachers. Jonson (2002) and Izadinia's (2015) studies on mentoring established that mentors provided technical support and feedback to mentees as a way of helping them develop their teaching styles. Providing support to pre-service teachers on teaching practice was found to help them develop confidence to take risks and experiment with new approaches in the classroom. Izadinia (2015) identifies two types of support mentors provide to their mentees during practicum, namely instructional related support and psychological support. Instructional support relates to knowledge, strategies and skills mentors develop in their mentees and psychological support has to do with enhancing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of effectiveness. In terms of instructional support, it was found that mentors assist their mentees in designing their schemes of work and developing effective lesson plans. On the other hand, psychological support facilitates the ease of fitting into and realistic exposure to school life.

The roles of mentors in mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice are multidimensional and diverse. A qualitative study by Liu (2014) on excellent mentor teachers' skills in mentoring for pre-service teachers established that several terms are being used to replace the role of mentors. The terms used are guide, advisor, counsellor, instructor, sharer, supporter and encourager. The same study also unpacked other mentor roles such as the provision of pedagogical guidance, emotional support, professional socialisation and role model. In another qualitative study that explores the roles and responsibilities of mentors during teaching practice, Mudzielwana (2014) found that mentors assisted mentees in numerous areas such as teaching and learning, assessment of learners' work and classroom management. In the same study, it was established that mentors helped their mentees in developing teaching skills, professional conduct and providing them with information about the culture of the school and community. Other mentor roles established in the same study included guiding student teachers in the effective use of time, developing lesson plans and effective lesson delivery through modelling and exchanging notes on professional experiences. In her study on mentoring, Ambrosetti (2014) found that mentors provided support for mentees in the form of feedback, constructing enabling learning environments and showing mentees how to teach effectively and in the process enhancing quick development of their skills. In their study on mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) also established that the key roles of mentors revolved around nurturing, counselling, guiding and supervising. Hall *et al.* (2008) found that mentors supervise and assess student teachers on teaching practice. However, Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) argue that mentors should not assess their mentees as it negatively affects the mentoring relationship. Whether mentor teachers across the Zimbabwean context also play such critical roles remains to be established. Fink and Brayman (2006) view mentors as instructional leaders who should lead in mentoring programmes.

A study on mentoring in the United States of America by Wilder (1992) uncovered several mentor roles. Wilder categorised mentors' roles into three broad categories, namely provision of professional support – that is socialisation of the mentee into the profession; provision of technical support and personal support. In the same study, it was found that a number of verbs were used to describe the function of mentors. These verbs included "assisting, guiding, modelling, advising, instructing, demonstrating, coaching, observing, supporting, meeting, documenting, providing feedback ..." (Wilder, 1992:7). In addition, the mentor assisted their mentees with a range of specific teaching techniques, how to locate resources, planning the curriculum and preparing for evaluation. Wilder (1992) found that in most states in the USA, the mentor plays a critical role in socialising mentees into the culture of the classroom, school, district as well as the profession. Mentors modelled appropriate teaching approaches and provided their mentees with resources and instructional materials. Mentors also provided mentees with advice in non-instructional matters such as classroom management, construction of report cards, organising and handling parent conferences and relations with school authorities. Observing and provision of constructive feedback on the novice's teaching and offering solutions to specific problems were some of the roles mentors enacted. Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) found that the mentors played several critical roles, and those viewed by participants in their study as critical included counsellor, guide, role model, empowering the mentee and provider of constant feedback.

Whilst the literature above has shown that mentors' roles are many and diverse in nature, it is unclear from these studies how they are enacted on practise. Hudson and Hudson (2016) argue that the success of any mentoring relationship hinges on how mentors and mentees enacted their roles. In their study, the two scholars uncovered that mentoring can be successful if the mentor takes the initiative to construct a positive relationship with the mentee. Establishing rapport, acknowledging skills, being supportive and mutual respect were also found to be necessary ingredients for a productive mentoring relationship. In the same study, Hudson and Hudson (2016) also established that modelling essential teaching skills by the mentor is important in the development of pre-service teachers' teaching competences. The study by Ambrosetti (2012) found that mentors enacted their roles by providing opportunities for mentees to design, teach and reflect on their teaching. Jonson (2002) identified six strategies employed by mentors in enacting their mentoring roles. These strategies involved the use of direct assistance, demonstration of teaching, observation and feedback, informal contact, development and use of an action plan for professional growth and role modelling.

In terms of direct assistance to mentees, the mentors help them in constructing and developing a record keeping system for their documents as well as providing them with information about the rules and norms of their schools and community. Mentors also directly assist their mentees in classroom management and maintaining discipline as well as socialising within the school (Jonson, 2002). Mentors also prepare and teach demonstration lessons using specific techniques while their mentees observe. In addition, they set goals for the observation and then hold post-demonstration meetings. After discussions, the mentee makes plans to practise the skills demonstrated. Liu (2014) also found out that mentors use demonstration lessons as a way of developing their mentees' lesson delivery skills.

Observation and feedback, according to Jonson (2002), involve mentors observing their mentees teaching learners. Jonson, (2002) established that this strategy comprise the mentor and the protégé holding a pre-observation conference, followed by actual observation of teaching and, finally, a post-observation conference. During the pre-observation meeting, the concerns of the mentees are identified and translated into observable behaviours; observation goals are set and a time for observation agreed upon. During the observation, the mentor writes down issues that will form the basis of the post-observation conference.

Jonson (2002) found out that informal contact between the mentor and mentee is an important strategy used by mentors in enacting their roles. During informal discussions, mentees are free to open up and disclose their concerns. Drawing up an action plan for professional growth has been found to be a common strategy practised by mentors in developing the various professional competences of the mentees. The action plans are flexible and can be revised or modified as need be. Jonson (2002) advises that the action should not be used as an evaluation tool. In addition, Jonson (2002) argues that mentors should not play the role of evaluator for their mentees. Instead, he advised that mentors should play the role of sponsor, consultant, facilitator and role model.

In his qualitative study on student teachers' perspectives on mentoring practices in Zimbabwean secondary schools, Chimhenga (2016) found that mentors developed their mentees' skills in teaching through modelling and observation. Chimhenga (2016:406) established that, "during the period of teaching practicum, student teachers observe their mentors' professional behaviour in class, relationship with students, classroom management techniques, behaviour management, teaching methods and strategies, and assessment practices". More specifically, Chimhenga's study suggests that mentors' practices in this study were largely dominated by pre-service teachers learning through observation. Through modelling, Chimhenga (2016) argues that student teachers were able to develop various skills and behaviours such as questioning skills, confidence in teaching and classroom control, student assessment skills, designing effective lesson plans, preparing examination questions and organising group work. The current study however focuses on school-based mentors' perspectives on mentoring in primary schools in Zimbabwe.

In a study by Pennanen *et al.* (2015) in Australia, it was found that the teacher education system had teaching standards and competencies for teachers. Mentoring in this context was focused on developing in mentees those skills specified by the Ministry of Education. The mentors enacted their roles by formulating a shared purpose for mentoring together with their mentees. A set of personal performance indicators that the mentee "wants to work on" was agreed upon. Following this, the mentor modelled the identified skills while the mentees observed. The novice teachers were then given time to practise the skills under the guidance of their mentors who would be observing them and providing critical feedback in the post-observation conference. Of interest here was that mentoring was focused on accomplishing a set of pre-determined skills and performances.

Soininen and Merisuo-Storm (2014) identified mentoring models being used in various contexts in the initial development of pre-service teachers: apprenticeship model, competency model and reflective model. In the apprenticeship model, also known as master apprentice model, the mentor plays the role of a model. Trainee teachers observe experienced teachers in their work and form ideas about the process of teaching. The competency model, also called the clinical supervision model, entails mentees learning to teach by practising teaching strategies and techniques under the observation of mentors. The reflective model requires mentees to critically evaluate and justify different ways of teaching in order to develop and extend their teaching repertoires and, at the same time, develop a deeper understanding of the process of teaching.

Mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum needs to be properly organised to enable mentees to develop the necessary skills required for an effective teacher. A study by Alnajjar (2016) on mentoring student teachers on teaching practice established that effective mentoring of pre-service teachers should begin with a warm welcoming of the novice followed by building a sincere and trustworthy relationship. What is unclear from the study is how mentors construct such environments. In part, this study investigates how mentors welcome their mentees to their classrooms. Ambrosetti (2012) suggests that mentor-mentee relationships should be characterised by open dialogue in a non-threatening environment. Other studies (Hoxha, 2016; Moyo, 2002; Samkange, 2015) argue in favour of open and free communication between the mentor and the mentees right from their first contact. Whilst these findings are critical and should characterise mentors' practices, they are unclear as to how mentors establish rapport and a collegial relationship with their mentees in practice; a gap this study attempts to fill. Samkange (2015) and Sanders (2005) support the view that mentoring practices should involve mentors equipping their mentees with critical skills that will enable them to fit into the national education system effectively. What seems to be lacking in these two studies is how mentors should enact such important roles.

Daresh (2003:7) identified four characteristics of successful mentoring. Firstly, mentors that provide powerful advice to assist mentees develop new insights into the profession. Secondly, mentoring that helps to reduce teacher isolation and has the capacity to build a collegial network among professionals. Thirdly, it develops a novice teacher from a level of mere survival to initial success and finally, mentoring that develops commitment in the novice teacher for the job.

Lesson planning and delivery are key skills to be developed by the mentees during teaching practice. Lewis (2017) argues that in terms of lesson planning, mentors should first teach their mentees how to state lesson objectives. Hoxha (2016) found that teaching mentees how to develop effective schemes and lesson plans was a critical initial step in their professional development as teachers. In a study by Chimhenga (2016), it was found that mentors develop various teaching skills in their mentees; for example, questioning skills, confidence in lesson delivery, assessing learners' work, test construction and analysing learners' academic progress. These studies, however, do not provide enough information concerning how mentors should inculcate these important teaching skills in their mentees. Hoxha (2016) further recommends mentors to provide opportunities for mentees to teach and provide them with immediate and constructive feedback in a friendly manner.

In her study on mentoring practices to keep teachers in school in the USA, Parker (2010:112) found that "beginning teachers need to receive support in their early years to assist with the transition to their own classrooms". In addition, in their study on mentoring in the USA, Ross *et al.* (2011:6) uncovered what they referred to as "secrets for mentoring novice teachers". The secrets centred on "lesson planning, classroom management, professional judgement, and school routines and procedures", as noted below.

Provide novice teachers with guidance on strong lesson planning: The study found that novice teachers commencing their first year would have some background in lesson planning. However, participants in this study stressed that lesson planning incorporates judgement that all novice teachers lack. The participants recommended that novice teachers need assistance from mentors to focus on the varied needs of the learners (Ross *et al.*, 2011:6).

Provide ongoing guidance related to classroom management: The teachers who took part in this study stressed that classroom management involves judgement and skills that take considerable time to develop and with practise. The participants added that making classroom management decisions was a difficult task and student teachers on teaching practice needed mentors to help them reflect on their decision (Ross *et al.*, 2011:7)

Provide guidance and support in making professional decisions: It emerged from the participants in this study that currently teachers are provided with an array of resources such as textbooks and curriculum guides. Teachers use their professional judgement in deciding how to use those resources. This may lack in new teachers; hence, they need the guidance of skilled mentors in this process (Ross *et al.*, 2011:8).

Remember to teach novices routine school procedures: The study uncovered that one of the secrets for effective mentoring of pre-service teachers was to familiarise them with the routines and procedures of their practising schools (Ross *et al.*, 2011:8).

Provide frequent opportunities for novice teachers to observe and be observed by experienced teachers: This study established that it was important to provide novice teachers with “opportunities to learn from more experienced teachers ... Here the teachers talked about the value of learning through activities such as observing and team teaching” (Ross *et al.*, 2011:11).

Use modelling to help novice teachers learn important teaching skills: The study discovered that pre-service teachers needed to be shown by experienced teachers “what to do and how to do it ... there should be intentional focus on modelling effective teaching as part of structured mentoring activities” (Ross *et al.*, 2011:12).

Provide novice teachers with a reasonable teaching load that supports the needs of new teachers: The study uncovered that one secret for effective mentoring was for school leaders “lightening the load of responsibilities for new teachers and being mindful of the students who are placed into a new teachers’ classroom” (Ross *et al.*, 2011:13).

In their qualitative study on mentoring in higher education, Ekechukwu and Horsfall (2015) found that mentors employed a variety of methods such as modelling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration. Modelling involves the mentor enacting teaching techniques to be emulated by the protégé. Coaching involves observing the student teacher being observed by the mentor performing a given task and getting immediate feedback. Scaffolding suggests teaching the student teacher certain teaching techniques or skills and gradually withdrawing support as the novice teacher gains proficiency. Articulation provides the novice teacher with opportunities to articulate their knowledge, reasoning or problem solving in a given domain. Reflection accords the pre-service teacher time to compare their practices with those of the mentor and finally, exploration where the pre-service teacher is given the chance to frame problems and solving them. However, it is unclear from these findings how the mentors actually enact the above practices.

Student teachers need to be grounded in various techniques and skills needed for the realities of the school and classroom before they are released for their practicum. Several studies on pre-service teacher development uncovered a disconnection between college or university programmes and the realities prevailing in schools (Ambrosetti, 2012; Hoxha, 2016; Samkange, 2015; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). A study by Frost (2013) found that student teachers fail to link the theory they learnt at university with what happens in the schools. Moyo (2002) also established that student teachers on teaching practice needed plenty of support in terms of syllabus interpretation, scheming and lesson planning. Similarly, in a study on student teachers' readiness for teaching practice, Ehrich (2017) uncovered that student teachers had deficiencies in terms of constructing the essential documents needed for effective teaching. In another study, Lewis *et al.* (2017) recommends that mentors need to conduct joint lesson planning sessions to ensure that mentoring becomes more effective. In their study on the quality and relevance of pre-service teacher training programmes, Wasonga *et al.* (2015) established that student teachers are ill prepared for their practicum in schools. They found a limited link between the college curriculum and the job in-practice. In a qualitative study on mentoring of pre-service teachers, Genc (2016) revealed that student teachers on teaching practice faced many challenges in terms of class management, assessing learners' work, time management during lesson delivery and general teaching strategies. Genc (2016) recommends that mentors should focus their help in improving these critical components.

Moir (1990) in *The Handbook for Mentoring Beginning Teachers* (n.d.:16) identified phases she believes "beginning teachers go through during their first year of service" and these are anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, reflection and renewed anticipation. During the survival phase, the novice teacher experiences feelings of inadequacy to the new teaching tasks. Moir (1990) argues that at this stage new teachers need plenty of support from more experienced teachers, in this case their mentors. The disillusionment phase is where the trainee teachers question their competence and their choice of profession. The phase is characterised by differences between theory and the realities of actual teaching. Moir (1990) recommends that new teachers need support to quickly move beyond this phase to prevent the development of a negative mind-set. At the rejuvenation phase, novice teachers “begin to accept the realities of teaching and adjust their teaching practices. They begin to feel a sense of accomplishment...” (Moir 1990:17).The mentors can spur on this sense of competence by acknowledging and celebrating successes and at the same time encourage their mentees in the development of professional excellence. The reflection stage is where beginning teachers reflect on their new achievements and confirm their commitment to the profession. At the renewed anticipation stage, the novice teachers return to their original “enthusiastic anticipation as their teaching career continues” (Moir 1990:17). Their anticipation at this stage is grounded in reality. Whether the mentors involved in this study are aware of these professional development phases and the type of help new teachers to the profession require remains to be seen. This study, in part at least, intends to find the areas mentors say student teachers require more assistance.

2.5 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Mentoring has recently gained popularity as a key strategy in the initial development of pre-service teachers in most countries throughout the world and Zimbabwe is no exception. Mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum has its own challenges. Genc (2016) established that mentors experience serious challenges while enacting their mentoring roles. Genc’s (2016) study uncovered that mentors had problems in maintaining a balance between providing the right amount of support and the freedom that student teachers needed. In the study, mentors expressed that they felt the quality of feedback they gave student teachers was anachronistic. A study by Wasonga *et al.* (2015) found that the mentoring relationship was negatively affected by a lack of resources such as stationery and textbooks that teachers required to plan meaningful lessons for their learners. In a study on mentoring in Zimbabwe, Marimo (2014), Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014), Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) and Samkange (2015) found that poor communication between schools and teachers’ colleges hindered the effective mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice.

In their study, Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) established that student teachers being mentored by school heads, their deputies or sports directors received minimum assistance. These student teachers were often viewed as relief teachers and were often left on their own with a full class. In the Zimbabwean context, student teachers are attached to mentors for five terms in the same class. This study also revealed that one student teacher was left with a mentor who was a temporary and untrained teacher. In the light of such situations, this study sought to investigate, at least in part, challenges encountered in mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum.

A study by Ambrosetti (2014) on mentoring in the Australian context established that mentors faced the problem of increased workload, uncertainty about how to execute their roles and some reported that mentoring was stressful. Similarly, Lynch and Smith (2012) established that mentors in their study felt overloaded with the added mentoring responsibility and that it was stressful to them. In another study by Hobson *et al,* (2009), it was uncovered that most untrained mentors resorted to using their experiences as pre-service teachers as a survival strategy. Hoxha (2016) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) found that most mentors in their studies were not trained for their mentoring tasks. These two studies further uncovered that mentors received minimum support from their universities and heads of schools. The major challenges found from these studies show that mentors ended up resorting to what they saw fit or applicable to their own contexts. In addition, Villegas-Reimers (2003) found that teacher-training institutions were not adequately preparing pre-service teachers for practical realities. This study further established that mentors struggled in guiding their mentees in various aspects of teaching such as developing schemes of work, lesson plans, classroom management and instilling school cultures at their stations. A study by Hudson (2014) established that most mentors were ill prepared for their mentoring roles, as they were not trained for the mentoring task. This study sought to establish whether mentors in Zimbabwean schools were trained or received support from their school authorities.

In one qualitative study by Ehrich (2017), it was found that mentoring is problematic if mentors are untrained and lack continuous support in the form of ongoing workshops. This study recommends that mentors be provided with clear guidelines about expectations and goals of the teacher education programme. Abongdia, Adu and Fonicha (2015) also found that the main challenges faced by mentors in their study were a lack of resources and a lack of knowledge on the part of mentors. The 1996 report by the National Commission on Teaching and American Future (Wasonga *et al.*, 2015) identified a multiplicity of challenges faced by mentors in the USA context. This study reports that there was inadequate time allocated to train teachers; thus, endangering learning of subject matter and how learners learn as well as fragmented and disconnected courses, which were not easy to link with classroom practices and poor role modelling by mentors. Wasonga *et al.* (2015) also found that student teachers were exposed to theoretical courses that had little relevance to classroom practices. Ackley and Gall (1992) also found that mentors in the USA faced problems such as a lack of time, lack of proximity to protégés' classrooms, lack of grade congruence between mentor and mentees, lack of resources, lack of knowledge about adult learning styles and inadequate mentor training as major impediments to effective mentorship programmes. A study by Sokal *et al.* (2013) found that pre-service teachers' training programmes failed to link with practical realities. Furthermore, a study by Chimhenga (2016) on mentoring secondary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice in Zimbabwe revealed that mentors lacked information about mentoring in general and the university mentoring programme in particular. The same study also established that mentees did not take their mentoring seriously, as they viewed it as an opportunity to earn an income. Most mentors were found to be less experienced in guiding student teachers on teaching practice and that some of the mentors had a negative attitude, as they were not remunerated for the extra duties they were doing. In addition, mentors who participated in the study were not trained to guide student teachers on practicum; hence, they lacked mentoring skills, which in turn created problems for the pre-service teachers they were leading. However, the study focused on the mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers on practicum from teachers' colleges and universities.

A study by Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) on mentor and mentee conceptions of mentor roles and qualities in Zimbabwe, uncovered that mentors faced several challenges such as a lack of basic knowledge on principles of planning by mentees. This was a serious problem, as mentors had to start anew in terms of developing their mentees. The study also revealed that mentors were not trained and unaware of what they were expected to do to help novice teachers. Other challenges the study unpacked included problems of role conflict and a lack of support in performing their roles. It is unclear whether these challenges are still prevailing.

There is a growing consensus in literature that mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum has several benefits for the mentors and the mentees (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson, 2016; Paris, 2013 Roff, 2012, Samkange, 2015). These studies reveal that mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice provided mentors with opportunities for self-reflection on existing practices and personal growth. Ambrosetti (2014) found that mentors had opportunities of improving their own practices, renewing their enthusiasm for teaching and enhanced collegiality. In another qualitative study on mentoring pre-service teachers, Roff (2012) uncovered that mentoring was a vehicle through which mentors achieved midlife generativity. Mentors enhanced their own planning and teaching skills when they planned together with their mentees. Roff (2012) concluded that mentoring succeeds in contexts where there is collaboration, co-planning and co-teaching with novice teachers. In a study on mentoring pre-service teachers in the Australian context, Hobson (2016) found several benefits for mentors such as mentors being given first preference to attend training courses organised by the university, gaining new teaching ideas and perspectives, learning new and improved teaching styles and strategies and enhancing their proficiency in the use of information and communication technology. The study further uncovered that mentors become more knowledgeable about novice teachers and their professional development needs. Mentors guiding student teachers on teaching practice were also found to experience less feelings of isolation as teachers enjoyed collaboration during mentoring of student teachers. Furthermore, the study established that mentors increased their own confidence in teaching and improved relationships with pupils and colleagues. Wasonga *et al.* (2015) also found similar findings in their study on mentoring beginning teachers. They established that mentoring provided mentors with positive professional growth, improved classroom teaching skills, opportunities to reflect on their own teaching and beliefs about teaching and professional renewal. In another study by Ackley and Gall (1992), it was found that mentors enjoyed the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the mentees, it was an increased opportunity for personal and professional growth and it was an opportunity to help someone as important benefit from mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilised the cognitive apprenticeship theory as a lens to understand school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum. Piaget founded the theory that Collins *et al.* (1989) later developed, and provided a framework for understanding how pre-service teachers on teaching practice develop the pertinent thinking and problem-solving competences necessary for mastery at a given task. In this case, the task was the development of skills for teaching the whole primary school curriculum. Collins *et al.* (1989:454) posit that the cognitive apprenticeship theory "embeds the learning of skills and knowledge in their social and functional context". In this case, student teachers on practicum were engaged in learning contextually relevant reasoning, thinking and instructional decision making skills on how to implement the primary school curriculum in real classrooms.

Traditionally, before formal schooling was introduced, learning was based on apprenticeship. Experts in specific fields trained novices through an apprenticeship (Collins *et al.*, 1989). In a study of a tailor shop in Africa, Lave (1988) established that traditional apprenticeship largely focused on specific methods of carrying out tasks in a particular domain. The development of specific skills was instrumental in accomplishing meaningful world tasks. The trainees in Lave (1988)'s study were trained to make garments in real tailoring shops and the training involved a step-by-step process ending with mastery in garment making. Expert tailors guided trainees through the whole process. In this case, learning was embedded in a social and functional context. During the training, apprentices learnt specific skills through a combination of observation, coaching and practise. The apprentices repeatedly observed the experts executing (modelling) the target processes that had interrelated sub-skills. The apprentices were then given the opportunity to execute the process under close guidance and help from the master (coaching). Apprentices performed the skills repeatedly and the masters reduced help gradually as mastery developed (fading). Collins and colleagues updated the concept of apprenticeship, called it "cognitive apprenticeship" and applied it in education. The focus with the new approach is now on the development of cognitive skills and processes. Learners are called upon to observe, enact and practise skills exhibited by experts in real learning contexts. In this case, student teachers on practicum observe the behaviours of experienced teachers (mentors) and emulate them until mastery is achieved. Today formal schooling and on-the-job training have replaced apprenticeship. Collins *et al.* (1989) argue that cognitive apprenticeship is a model of instruction that traces back to apprenticeship but now incorporates elements of schooling.

Pre-service teachers on practicum were attached to experienced and qualified teachers for a period of five terms (twenty months) to develop and experience the teaching craft. Collins *et al.* (1989:457) argue that, “cognitive apprenticeship refers to the focus on learning-through-guided-experience, on cognitive and meta-cognitive, rather than physical skills and processes”. Furthermore, Collins *et al.* (1989) argue that the cognitive apprenticeship model utilises such methods as, modelling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration, which they describe as follows:

Modelling: This method involves the expert performing a task while the novice observes and at the same time, builds a conceptual model of the processes needed to accomplish the task (Collins *et al.*, 1989). Bandura (1978) argues that modelling involves demonstration, rehearsal and enacting the skill as required. In this case, a mentor may model a specific teaching approach while being observed by the mentee.

Coaching: The expert observes the novice performing a task while closely watching and providing “hints, challenges, scaffolding, feedback, modelling, reminders, and new tasks aimed at bringing their performance closer to expert performance” (Collins *et al.*, 1989:51). In this case, the mentor allows the mentee to teach pupils in a given subject, observes the processes and then provides constructive feedback. Dennen (2000) argues that coaching and mentoring refer to the same thing. However, the difference is that mentoring is rather general in nature whereas, coaching focuses on the development of specific skills.

Scaffolding: This refers to support given to a novice by the expert in the form of suggestions or help. The expert gradually fades away leaving the novice in control of the situation as skills are being mastered. Vygotsky (1978) comes up with two key concepts on how learners develop skills, namely scaffolding and zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development refers to what a novice cannot do alone but can perform the task if assisted by an expert peer or in this case a mentor. Scaffolding refers to the expert breaking down a complex situation into manageable activities and tasks for easy mastering by the novice.

Articulation: According Collins *et al.* (1989), articulation includes any method used to get learners explicitly specifying their knowledge, reasoning or problem solving procedures in a domain. In this regard, student teachers on teaching practice are asked to explain or provide a rationale for their decisions.

Reflection: The learners are required to compare their problem solving approaches with those of the expert. Reflection provides opportunities for self-correction and improvement.

An apprentice learns from experts in a real world context. Collins *et al.* (1989) argue that, traditionally, apprentices were seconded to actual contexts in which experts perform the required skills. In this regard, student teachers in Zimbabwe are attached to mentors in actual school settings or classrooms for a period of twenty months (five school terms). This brings to the fore another key concept of the cognitive apprenticeship model, which is *situated learning*. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) assert that novices are brought into real environments reflecting the nature of such tasks in the real world. This suggests that pre-service teachers on practicum have easy access to several experts (experienced teachers) or models in the schools they are seconded. According to McLellan (1994), cognitive apprenticeship is one example of situated learning that involves learners in a community of practice. Learning in this community of practice is largely through engaging in actual activities and interaction with peers. More specifically, ZPD suggests learning goes on through interaction between an expert and a novice. The concept promotes guided participation.

Some studies have also utilised the cognitive apprenticeship theory to understand how novice practitioners developed skills in specific domains. Dickey (2007) utilised the cognitive apprenticeship model to understand barriers and enablers in the integration of a web-based educational technology course for K–12 (primary and secondary) teacher education. The study revealed that modelling was supported using text-based models and exemplars of lesson plans. In another study, Collins (1991) used the cognitive apprenticeship model as a lens for understanding the teaching craft of reading, writing and mathematics. Cheng (2014) also utilised the cognitive apprenticeship theory as a framework in understanding the implementation and evaluation of a teacher training programme. This study employed the cognitive apprenticeship model to understand mentors' perspectives on mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a review of related literature on mentoring of pre-service teachers from different studies during their teaching practice. The review revealed that teaching practice is a key component in the preparation of pre-service teachers. There is no consensus in the literature regarding the definition of mentoring and how mentors are selected. Literature reviewed also uncovered the challenges and opportunities experienced by mentors in the implementation of their roles. The cognitive apprenticeship theory utilised as a lens for understanding the perspectives of school-based supervisors on mentoring student teachers on teaching practice in schools has been explained. The next chapter provides the methodology adopted for this study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research design and methods used for data collection in this study**.** A qualitative methodology was adopted to explore school-based supervisors' perspectives on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe. The discourse focuses on the research approach, data generation method and design adopted in the study. The chapter will also discuss issues of ethics and trustworthiness and provide a chapter summary at the end.

3.2 SETTING OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Masvingo province of Zimbabwe. Out of the country's ten provinces, Masvingo was chosen because it has three primary teachers' colleges, which allows for diversity and comparison in the sample. Masvingo province has seven districts and all the teachers' colleges are located in the Masvingo district. I chose this district because the three colleges deploy most of their students within the district and it was relatively easy for me to access the school-based supervisors, given the limited budget as well as time for this study. The choice of Masvingo district was also informed by literature, which highlights the use of relevant constituencies that illuminate and inform understanding in a qualitative sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Mertens, 2015). That I am a full-time head of one of the teachers' colleges in the district also influenced my choice of the Masvingo district.

All the colleges in Masvingo district follow a 2-5-2 programme under the scheme of association with the University of Zimbabwe (DTE handbook, 2015:5). Student teachers in this programme are placed on teaching practice in schools for 20 months under the mentorship of school-based supervisors. There are 150 primary schools in Masvingo province, that is, 16 urban, 124 rural and 10 on farms.

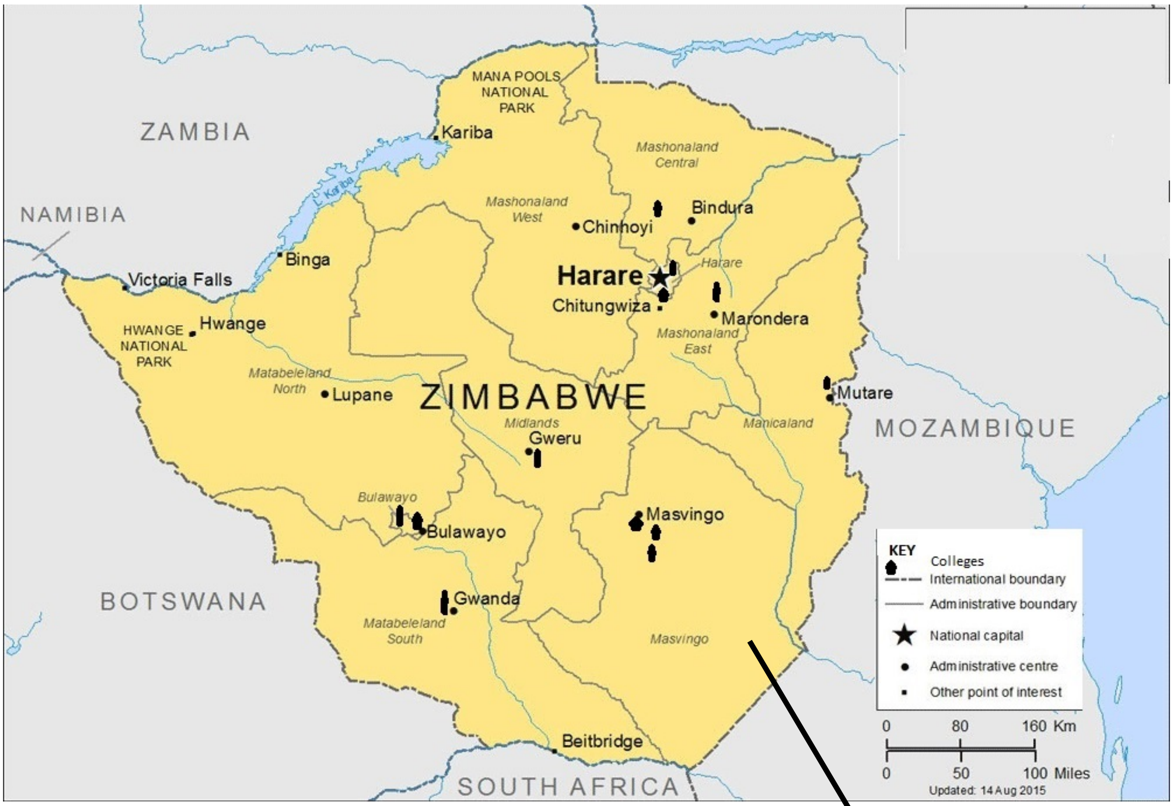
ZAMBIA
NAMIBIA
MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK
Kariba
Mashonaland Central
Mashonaland West
Chinhoyi
Bindura
Binga
Victoria Falls
Harare
Chitungwiza
Harare
Marondera
HWANGE NATIONAL PARK
Hwange
Mashonaland East
Matabeleland North
Lupane
ZIMBABWE
Mutare
Midlands
Gweru
Manicaland
MOZAMBIQUE
Bulawayo
Bulawayo
Masvingo
BOTSWANA
Gwanda
Matabeleland South
Masvingo
Beitbridge
SOUTH AFRICA
KEY
Colleges
International boundary
Administrative boundary
National capital
Administrative centre
Other point of interest
0
80
160 Km
0
50
100 Miles
Updated: 14 Aug 2015

Figure 3.1: Map of Zimbabwe showing the location of colleges in different provinces

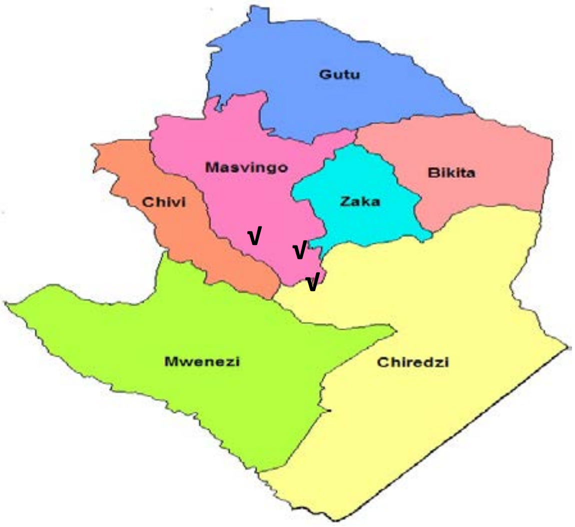
Gutu
Masvingo
Bikita
Chivi
Zaka
√
√
√
Mwenezi
Chiredzi

Figure 3.2: Map showing the 7 districts in Masvingo province

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The major research question that directed data collection for this study was: *What are the school-based mentors' perspectives and practices of mentoring during teaching practice?*

The following are the sub-questions for this study:

- What are the views and beliefs of Zimbabwean school-based supervisors (mentors) on mentoring of the primary pre-service teachers?
- How do school-based supervisors understand and enact their roles of mentoring?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for the mentors on this aspect of teacher education?
- How can the perspectives and practices of the school-based mentors be understood and explained?
- How can school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice be improved?

Table 3.1 provides an outline of this chapter before the in-depth presentation and discussion of issues concerned.

Table 3.1: Overview of the research methodology

Title	The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.
Research design	Case study research design
Data collection	After clearance by the university ethics committee (UFS-HSD2015/0628), I sought permission to conduct the study from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Masvingo Provincial Education Director (PED) and Masvingo District Education Officer (DEO). Permission to interview teachers was sought from heads of the involved schools. Each participant was consulted and filled in the consent forms in preparation for data collection.
Sampling procedures	Purposive sampling was adopted to select participants and the setting of the study. Masvingo Province was selected as the setting of the study out of ten provinces in Zimbabwe. Seven schools from Masvingo district and seven mentors, one from each school, were sampled to participate in this study.
Data generation methods	a) Semi-structured interviews with the seven mentors b) One focus group discussion with the same mentors c) Document analysis: mentor supervision reports from the mentees' teaching practice file
Instrumentation	My supervisors and peer researchers helped to validate the data collection instruments and the instruments were used in a pilot study that included 2 schools and 5 mentor-teachers. Their recommendations were taken into account accordingly. The mentor teachers were selected because of their experiences in mentoring student teachers of different year groups from the three Masvingo teachers' colleges.
Data presentation and analysis	The data were video and audio taped. The researcher transcribed and interrogated all the data to come up with themes. The data were coded and distilled into themes. This becomes the basis for Chapter 4.
Trustworthiness	To ensure trustworthiness, constructs such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability were used.
Ethical consideration	Participants completed consent forms before discussions. They voluntarily participated in the study and maintained the right to discontinue at any time during the research. Confidentiality was retained by using pseudonyms for the colleges and participants, and codes/numbers were used for the schools.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The qualitative research methodology is naturalistic and was therefore deemed appropriate for the natural setting of participants in this study. This is in line with McMillan and Schumacher (2010:372) who state that, “qualitative research is based on naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that views reality as multi-layered, interactive and a shared social experience”. A qualitative research approach was employed to address the critical research questions in this study as it was considered the best approach for investigating human behaviour and learning (Gay *et al.*, 2011; Flick, 2014; Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The qualitative research approach assisted me to gather rich descriptive data meant to develop an in-depth understanding of the way school-based supervisors view their roles as mentors of student teachers on teaching practice, how they enact those roles, their challenges and opportunities during mentoring (Creswell, 2015; Creswell, 2012). Employing qualitative research minimises presumptions with which a researcher would have approached the phenomenon under study (De Vos *et al.*, 2012 : 266). In the same vein, Creswell (2014) argues that qualitative methods enable the researcher to obtain deep and intricate detail about a phenomenon.

The choice of a qualitative research approach was also determined by the purpose of the study as well as the nature of the data needed to address the research questions. The study aimed at exploring the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their role in mentoring student teachers on teaching practice. Qualitative data was found most suitable to address the research aims of this study, and thus partly justified the rationale for my choice of the qualitative research approach.

Flick (2014) and Magwa and Magwa (2015) argue that data generating tools for qualitative research include focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis, and that information collected is mainly in the form of words rather than statistical data. I intended to collect data from participants about their understanding and experience of mentoring primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. The collection of data from participants’ viewpoint could be more conveniently achieved through a qualitative research approach.

In this study, I sought to acquire deep insights on how mentors perceive mentoring, how they enact their mentoring roles during teaching practice of primary school pre-service teachers, the contextual challenges and opportunities they faced during the mentoring period. Through detailed descriptions and explanations, mentors provided a deeper understanding of their perspectives on their roles during mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). This was done through descriptive data in the form of participants' own written or spoken words and/or observable behaviour (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Participants were therefore expected to clearly express how they enacted their roles, the challenges they met and the opportunities that were made available to them in the process of supervising student teachers on teaching practice. The school-based supervisors' lone voices were expected to assist me to construct my own worldview from the information they contributed as participants in the study.

3. 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design focuses on the data collection methods, instrument(s) for data collection and the way the collected data will be analysed, interpreted and discussed. It is a plan, a recipe or a blue print describing conditions and procedures for collection of data (Mouton, 2001; Mertens, 2015). This research on the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their role during teaching practice in Masvingo district, Zimbabwe, was conducted employing a case study design. This area of the report summaries the procedures I adopted to generate the data as well as interpret and analyse the data to answer the research questions for this study judiciously (Bazeley, 2013; Gay *et al.*, 2011; Mouton, 2011). I adopted a case study research methodology to view reality from the viewpoint of the researcher and participant (Creswell, 2014).

Mouton (2011) emphasises that the research design must guide the researcher on answering the research questions. As stated before, a case study research methodology employed in this study is used to view reality from the viewpoint of the researcher and participant through a constructivist lens (Creswell, 2014). This view is in line with Merriam (1998:22) who states that, "the researcher brings a construction of reality to the research situation which interacts with other people's constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied". The final product of this type of study is an interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through his or her own thoughts. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) underscore the fact that a research design describes the procedures that the researcher undertakes when carrying out his or her research indicating, "… when, from whom, and what conditions data was collected". They further stress that a research design guides the researcher, selecting the methods and decisions to be made in carrying out the field research work. For my study, the perspectives of school-based supervisors were considered as a case that mentors needed to articulate from their own perspectives. This was meant to enhance the researcher's understanding of the roles of the school-based supervisors, how they enact their roles, the challenges and opportunities of mentoring primary school pre-service teachers and how mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers could be improved.

Creswell (2014), Punch and Oancea (2014), and Ritchie *et al.* (2014) contend that a case study, as a research design, is associated with qualitative research; it focuses on understanding the case within its natural setting, taking cognisance of its complexity, content and time. I adopted a case study research design in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how school-based supervisors (mentors) understand, explain and enact their supervisory role from their own perspectives. Gay *et al.* (2011:444) define a case study as "a qualitative research approach in which researchers focus on a unit of study known as a bound system". In addition, Gay *et al.* (2011:444) further argue that a case is an investigation of a phenomenon that occurs within a specific context. A case study thus is bounded, concrete and rooted in the specific context that is to be studied. For my study on the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles during teaching practice in Masvingo district in Zimbabwe, data was collected from seven primary schools in Masvingo district where pre-service teachers from all the three Masvingo primary teachers' colleges were doing their teaching practice.

Yin (2011). argues that this involves multiple approaches, supports the case study approach. Punch and Oancea (2014) also underscore the importance of using multiple data sources and multiple data collection instruments as a means to enhance the trustworthiness of data. A blending of data and convergence of the findings ensures a certain degree of validity. Any divergence stimulates further discussion to find out the reasons behind that. In my research, there was room for triangulation of both sources of data and instruments of data collection. I used two sources of data, namely responses from mentors and documents as well as 3 methods of data collection, namely documents analysis, interviews and focus group discussions.

It should be highlighted that the case under study may not lead to generalisation. It is concerned with a deep and intensive understanding of the perspectives of mentors, through their voices, concerning their roles as supervisors of pre-service teachers during teaching practice. This is in line with Punch and Oancea (2014) and Creswell (2014) who purport that data collected through a case study is not always meant for generalisation unless it is for specific goals or within context. According to literature reviewed for my study, mentors' voices have not been heard before. Silverman (2013), Leedy and Ormrod (2014) and Punch and Oancea (2014) indeed emphasise the importance of employing a case study for data collection where knowledge is shallow, incomplete or non-existent.

Leedy and Ormrod (2014) and Ritchie *et al.* (2014) concur that a case study has advantages of collecting extensive data on individual(s) programme(s) or event(s) through the employment of various methods of data collection. In this study, I used interviews, focus group discussions and documents analysis. These different methods afforded mentors the chance to articulate and express their perceptions and understanding of the roles they should play as school-based supervisors of primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. Thus, they had a chance as major players in the mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers during teaching practice, to voice their concerns on how mentoring is practised in the Zimbabwean primary school teacher preparation programme.

There are more advantages related to the use of a case study. Ritchie *et al.* (2014), Flick (2014), Creswell (2014) and Punch and Oancea (2014) outline further that a case study creates new theoretical positions through the researcher's provision of rich descriptive data and understanding of the case if the researcher has an open mind to new views. In this study, I intended to come up with a clear understanding that drew on the mentors' views on how mentors should be involved in the mentoring programmes, how they should be understood and how their mentoring process should be facilitated.

Creswell (2014) highlights the importance of a case study in the postulation that it allows for generalisation of deep knowledge pertaining to specific situations. He argues further that a case study gives room for probing, which in turn leads to more discoveries about the phenomenon being studied. For this study, I was able to probe mentors during interviews and focus group discussions to get a rich description of how they understand and perceive mentors' roles in the mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers. The associated analysis of documents describing the mentors' narrative to mentees on the "areas to improve" supervision reports also enabled me to understand the role that mentors assume, how they enact their roles and their understanding of mentoring. It was also evident in the documents how mentors and mentees related with each other. The information from different methods of data collection was compared and this assisted in strengthening the validity of data. However, if I had followed all reports and not picked up the few cases, I could have obtained richer and thicker data. This study picked the mentors' voice from their interview responses, focus group discussions and documents (mentors' supervision reports) in the teaching practice file. This is, therefore, in line with the observation by Creswell (2014), Punch and Oancea (2014) and Ritchie *et al.* (2014), that a case study gives room for face-to-face interviews which enables individuals to be heard.

A number of disadvantages are associated with the use of a case study. Yazan (2015) argues that a case study design's weakness is its use of opposing approaches as social sciences have contested that it sometimes employs many research methodologies. Creswell (2014) and Flick (2014) also highlight what could be termed as bias caused by its lack of rigour during data collection processes. Yin (2011) also points to the researcher's influence that may allow biased views to influence the results of a study. Yin (2014) refers to such data as "subjective data". Thus, the generalisation of data in a case study is not quite possible (Creswell, 2014; Yazan, 2015). In this regard, a few mentors were studied so that the results may be transferred to cases of the same nature.

Creswell (2014) values the importance of case study research in that it gives room for the collection of authentic and credible data, as the researcher is able to evaluate colleagues' personal judgements. Lincoln and Guba (1985) purport that data collected from a case study should be credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable, if rigorous data collection procedures are adopted. Any collected data that exhibit bias and influence of the researcher in the findings should be exposed to re-analysis.

In this study, therefore, data were collected directly and personally from mentors in an attempt to make the data more trustworthy. In addition, the employment of a rigorous method of data collection made it more likely that a triangulation of data across methods and sources would make the collected data credible since they were from primary sources.

Another disadvantage of a case study is what Yin (2014) perceives to be the amount of time required for data collection, analysis and the final report writing. The volume of the report is another disadvantage that is pointed out by Yin (2014).

In this study, I used all the relevant data collected to the best advantage of this study. My goal was to find out how mentors perceived and understood their roles as school-based supervisors of primary school pre-service teachers during teaching practice. The evident feelings about their roles inhibit or facilitate the enactment of their supervisory roles. The findings could apply to other mentors who are school-based supervisors of primary school pre-service teachers in different schools, from different districts in Zimbabwe.

3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

When embarking on a research study, researchers do not involve all the elements in an area as units of analysis, rather they only select a few (i.e. people, groups, artefacts, setting, etc.) in such a manner that they enhance their ability to answer research questions (Gay *et al.*, 2011).

Purposive sampling was adopted to pick data rich respondents, as well as access knowledgeable persons on the phenomenon being studied (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:157; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014:113). Magwa and Magwa (2015:68) also view purposive sampling as when, “the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in his sample on the basis of his judgment of their typicality”. Here, the emphasis is on the respondents’ potential to provide significant information in the research, make the researcher capable of answering research questions and satisfy research objectives.

In this study, I view a sample as a slice from a cake that allows those eating it to get the taste and flavours of all its ingredients. In this regard, one does not have to eat the whole cake to get the necessary taste and flavour. Each slice, as suggested in the picture below, contains the egg, flour, sugar, vanilla, salt and all the ingredients that make the cake.

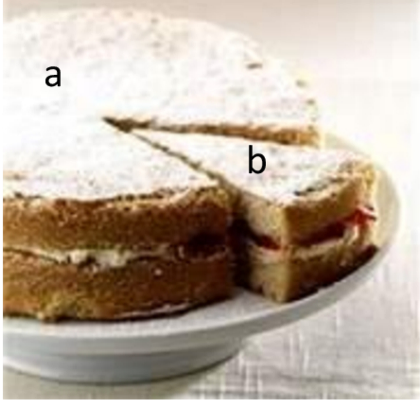

Figure 3.3: Graphic representation of a population and a sample in research

(a) Whole cake – represents the population
(b) The slice – represents the sample

The sample for this study consists of selected schools and mentors involved in the mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. Here, the sample of mentors are expected to describe and explain their perspective and understanding of their roles, how they enact those roles as well as the challenges and opportunities they face as school-based supervisors of primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. Criterion-based sampling was adopted for choosing a sample and setting for this study in order for it to meet or possess key features relevant for the study (Flick, 2014; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014).

3.6.1 Selection of schools

The selection of schools that took part in this study was based on their location in Masvingo district, having student teachers from the three different colleges on teaching practice as well as being a farm, rural and urban school. These types of schools are major categories of schools in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the intention was to have a representative sample (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). This is what Ritchie and Lewis (2013:83) meant by saying that, “one of the requirements for a qualitative sample is to ensure that the sample is as diverse as possible within the boundaries of the defined population”.

After considering the above criteria and being informed by the reviewed literature, seven primary schools were selected for this study. These included three rural, two urban and two farm primary schools. These schools are representative of the primary schools in Masvingo district.

3.6.2 Selection of participants

Participants in this study were from the seven selected primary schools. The sample comprised female and male mentors as both genders are involved in mentoring primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. I selected one mentor with a minimum of three years mentoring experience from each of the seven schools. A supervision report was picked from a mentee being supervised by this mentor. All the participants had a minimum of a certificate or diploma in education and were mentoring student teachers on teaching practice either at first, second or third year level. The process of ethical consideration was also taken into account. The sample therefore included seven primary schools, i.e. three rural, two urban and two farms and seven mentors comprising two males and five females. One supervision report for students supervised by the seven selected mentors was picked from each of the selected students’ teaching practice file. The mentors were mentoring primary school pre-service teachers from all three colleges in Masvingo province.

The above sampling is in line with the argument by Patton (2002), Halloway and Wheeler (2002) and Ritchie *et al.* (2014) that a sample must have similar characteristics or the same experiences. In this study, being a certified teacher who is involved in the mentorship programme is what mentors share in common, and this makes them rich cases and most suitable to the construction of themes and insights that answer the research questions (Yin, 2011).

According to Flick (2014), who also concurs with Patton (2002), purposive sampling can lead to the selection of a sample with greater intensity of interesting features and experiences necessary for the study of the phenomenon in question. In this study, mentors and their supervision reports were selected, as they possess rich information about the mentors' understanding of their roles, how they enact those roles as well as the challenges and opportunities they face during mentoring. This will help in answering the research question in detail.

The size of the sample for this study may seem small but Ritchie *et al.* (2014:117) contend that samples in qualitative research are commonly small because of the homogenous nature of the sample. It is likely to possess all the required data and, in more cases, is not likely to bring in any new data/evidence. In a case study, evidence needs to appear once to be part of analytical findings, hence "... Statements about incidence or prevalence are not the concern of qualitative research. Because of the detail and richness of data and the volume from each unit, to do justices to data analysis calls for small size sample" (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014:117). Finally, time for data collection and resources to use in the research are also factors that would affect the size of the sample.

Table 3.2: Participants' demographic data

School codes	**Participants/ Mentor names**	**Gender**	**College name**	**Level mentored (years)**	**School location**
1	Lady A	F	Gomo	1st, 2nd and 3rd	RPS
2	Lady B	F	Pamusoro	1st, 2nd and 3rd	RPS
3	Lady C	F	Seri	1st, 2nd and 3rd	FPS
4	Lady D	F	Seri	1st, 2nd and 3rd	UPS
5	Lady E	F	Pamusoro	1st, 2nd and 3rd	UPS
6	Sir F	M	Gomo	1st, 2nd and 3rd	FPS
7	Tawanda	M	Pamusoro	1st, 2nd and 3rd	RPS

KEY

RPS – Rural primary school

UPS – Urban primary school

FPS – Farm primary school

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

After having decided on a research design, developing it and constructing a research instrument, researchers begin to collect data to address critical research questions on the phenomenon under study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Data collection for this study was spread over seven months. The data collection instruments used for this study included semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and document analysis (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2014; Magwa & Magwa, 2015).

3.7.1 Instrumentation

Before collecting data to answer the study's critical research questions, I designed two research instruments for the collection of relevant data. The construction of the data collection instruments was informed by extensive literature review. The literature review explored mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers, how supervisors enact their roles, mentors' perspectives on their roles, how mentoring could be improved and challenges and opportunities in mentoring. This study employed document analysis, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion to collect qualitative research data (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The three data collection instruments were important in providing multiple data sources for the purpose of triangulation of information (Magwa & Magwa, 2015).

Document analysis involved collection of supervision reports from student teachers' teaching practice file. The documents were collected from students who were being mentored by participants in this study. Primary documents such as supervision documents, supported by reviewed literature, guided the design of the two research instruments, namely the interview schedule (see Appendix G) and the focus group discussion questions (see Appendix I)

3.7.2 Pilot study

I pilot tested my focus group discussion questions and the interview schedule using nine mentors, from three rural, three urban and three farm primary schools. These participants who were not included in the final sample (Yin, 2011). These three mentors supervised student teachers from the three teachers' college in Masvingo province. The student teachers were in their first, second and third years. The pilot study participants were considered "information rich" and relevant for testing the validity and dependability of my research instruments (Patton, 2002).

The pilot study was intended to test the clarity of my questions and see whether they answer my research, time it would take to conduct the interview and focus group discussion. Four peers, who are also PhD students, as well as my supervisor, helped me in assessing the validity of the data collection instruments. Their recommendations were considered accordingly and a few questions were modified. This is what Leedy and Omrod (2014:205) meant when they pointed out that, … researchers conduct a test run of newly designed questions to make sure that the questions are clearly and effectively solicit the desired information… I had to rephrase some of the questions, as recommended by reviewers.

My pilot study participants were all females, and reviewers recommended that I include male participants (Cohen et al., 2011). My final sample included five females and two males.

3.7.3 Document analysis

According to Creswell (2014) and Magwa and Magwa (2015), documents refer to a wide range of written materials that a researcher can interrogate to come up with qualitative information. They come as policy documents, reports, mission statements, minutes of meetings, codes of conduct and case notes (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). Mertens (2015) and Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009) highlight two types of documents, namely primary and secondary documents, that is, unpublished and published respectively.

For this study, primary documents, namely mentors' supervisory comments, were used to explore how mentors enacted their roles during teaching practice. I was guided by the document analysis protocol to understand the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe (see Appendix J). I selected available reports from each of the mentees' teaching practice file for those who were being supervised by the seven mentor-participants from the third term of 2015 to the first term of 2017. These reports were critical, as I was able to understand the support given to mentees from the mentors' own words in the reports. The primary document reflects mentors' enactment of their roles during teaching practice. The reports mirrored the mentor-mentee interaction in written form. Documents also helped to clarify mentors' understanding and their perspective of their roles in the supervision of student teachers through reports. These reports were also a great contribution to the development of my data collection instruments – the interview schedule and focus group questions – employed to elicit information from mentors on their understanding of their supervising role.

Creswell (2014) argues that documents are relevant as they contain participants' own language and works and provides the research with well thought out accounts of views, news and perceptions. My study considers mentors' reports as accounts of their roles and how these roles should be enacted. These primary documents can be verified by checking with the records of lessons taught on the day concerned from the lesson plans and schemes of work. This concurs with Punch and Oancea (2014) and Denzin & Lincoln (2000), who emphasise the need to check the authenticity, credibility and accuracy of documents used in research.

Documents used in this study were easier to access as indicated in my literature review. The literature reviewed has indicated less availability of mentor supervision reports as most mentors verbally discussed with mentees and did not write reports (Marimo, 2014; Samkange, 2015). The reports provided authentic data that the mentors signed (Flick, 2014). The process of data gathering from the documents was convenient for this research as it is unnecessary to transcribe the data from supervision reports as the information was already in the participants' own language and ready for indexing and sorting (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). It also became easy to assess the quality of documents, that is, their authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Flick, 2014; Silverman, 2013; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). I spent four weeks reading and interrogating the supervision reports in order to understand the reports in full. Thereafter I used the reports for this study.

3.7.4 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview questions were validated by four colleagues who are also PhD students with other universities in and outside Zimbabwe as well as my supervisor. To increase the validity of my interview questions and focus group schedule, I pilot tested the instrument with three mentors from three neighbouring primary schools, to which student teachers from all three colleges in Masvingo were deployed. The pilot study helped to substantiate the usefulness of the questions, their comprehensibility to participants as well as familiarise the researcher with research instruments. A few questions from the interview schedule and focus group discussions were adjusted as a result of findings from the pilot study.

Through interviews, information on how the interviewees understand their roles, their challenges, opportunities and how mentoring could be improved, was also solicited to answer the five research questions.

An interview schedule is a structured set of questions used by the researcher to ask interviewees for answers to research questions (Creswell, 2012; Flick, 2014; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). For this study, pre-set structured interview questions were considered appropriate for several reasons. They accorded me the opportunity to understand the world from the perspective of the participants (Barbour, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, I was able to collect rich descriptive data vital for addressing all five research questions as well as understand how mentors construct knowledge to form their perspectives (Nieuwenhuis, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, they were found flexible as they gave room to deviate and probe further in order to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2011).

The interviews also enabled me to generate data that could not be easily accessed using other methods. This data included body language, gestures, facial expressions and other critical cues that were exhibited when expressing their feelings on the understanding of their roles, how they enact them, their challenges and opportunities in mentoring and how they could improve school-based supervision.

I interviewed all seven mentees at their workplaces in order to keep them in familiar surrounds so that they were free to discuss issues openly. Each participant was phoned three days before the actual interview to remind them of the set plan. This helped to remind them as well as give them chance to choose to participate freely.

The interviews started on 28 June 2016, with participant Lady E. On the day of the interview, participants signed the consent form after the researcher explained the purpose of the study and assured them of confidentiality (Creswell, 2014; Magwa & Magwa, 2015; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The participants had experience that ranged from six to 32 years as mentors because only the information rich participants were selected for this study (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Yin, 2011).

The interview followed the questions on the interview schedule, with interviewees providing detailed verbal information on their understanding, experiences, challenges and opportunities in mentoring of primary school pre-service teachers on teaching practice. They also gave information on ways to improve mentoring practices to enhance the quality of teaching. This enabled me to access the voice of the mentor from their perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Yin, 2011). The interview questions sought to answer the five research sub-questions closely. Through listening and interaction with the interviewees, I also sought to create meanings of what was being said to understand what shaped mentors' perspectives on their roles as school-based supervisors. At relevant instances, I probed the interviewees to develop and build their ideas and provide in-depth information to explain their understanding of their roles, the enactment of these roles, the challenges and opportunities of mentoring and ways to improve the mentoring practices to enhance the quality of teaching practices.

According to Borg and Gall (1996) and Gay *et al.* (2011), the interview method has its own limitation as interviewees could be biased in their responses in order to please the interviewer. I had to ask the same question in a different way in the interview process to check for consistency of responses. The focus group discussions and supervision reports also helped to verify the accuracy of the response from the interview. It also helped substantiate truthfulness of interview responses and vice versa (Gay *et al.*, 2011; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

The other limitation of the interview as a tool for research is the way it causes uneasiness on the part of the interviewees when responding to questions. To counter this limitation, I gave myself time to begin by explaining to the interviewees the purpose of the study and then requested them to sign a consent form and assure them of anonymity and confidentiality (Flick, 2014; Yin, 2011). The next issue was a general discussion with each participant on their demographic data. This was an ethical issue and was intended to calm the participants, making them feel comfortable and allow them to open-up (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014; Yin, 2011). I also requested to video record the conversation to help produce accurate transcription. It seemed the phenomenon under discussion was a contentious issue for I did not have problems to get involved in meaningful discussions. Teachers, being who they are, displayed a great zeal of wanting to be heard and understood. Interviews were carried out in a secluded room to ensure confidentiality of discussed issues (Creswell, 2012; Kruger & Casey, 2009). I took down field notes on salient issues concerning the conversations so that I could effectively contribute information during analysis of data. The open-ended questions adopted allowed interviewees to explain some of their responses further (Creswell, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2012). Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes.

3.7.5 Focus group discussion

After the interviews, I held one focus group discussion with all seven participants. The focus group discussion was conducted on Tuesday 26 July 2016. This took place at the Great Zimbabwe Hotel outer conference room as had been agreed upon by participants. Teachers from different schools normally use this venue for workshops, so it was a familiar venue to all participants. The reminder was sent via a phone call three days before the actual date. All seven participants arrived approximately twenty minutes before the time despite my actual fear that some might not show up. We had some refreshments and a general discussion as a group to try to reassure and calm the participants while at the same time creating familiarity (Flick, 2014; Hancock, *et al* 2009). I also allowed participants to introduce themselves to the group to familiarise themselves with each other.

The term focus group is often used interchangeably with group discussion intended for a specific topic of interest to the researcher. Normally 6 to 12 participants are brought together to discuss a specific research topic of a study (Flick, 2014). For this study, I was interested in the views, ideas and opinions about how school-based supervisors view their roles as supervisors of student teachers on teaching practice. This discussion was aimed at addressing the five research questions of this study. It was also guided by questions in the focus group discussion schedule with the intention of verifying interview responses as well as gaining an in-depth understanding of school-based supervisors’ perspectives on their roles as mentors during teaching practice.

The same participants who participated in the interview took part in the focus group discussion. This was because these were information rich participants (Yin, 2011). The focus group discussion also allowed participants to interrogate and verify their views and those of other participants. Furthermore, the focus group discussion was appropriate for this study as it utilises its dynamics in developing conversations as a central source of knowledge. Participants had an opportunity to interact and interrogate each other’s ideas on their roles and the way they enact their roles, which was not the case with interviews (Bazeley, 2013; Flick, 2014). This was so because focus group discussions allowed participants to listen and reflect on what others said and further reconsider their standpoints (Mertens, 2015; Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). My major role, as the moderator of the focus group discussion, was taking down field notes and listening carefully, redirecting the focus whenever necessary. Ritchie *et al.* (2014) stress the need to engage the group fully to come up with new insights and thoughts. Hence, I tried to give participants the chance to deliberate fully on every question to get a clear understanding of how school-based supervisors understand and explain their supervisory role during teaching practice, explain the challenges and opportunities in mentoring as well as how mentoring could be improved. As the moderator, I ensured that some participants who were more vocal did not dominate in the deliberations and that all were accorded a fair chance during the focus group discussion (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). I used probes to enhance in-depth understanding of issues under discussion by requesting participants to clarify and delve deeper into issues related to the research sub-questions. This assisted in making the data richer and in answering the research sub-questions fully.

Kruger and Casey (2009) and Mertens (2015) emphasised the importance of confidentiality and anonymity over data collected from focus group discussions as the issue of collegiality may lead to the divulging of important data by participants. To counter this, I reaffirmed the issue of confidentiality, especially on sensitive information, explained the purpose of the study and outlined the intended use of data to try to allay participants’ fears.

Towards the end of the group discussion, I would signal that each participant and the whole group give their final comments, suggestions and whatever insights they felt must be pointed out.

Finally, we engaged in the ultimate conversation relating to participants travelling back to their homes. Those who had not received their transcription for member checking were provided the opportunity for verification and making corrections on the transcription. The videotaping gave room for capturing everything we had discussed. The focus group discussion took approximately 1½ hours.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

All the data gathered for research purposes must end up with data analysis to give the study its structure. Mouton (2011:108) states that, “analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships”. It entails the search for patterns in the recurrent behaviour. On the same issue, Hoberg (2001:65) noted that, “qualitative researchers integrate the operations of organizing, analysing and interpreting data and call the entire process data analysis”. The Johnson and Christensen method for data analysis also agree with the above as it includes segmenting, coding, compiling a master list checking for inter-coders and intra-codes consistency, enumeration and indicating a relationship among categories as data analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Slavin, 2007). For this study, data collection and analysis were done concurrently. This enabled me to identify issues that needed further interrogation and detail; and gaps were also identified and filled in as the process continued. This assisted me to continue focusing on the study’s research question as discussions proceeded. I read, coded information, identified general and unique themes and established key themes, categories and sub-categories (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). I also focused on how the themes related to the research sub-questions. The above process was repeated several times as I carefully read transcriptions line by line, tagging and labelling data with similar meanings accordingly (Flick, 2014; Silverman, 2013).

I took a number of steps in the process of analysing data. Firstly, I closely observed and listened to the audio/video tapes several times, before transcribing them verbatim. I transcribed all the information personally to ensure that all words were captured including commenting about body language. Transcribed data was sent back to interviewees and group discussion members to check for content accuracy (Flick, 2014; Yin, 2011). After the above thorough process, searching for similar responses was done through segmenting. The codes were collapsed according to emerging themes and insights, and brought together, guided by the research objectives (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Punch & Oancea, 2014:258).

I also considered document analysis of the selected mentors' supervision reports. These reports provided plenty of relevant information about the phenomenon under study. Using the descriptions, the data from the three data sources was presented as an integral whole. Triangulation was also possible as data from varied sources and different data collection instruments were compiled and constructed. It enabled me to come up with a panoptic picture of the perspectives of school-based supervisors. I diligently used all the data collected and addressed the research questions of the study (Punch & Oancea, 2014).

3.8.1 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness, according to Yin (2011), is a term employed in assessing the quality of a qualitative inquiry. It seeks to enhance the argument that a study was conducted in a transparent manner and that the findings are credible (Huberman & Miles 1994). Bazeley (2013) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) used constructs such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability to evaluate the quality of a qualitative research study. For this study, the four constructs guided trustworthiness of the whole process on the study of school-based supervisors' perspectives of their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

3.8.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which findings of the study are an accurate and authentic representation of the meanings of the research participants (Denscombe, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The above suggests the need for consistency between the researcher and representation of views and the views of participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To achieve this, I adopted a number of techniques such as use of the descriptive data, member checking and triangulation. Data from one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and mentor supervision reports were used for triangulation of data. The data obtained from the three sources were compared and collapsed to check if they directed to the same conclusions. This assisted to ensure that the research findings from participants' perspectives were credible (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). Furthermore, my supervisor and a chosen colleague assisted in data analysis to observe triangulation. The above also ensured a track of important issues and use of all collected relevant data (Punch & Oancea, 2014).

I also used member checking to check credibility. Shenton (2004) describes member checking as a vital strategy for enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative research. This is done through seeking participants' confirmation of the transcriptions before information is used for the study (Creswell, 2012).

All seven participants reviewed transcription from interviews as well as the focus group discussion to correct errors (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013). The supervision reports were in the school-based supervisors' (mentor's) own written words so there was no need for member checking on these. Member checking allowed for further inspection on the accuracy of my interpretation of the data. This helped me to ensure that the findings reflected the participants' understanding and experiences of their roles as school-based supervisors.

For me to come up with in-depth descriptions, I employed prolonged engagement with participants. I started my data collection from 26 June 2016 to January 2017, that is, over 8 months. I fully interacted with participants through the focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. I read and reread the supervision reports of mentors. I also kept checking on the data with participants through phone calls and sometimes, physical visits. All participants who were interviewed took part in the focus group discussion so that they could also check their contributions and understanding of issues as per my interpretation. Continuous contact with participants resulted in some repetition of some information; hence, this allowed triangulation from different participants' view (Denscombe, 2014). The audio-/videotaping of the interviews and focus group discussion gave me room to listen to them several times before verbatim transcription. This was another form of triangulation.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Silverman (2013), dependability is a result of the researcher providing sufficient reliable documentation on how the study was conducted, which directs readers to follow and review all research procedures. Rayn, Coughlan and Cronin (2007) view dependability as synonymous with auditability criteria. Halloway and Wheeler (2002:255) view dependability as “the degree to which the procedures give almost similar findings under constant conditions on all occasions”. To achieve this, I documented all research procedures employed in this study in a way that would allow readers to track the trail used and arrive at a similar or comparable conclusions (Flick, 2014). I explained the rationale for theoretical and methodological decisions made throughout the study. All the deviations from my original plan are fully documented, with the intention of allowing the readers to follow my research process. The categories created in the process of data analysis were clearly labelled. The data analysis procedure was detailed to enable readers to understand decisions made, how data analysis was done as well as the process employed to reach the conclusion (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Ritchie & Lewis, 2013).

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability is one of the factors that ensure trustworthiness of research findings (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). It refers to the degree the findings of a study can be applied to other settings, events or groups in the population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, my research being a case study, I did not intend to generalise the findings. I intended to get an in-depth understanding of how mentors understand, explain and enact their roles as school-based supervisors during teaching practice. The small size of the sample limited generalisation of findings from this study.

Cohen *et al.* (2011) and Mertens (2015) contend that qualitative studies do not seek generalisation. However, readers could apply findings of my study to similar cases, since details of how the study was carried out are contextually provided. For this study, I presented data through thick descriptions; thus, enhancing the readers’ understanding of how these findings could be applied to their own setting (Shenton, 2004; Mertens, 2015). All the research decisions and procedures provided sufficient details for the reader to judge the applicability of the research findings.

3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability determines whether research findings are unbiased and it relates to how neutral and objective the research is (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). Mouton

(2002:240) posits that researchers should strive to maintain “objectivity, conformability and integrity in the conduct of their scientific research” at all times. Shenton (2004:72) stresses that “steps must be taken to help ensure that as far as possible that the works or findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than characteristics and preferences of the researcher”. To achieve confirmability, I used several strategies, namely triangulation, an audit trail, peer debriefing and a reflexive journal maintained throughout the process.

I used the triangulation technique to reduce researcher bias (Silverman, 2013). I generated data from three data sources, which included semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and document analysis. The data generated from different sources were compared and contrasted during the process of data analysis. Peer debriefing involved consultation with peers and the supervisor. In the process, I received quality feedback, which improved the quality of the study (Rayn *et al.*, 2007). The above techniques also promoted reflexivity, which remained a constant feature for this study. As I proceeded, new ideas were raised and potential pitfalls associated with the methodology of this study were identified and corrected. I employed an audit trail in order to make the evidence available to the readers that would enable them to trace decisions made during the study as well as the procedures I adopted (Descombe, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Creswell (2014), Punch and Oancea (2014) and Yin (2011) concur that a case study involves the collection of personal and private data from participants; hence, the need for participants to give their informed consent if they are to take part in any research. As a result, permission to carry out any research must be sought from institutions as well as the prospective individual participants. Consent must be sought at all levels for each participant (Punch & Oancea, 2014; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). Ethical issues are therefore a critical component for any research study; hence, I ensured good conduct and respect for participants throughout the research process. Ethics covers what people consider morally right or wrong, or what is considered morally proper or improper when undertaking a research study (Cohen, 2011; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I tried to do what is right and to avoid infringing on the participants’ rights in the process of conducting this study.

Grix (2010:35) argues that, “qualitative research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and inner most matters in people’s lives and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information”. Thus, sampling for this study was an ethical issue as I tried as much as possible to come up with participants who are not only information rich but also representative of the diverse schools and mentor teachers in Masvingo district. Qualitative research requires that a sample should be as diverse as possible within the boundary of the defined population. Through purposive sampling of participants and institutions, I ensured tapping the diversity of ideas and views from various data sources. The sample for this study included seven mentor participants from seven primary schools in Masvingo district, three rural, two urban and two on farms. The schools represented the diverse school types in Masvingo district. The mentoring experience of participants ranged from six to 32 years.

Hammersley and Travanou (2012) emphasised the need to protect the dignity of participants in a research study, therefore, I ensured ethical consideration was prioritised from the start to end of my study. Accordingly, I applied for permission from the University of the Free State Ethics Committee to conduct this study. In my ethical clearance application, I made a commitment that I was going to protect and respect the rights of every participant. Outlined principles in the ethical clearance application document directed the administration of this study.

At the beginning of the interviews and focus group discussion, I took some time to deliberate with participants on their rights to participate in the study. This was intended to respect the rights and autonomy of participants (Chikoko & Mhloyi, 1995; Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Flick, 2014). Participants also completed a consent form that had my supervisor’s email address, phone number and full name. The participants were informed that they could communicate with my supervisor in case they required any clarifications. Cohen *et al.* (2011:777) posit that “consent thus protect and respect the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participants should anything go wrong in the research”. To facilitate informed consent, I provided participants with relevant information on the purpose of the study, methods of data collection and data use, and all participants gave their consent without being coerced.

The notion of informed consent, when dealing with ethical considerations, has four critical components to be addressed for any research study, and these are competence, voluntarism, informed consent and comprehension (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Mertens, 2015). For this study, participants were adult teacher mentors from selected primary schools, and this ensured competence on the part of participants. They had the capacity to acquire, retain and evaluate information received from the researcher hence they were deemed competent. In the informed consent form, this was addressed by stating that participants have the power of choice, and thus voluntarily resolved to participate in this study. The concept of volunteering was maintained throughout the research process (Creswell & Miller, 2000), since there was room for participants to withdraw at any time.

Comprehension demands that participants fully understand the nature of study and its procedures (Bazeley, 2013). To ensure the comprehension, I allowed participants to ask questions before we started the data collection process so that their concerns could be addressed. All participants were holders of a diploma or certificate in education, thus they had carried out research at diploma level. On agreeing to participate, all participants signed a consent form without coercion.

In most studies, confidentiality and anonymity are often used interchangeably and they take centre stage in qualitative research. Mertens (2015) and Punch and Oancea (2014) define confidentiality as an attempt to detach from research records any elements that might indicate participants' identities, which means that the data cannot be associated with the research participant personally. In this study, I ensured that all audio/video tapes, transcripts and teaching practice supervision reports were only accessible to the researcher, information associated with the source were removed to conceal the identities of research participants. Throughout the study, I used pseudonyms, numbers and codes instead of the real names of participants and institutions. The data collected for this study was not accessible to any individual who did not take part in the study (Bazeley, 2013; Mertens, 2015).

Acquiring permission from the relevant authorities is a critical ethical consideration to be undertaken by any researcher. Cohen *et al.* (2011) advises that for easy access into the field, researches need to obtain permission from the authorities starting from the top offices. After being granted permission to conduct this study by the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education Ethics Board on 20 April 2016 (UFS-HSD2015/0628) (see Appendix A), I applied for permission from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe on 17 May 2016 (see Appendix B). This was granted on 23 May 2016 (see Appendix C). I also sought and was granted permission to conduct this study by the Masvingo Provincial Education Director (PED) on 6 June 2016. The District Education Officer (DEO) granted me permission to carry out this study in the Masvingo district on the same day. The DEO simply stamped the letter from the PED, signed it and wrote "Approved" (see Appendix D). This was the letter I carried to the identified schools and to teachers who participated in this study.

During data collection, my first port of call was the office of the principal/head. This was meant to fulfil the obligation about respect of authority that I had made on my ethical clearance agreement. Though they requested the letters of authorisation from the PED and DEO, all school heads were cooperative as they facilitated my easy access to teacher mentors. The school heads provided me with separate offices to conduct interviews. This further ensured confidentiality. The selected mentors volunteered and consented to participate in the study. To begin with, I gave each mentor teacher I visited the invitation letters and consent forms to participate in the study (see Appendices F and H). I also explained the purpose of the study, its importance, possible protection and possible risks to the participants to reaffirm their confidentiality and anonymity. All mentor teachers who took part in this study volunteered to participate and accepted to be audio/video taped. This is in agreement with Flick (2014) who stressed the importance of verbal and written briefing with participants to allay their fears. Each participant then signed a consent form before being interviewed and getting involved in the focus group discussions. They also agreed that I use their supervision reports for this study. I wrote to the heads/principals of each participating school seeking consent to carry out the research in their institutions (see Appendix E). I thanked the participants after the interviews or focus group discussion and requested follow-ups by either phoning or visiting them for any clarifications or further questioning.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 has presented the research methodology used in this qualitative case study. The study has adopted various sources of data that includes interviews, a focus group discussion and document analysis. This was intended to obtain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe. The chapter specifically focused on the research approach, design, sampling, data generation and analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents data from various data sources used in this study, namely interviews, the focus group discussion and document analysis.

CHAPTER 4
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presents findings on the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors in Zimbabwe. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were used to generate qualitative data to address the study's key sub-questions (Flick, 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014; Silverman, 2013). Justification for the use of the above data generation instruments was fully discussed in the methodology section (Chapter 3). The study's objectives and emerging themes guided the organisation and presentation of findings of the study. In addition, data is presented thematically as an integrated whole. This is important as it makes it easier for me to manage the large volumes of data generated for this study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Magwa & Magwa, 2015; Ritchie *et al.*, 2013).

The objectives of this study were to:

- explore how school-based supervisors conceptualise mentoring
- establish how school-based supervisors viewed and enacted their roles
- explain school-based supervisors' perspectives and practices
- identify the challenges and opportunities faced by school-based supervisors in mentoring primary pre-service teachers
- recommend best practices for the improvement of mentoring of pre-service teachers

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION

.The first part presents participants' personal details. Their demographic characteristics are summarised in Table 4.1 below. This is followed by participants' views on various aspects on mentoring of pre-service teachers during their practicum. Their views are presented following the order of the themes that emerged during data analysis.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents results on the profile of participants according to qualifications and experience.

Table 4.1: Profile of school-based supervisors according to their qualifications and experience

Name	**Academic qualifications**	**Professional qualifications**	**Teaching experience**	**Mentoring experience**	**Experience before becoming a mentor**
Lady A	‘O’ Level	DipEd; BEd Primary	23yrs	19yrs	4
Lady B	‘O’ Level	CE; MEd (Counselling)	27yrs	10yrs	17
Lady C	‘O’ Level	CE	9yrs	7yrs	2
Lady D	‘O’ Level	DipEd; BEd (Special Needs)	16yrs	10yrs	6
Lady E	‘A’ Level	Dip Ed; BEd (ECD)	11yrs	6yrs	5
Sir F	‘O’ Level	CE; BEd History; BA Honours English, BSc Physical Education & Sports; MEd Philosophy; HND Accounting	39yrs	32yrs	7
Tawanda	‘O’ Level	CE; Bed	36yrs	20yrs	16

KEY

Dip Ed - Diploma in Education

CE - Certificate in Education

BEd – Bachelor of Education

MEd – Masters of Education

Table 4.1 above indicates that six of the participants had ‘O’ levels and a minimum of a first degree as their highest academic and professional qualifications whilst only one had ‘O’ levels and a certificate in education. Their teaching experience ranged from 9–36 years and their mentoring experiences were between 6–32 years. While experience before being a mentor ranged from 2 – 17 years.

Accordingly, I deemed these participants to be information rich and capable of providing me with relevant data to address my key research questions.

4.4 OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGING THEMES

The table below provides a summary of the emerging themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of data for this study. This layout helped me in presenting findings of this study systematically.

Table 4.2: Overview of emerging themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
1.School-based supervisors' conceptualisation of mentoring	Mentors' conceptualisation of mentoring	1.What mentoring is
		2.Who the mentor is
		3.Selection of mentors
2.School-based supervisors' role in mentoring	Role of mentors	1.Mentoring role(s)
		2.Mentoring practices
	Support given by mentors to pre-service teachers	1.Areas pre-service teachers need help
		2.Type(s) of support given by mentors in: i. Scheming ii. Planning iii. Teaching practice file
3.Challenges and opportunities in mentoring pre-service teachers	1.Mentoring challenges	1.Challenges faced
	2. Support mentors receive from stakeholders	1. College-based support
		2.School-based support
	3.Opportunities in mentoring	1.Benefits of mentoring pre-service teachers
4.Suggestions for improvement	1.Mentors' suggestions for improvement	1.Suggestions for improvement
	2.Role of other stakeholders in improving mentorship of pre-service teachers	1.The college 2.School head/deputy 3.TIC

4.5 THEME 1: SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISORS' CONCEPTUALISATION OF MENTORING

Mentoring is a critical component in the development of pre-service teachers throughout the world (Ambrosetti, 2012; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Ochanji *et al.*, 2015; Wetzel *et al.*, 2017). However, little has been documented about who the mentor is, how school-based supervisors understand it and how mentors are selected (Heeralal, 2014; Samkange, 2015). This study, at least in part, aimed at addressing this gap in the scholarship of mentoring by exploring mentors' perspectives of mentoring.

4.5.1 School-based supervisors' understanding of mentoring

In this study, school-based supervisors refer to mentors who supervise primary pre-service teachers/mentees, during their teaching practice in Zimbabwe (Chakanyuka, 2006; Marimo, 2014; Moyo, 2002; Samkange, 2015). Three categories emerged from the analysis of data on this sub-theme, namely school-based supervisors' understanding of mentoring, who a mentor is and how mentors are selected.

4.5.1.1 What mentoring meant to school-based supervisors

All the interviewed school-based supervisors view mentoring as the provision of guidance, leadership and modelling. The extract below captures the feeling of Lady C, one school-based supervisor from one of the farm schools.

> When you are mentoring you are just being a leader. You are one person who will be showing the way. You are one person who will be aaah you are like a role model to someone who is looking up to you. So, in mentoring you give directions as to how things have to be done.

Drawing from the extract above, it seems Lady C and Lady D view mentoring as constituting a relationship where the mentor acts as a leader and role model. What seems to emerge from this quote is that Lady C and the whole group understand mentoring in terms of how the mentors enact their role. Mentors 'give directions' concerning how teaching and learning should go on in the class. It appears that the participants view mentoring as a hierarchical relationship where the mentor provides guidance and leadership with very little or nothing coming from the mentee. To her, mentoring seems to entail perhaps the mentee unquestioningly or blindly following the senior partner.

Asked to explain more about mentors being leaders, Lady C added that:

> You will be providing directions, directing how teaching should go. You decide what we should teach first and then what should come next ... I mean the topics to be planned and their order. I tell the mentee what we should do.

According to Lady C, school-based supervisors are instructional leaders with the monopoly of influencing how learning should go on in their classes. The fact that she says "I tell the mentee ...," suggests that there is limited dialogue between her and the mentee. This supports Hudson and Hudson (2010) who aver that mentoring can be a 'relationship of compliance' where the mentee accepts everything from the mentor without any input. This response from Lady C seems to indicate that her understanding of mentoring is characterised by power and authority differentials.

Lady B, from one of the rural primary schools supported this view by saying:

> What I understand by mentoring is that, an experienced teacher will be helping a mentee who is not experienced so that he or she gains experience on the job.

According to Lady B, mentoring involves a more experienced teacher given the task of assisting mentees in gaining the much-needed teaching experience. From Lady B's perspective, mentoring is a form of apprenticeship where a less experienced person learns the 'tricks' of a trade from someone who is an expert and more experienced (Wright & Pascoe, 2017).

Another participant, Lady D, from one of the urban schools, seems to share a similar view about what mentoring is, when she said,

> when you are mentoring you are just being a leader … so in mentoring you give directions as to how things are to be done. Students are supposed to cooperate so that they can learn well.

What seems to be recurring is the view of mentoring as provision of leadership. This is an interesting finding in that mentors have a strong belief that they are visible leaders responsible for directing the way mentees should gain teaching skills. Interesting from the above quote is the implication that mentees are mere recipients.. According to Lady D, mentors dictate what and how teaching and learning should proceed with mentees unquestioningly complying. It seems to indicate that mentors are willing to take a visible role.

Participants’ concurred during focus group discussions that mentoring is the provision of leadership, guidance and directions to the mentee. Lady A summarised the views of all participants saying,

> mentoring is providing leadership to student teachers and guiding them during their teaching practice. We tell them what to do, so you will be giving them directions because they will be learning from us.

Emerging from the above is not only the provision of leadership and guidance by mentors to student teachers but also how they relate to each other. According to Lady A, mentors seems not to discuss with their mentees on how they should operate. However they bring help to the mentoring relationship. On the other hand the participants seemed to agree that mentors ‘tell’ their mentees what and how to do things in their classes. In addition, coming from the above conversation seems to be the belief that mentees bring very little into the relationship.

Two important points seem to emerge from the above quotes. Firstly, school-based supervisors’ understanding of mentoring seems to involve the provision of leadership to less experienced mentees. More specifically, mentors’ understand mentoring as a form of apprenticeship. Secondly, the provision of leadership seems to take the form of dictating what and how teaching should go. Mentors’ conceptualisation of what mentoring is seems to bring to the fore the issues of authority and power differentials as there is little room for dialogue.

4.5.1.2 Category 2: Who is a mentor?

The literature reviewed revealed that mentors are qualified teachers trained for a specific teacher development programme (Hudson, 2013; McMahan, 2017; Whitebook & Bellm, 2014; Tok & Yilmaz, 2011). Emerging perspectives from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions suggest that a mentor is a qualified and experienced teacher chosen by the head to guide and become a role model to the mentees. For example, Lady C was of the view that:

> A mentor is someone who is well experienced in teaching profession and a mentor is one who can be a role model, who can show the mentee what exactly to do at the right time.

Inferring from the above quotation, Lady C’s view suggests that a mentor is a qualified and experienced teacher. In addition, she also seems to understand who should be a mentor in terms of functions or duties. According to her, a mentor is a role model. The issue of training is silent from her view of a mentor.

Another school-based supervisor, Lady D, seems to share a similar view when she said a mentor is, "… a qualified someone who can lead, who can direct and who can show the way".

Emerging from this excerpt is the view that a mentor is a leader. The mentors espoused that there are exercising instructional leadership. They communicate with mentees to develop their knowledge and skills. This further supports the above view that mentors should be understood in terms of the leadership roles that they perform. The issue of leadership kept on recurring even during focus group discussions. For example, Tawanda pointed out that "a mentor is a leader or qualified teacher selected by the head to guide student teachers during teaching practice".

Responding to the same issue during focus group discussions, Lady A added a new qualification about who should be a mentor when she pointed out that, "… at our school more than two years in teaching field, someone can be a mentor".

Though she seemed to echo similar views with other participants, she underscored experience as necessary for one to become a mentor. According to Lady A, two years teaching experience qualifies one to be a mentor.

In another interview, Lady E reiterated a similar view about who should be a mentor when she pointed out that:

> I can say a mentor is attached to a mentee and then she supervises that mentee, she will come to you, she will be attached to you with little knowledge and you have to assist him/her to gain more knowledge on how to do T.P.

Drawing from the above quotation, Lady E seems to view a mentor is in terms of function. A mentee is "attached" to a more experienced teacher who in turn provides supervision and guidance. This participant seems to suggest that a mentor has expertise and the mentee learns from the mentor. Mentors provide a support system to help mentees develop new knowledge for the new roles and responsibilities. This suggests that mentoring takes the form of an apprenticeship model where a novice learns from a more experienced and expert person (Eryilmaz & Aypay, 2016). According to Lady E, a mentor is an expert responsible for developing mentees' teaching competences. This is in agreement with DuFour 2002, who purports that instructional leaders should guide the interns to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills which will result in quality teaching.

What seems to emerge from the above narratives is that a mentor is an experienced, qualified teacher in-charge of a class and chosen by the head to provide instructional guidance to pre-service teachers during their teaching practice. It seems all participants agreed that mentors are more knowledgeable than their mentees. The provision of instructional guidance by mentors to their mentees is critical. The mentors as instructional leaders seem to focus on setting high expectations and standards which provides opportunity for professional growth (Fink & Resnick, 2001). However, what appears to be interesting is that mentors seem to believe that there is not much to learn from their mentees, as they did not articulate that. This type of thinking by mentors seems give little room to the view that mentoring is a give and take relationship. The aspect of being a qualified teacher for one to be a mentor is the main point of departure between what emerged from the review of literature for this study and what the participants said during the interviews and focus group discussions. To the participants, anyone who is a qualified teacher could provide mentorship to pre-service teachers on teaching practice.

4.5.1.3 How mentors are selected

There is consensus in the literature consulted that heads of stations have the mandate to select mentors for pre-service teachers. However, scholars bemoan the lack of a standardised criterion on the selection of mentors (Ambrosetti, 2012; Genc, 2016’ Samkange, 2015). All school-based supervisors who participated in this study seemed unaware of how they became mentors. For example, Lady D responding to this issue during focus group discussions pointed out the following:

> I really would not know, but I believe they also saw that I am qualified, like I have the qualification. I am not a temporary teacher so that’s when they probably made me a mentor. They saw that I could be a leader. I am a potential leader.

It is clear from the above extract that Lady D was unaware about how she became a mentor. The extract further demonstrates that her response was speculative rather than fact. According to Lay D, there is a possibility that heads select mentors on grounds of their qualifications and leadership potential.

Interestingly, another participant, Lady B was equally unaware about how she was selected a mentor. This was clear from her response when she pointed out that:

> I think they just thought I am mature enough to help someone, so I think the head knows that I am someone who is hard working and by so doing a mentee can have my example.

Emerging from this conversation is that Lady B thought that her being mature, hard working and qualified made her a mentor. What is clear is that she is unaware of the actual reasons for her selection as a mentor.

Responding to the issue of how she was selected a mentor Lady E also echoed similar sentiments when she pointed out that:

> I think they have seen my hard working with pupils and because I am a distinctive student from the college, they wanted the mentee to be a distinctive student too so they attached a mentee to me.

Drawing from the above conversation, Lady E thought that since she was hard working and having a distinction in teaching practice during her pre-service course were the criteria the school head used to select her to become a mentor.

As pointed above focus group discussions revealed that all participants were unaware how their school heads selected them to become mentors. Sir F seemed to have summarised the views of all participants when he said, “we are not told about why and how we are chosen to be mentors. You are only told to have a student in your class”.

The above quotes indicate that all participants were unaware about how and why they were selected mentors at their respective schools. It emerged that school heads do not consult their teachers before appointing them to become mentors. Inferring from the above conversations, it seems school heads appoint mentors from qualified teachers who have requisite knowledge and expertise to guide pre-service teachers on teaching practice.

4.5.2 **Theme 1: Discussion of findings**

Scholars define mentoring as a process intended to assist the novice to develop appropriate teaching behaviours and strategies through nurturing (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Ochanji *et al.,* 2015; Pennanen *et al.*, 2015; Wetzel *et al.*, 2017). In accordance with literature, participants for this study also conceptualised mentoring as the provision of guidance, leadership and role modelling. Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) view mentoring as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced teacher guides a novice. The relationship is characterised by which a more experienced teacher guides a novice. The relationship is characterised by reciprocation and is non-hierarchical (Ambrosetti, 2011). The participants in this study seem to embrace some of the components constituting mentoring such as provision of guidance to a less experience person by a more experienced one.

More specifically, school-based supervisors' understanding of mentoring has two critical components. First, they understand reciprocation and is non-hierarchical (Ambrosetti, 2011).

More specifically, school-based supervisors' understanding of mentoring has three critical components. First, they understand mentoring in terms of leadership. It seems to these mentors mentoring is synonymous with the provision of leadership to their mentees. They seem to view themselves as instructional leaders (DuFour 2002). For example, this is what Lady A was referring to when she said, "mentoring is providing leadership to student teachers and guiding them during teaching practice". This suggests that school-based supervisors conceptualise mentoring, not necessarily as a process and a relationship, but in terms of function. They specifically understand mentoring in terms of what they do and how they operate at their stations with mentees. In other words, experience with student teachers on teaching practice shapes their understanding of what mentoring is. It is not far-fetched to suggest that school-based supervisors' conceptualisation clearly brings to the fore the issues of power and authority. It appears from the conversations above that mentees bring in almost nothing into the relationship. Their role in the partnership seems to be that of blind followers.

Literature reviewed for this study revealed that mentors are expert teachers trained to handle a specific teacher professional development programme (Heeralal, 2014; Tok & Yilmaz, 2011; McMahan & Garza, 2017; Wilder, 1992). Participants in this study partly concurred with this view about who should be a mentor. They agreed that mentors are certified teachers given the responsibility of mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum. Their understanding of who should be a mentor differs from the prevailing scholarship in that they are of the opinion that being a certified teacher qualifies one to be a mentor. To these participants, qualified teachers do not need any further training. The participants' understanding of who the mentor is seems to be characterised by three critical components. First, they consider a mentor as a leader. It seems from their understanding a mentor is someone with leadership qualities. Second, experience seems a key ingredient of who a mentor is. It is critical that mentors posses the necessary experience to guide student teachers on teaching practice. Third, mentors are qualified teachers with expertise or knowledge to provide leadership to mentees on practicum. The three components are critical in a mentoring relationship.

Scholars on mentoring (Ochanji et al., 2015; Pennan et al., 2015) argue that mentors are teachers trained for a specific teacher-training programme. This study revealed that not all the mentors who participated in this study trained for their mentoring roles. This lack of training suggests that school-based supervisors relied on their experience as pre-service teachers and their knowledge from mentoring student teachers on practicum. This entails that school-based supervisors did not provide similar experiences to their mentees.

The consensus emerging from the literature is that school heads have the mandate to select and appoint mentors at their stations (Ambrosetti, 2012; DTE Handbook, 2015; Genc, 2016; Samkange, 2015). Participants in this study concurred with what emerged from the literature that school heads are responsible for appointing and allocating student teachers to mentors. However, what seems unclear from the literature is the selection criteria of teachers to be mentors for pre-service teachers on teaching practice (Rowley, 1999; Russell & Russell, 2011; Brady & Broadbent, 2007). It is interesting to note that school heads seems to have unwritten criteria for selecting mentors. All participants believed that heads selected them because of their "knowledge" of teaching, "hardworking" and "leadership potential".

What seems to be a critical and disturbing finding from this study is that heads do not consult mentor during their selection and allocation of mentees. This is likely to negatively impact on the mentoring relationship (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). The general feeling of the mentors suggests that the school heads were supposed to consult them first before allocating them student teachers to guide during their teaching practice in schools.

4.6 THEME TWO: ROLE OF MENTORS

This section focuses on the role of school-based supervisors in the mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice starting from the first day of contact. It is critical to understand how mentors received their mentees as this has a bearing on their future interactions (Alnajjar, 2016; Sanders, 2005). Two sub-themes emerged from the analysis of data for this theme, namely mentors' roles and support given to mentees by their mentors.

4.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Role of school-based mentors

Two categories emerged from the analysis of data on this sub-theme namely mentors' perspectives of their role(s) and mentoring practices.

4.6.1.1 Mentors' perspectives of their roles

Several mentor roles emerged from the reviewed literature such as nurturing, provision of counselling, guiding and supervising (Hoxha, 2016; Mudzielwana, 2014; Roff, 2012; Samkange, 2015). Similar roles also emerged from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the participants. For example, Lady E shared her sentiments about her role as a mentor during interviews saying:

> A mentor is a planner, someone who plans the day-to-day activities. What we are going to do and what pupils are supposed to do for the day. Is someone who is the advisor, who gives advice. A mentor is a leader.

Drawing from the above remark, mentors are clearly programme planners and mentees are followers. What it therefore means is that mentors are instructional leaders (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Thus, they should lead the mentees and the mentoring programmes. It is however not quite clear how the mentors provided advice to their mentees. From this statement, it appears that the relationship is not dialogical. Lady E reiterated what other participants pointed out above, that mentors were leaders.

Responding to the same issue about the roles of a mentor, Lady C expressed her views as:

> Okay a mentor is someone who has to be a role model. Eeeh the way s/he dresses has to show the mentee a professional way of dressing. And also the other role of a mentor is to be exemplary on the way you deliver your lessons and also the mentor has to be exemplary especially on the way s/he handles his/her record books, how it is done and when it is done.

The key role of the mentor emerging from this remark suggests that a mentor is a role model. This also suggests that mentees were to emulate their mentors in many respects stretching from dressing to lesson delivery. Most effective mentoring occurs were communication system is open and provision of feedback is established to create trust (Allen & Poteet, 1999).

Another participant, Sir F, added a new dimension of a supervisory role when he said,

> a mentor is a supervisor who supervises the pre-service teacher in his scheming, planning, lesson delivery and the marking of books.

What is emerging from this statement is that a mentor's role is to supervise student teachers during practicum. According to Sir F, mentors are responsible for supervising how student teachers scheme and plan their lessons, and they also monitor lesson delivery and assessment of children's work. What seems interesting is that mentors are not trained for such responsibilities.

Contributing to the discussion on the roles of the mentor during focus group discussions Tawanda had this to say:

> The major one is to ensure that the student has got the right skills to draw the lesson plan or is equipped with enough knowledge on how to write a lesson plan following what has been schemed in line with the syllabus. So document writing is the first thing, following what is required from the mother college. Secondly how is the student going to deliver the lesson, in other words he must have a vision of how he is going to deliver the lesson. We also discuss the methodology. Then you also have to teach the mentee what is important or the key points to highlight and the materials to be collected before the commencement of the lesson … there is need for a mentee to ensure that the teacher uses the simplest English understood by pupils.

According to Tawanda the roles of the mentor are to develop student teachers' competences in terms of drawing lesson plans and lesson delivery. This supports the cognitive apprenticeship model used as a lens for this study. Tawanda seems to portray his role through discussions with the mentee on teaching approaches and the language to use with learners.

What is emerging from the above quotes is that mentors play various critical roles in helping mentees to become competent teachers and behaving similarly to any other professional. More specifically, mentors act as critical friends for student teachers on teaching practice. Most importantly, the role of an instructional leader seems to be the most important one as they direct and influence mentees on “what” “when” and “how” to teach pupils. These narratives seem to suggest that mentors play a critical role in the development of teaching skills for their mentees. What seems interesting is the finding that experienced teachers not trained for the mentoring tasks perform these roles.

4.6.1.2 Mentoring practices

In part, this study investigated the school-based supervisors’ mentoring practices. This was important as it helped to unravel and unpack how mentors enacted their duties. All mentor participants agreed that establishing cordial relations and knowing each other, including their college expectations, were the first things to do during initial contact. Lady D put it thus:

> I will have to get to know the mentee first, thus actually I will involve myself into knowing the mentee as in knowing the mentee in detail, like who is he or who is she, where does she come from? What are the things that she likes just to make the mentee comfortable , so it is about background information about the mentee first and then move to asking what she knows about planning, scheming so that I know where to help.

The above acknowledgement is in accord with the finding by Alnajjar (2016) that effective mentoring begins with the establishment of a sincere and trustworthy relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Lady D seems to be an effective mentor as she begins by not only establishing a cordial relationship, but also establishing what the mentee knows about the major task of teaching.

Responding to the issue about receiving their mentees, Sir F added a new dimension, that of college expectations, when he said,

> … I have to ask him the requirements of the college. How many lessons s/he should be teaching per day and also I have to provide him or her with the timetable so that he could know where to start …

This consideration is in line with Rowley (1999), McMahan and Garza (2017) and Hudson (2013b) who contend that mentors should be aware of the goals of the mentoring programmes and the needs of the mentees. This argument also concurs with what emerged from the focus group discussions when mentors said that the first important thing to do during the initial contact was acquainting themselves with their mentees. Creation of collegiality seems to be the main issue during mentor-mentee initial contact.

Turning to the issue of documentation, participants seemed to agree that they assisted mentees in syllabus interpretation, scheming, planning and organising their teaching practice files. In contributing to discussions on this, Lady D expressed her views as:

> Because normally we have the mentee coming without knowing the scheme or without knowing how to interpret the syllabus, breaks the concepts. So I really have to find out how much the mentee knows, so that we know where to start from. Then I teach the mentee to scheme, I teach the mentee to plan, do the records.

Emerging from this contribution is that mentors seem to conduct brief lectures on how to generate teaching practice documents. Lady D seems to engage in deeper conversations with mentees focused on curriculum analysis and documentation. She teaches her mentee to interpret the syllabus, how to scheme and to plan lessons. What is interesting seems to be the way she taught her mentee. She starts from what the mentees already knows to the unknown. This is accordance with the cognitive apprenticeship model of learning where the mentor starts from what the protégé knows to complex activities (Collins *et al.,* 1989).

Responding to the issue of documentation during interviews, Lady B pointed out that:

> The most important area is scheming, that is the syllabus interpretation and then we go to planning, how to state objectives. Okay in the scheming, the syllabus interpretation, how the topics or objectives are arranged in the syllabus. I explain to the mentee how to also divide them so that they fit our three terms and also how to arrange them so that they take those that are the same and put them together. Then on planning that is the introduction, the importance of the introduction on a plan is to arouse interest in the children when they are learning. Then, the lesson steps how to distribute your time, then the lesson steps so that you don't dwell on things for a long time making other areas suffer. And then the conclusion why it is important to wind off in a way that will make children want to know more next time when you come to teach the subject.

Drawing from the above quotation, Lady B is evidently an instructional leader. She teaches her mentee about scheming and drawing lesson plans from schemes. It is unclear from this narrative whether colleges teach their student teachers these vital teaching components during their initial residential phase. It appears mentors teach their mentees what these student teachers were supposed to have learnt at college. What seems to emerge from this contribution is that colleges do not adequately prepare student teachers for teaching practice. Lady B seems to start anew with the mentees instead of just polishing up on minor aspects of teaching her mentee may require.

The above quotation agrees with what emerged from the analysis of documents in the student teachers' files. School-based mentors identify aspects of teaching their mentees need to improve on. For example, they would comment in their mentees' teaching practice documents thus:

Lady E: "Objectives should be measurable. Avoid using relative words such as correct".

Lady D: "You should not use words such as correct when stating objectives".

Lady A: "Indicate the use of media in your lesson steps".

Document analysis revealed that mentors write down what their mentees need to improve on in their lesson plans. This is critical as it focus student teachers on what exactly they need to work on and improve their instructional practices.

Emerging from participants suggest that mentors advise their mentees on a number of issues that included commenting on their schemes of work, how to use media, lesson steps and how to assess children's work, among other things. This suggests a hands-on approach to learning which is different from their college experiences.

Contributing during a focus group discussion Lady A pointed out how she enacted her mentoring role, saying:

> I will help the mentee to maintain the classroom discipline and also the classroom arrangement before the teaching takes place, sitting arrangement and everything that is in the classroom be it resources being used, the textbooks, the exercise books all these things, the cleanliness of the classroom.

Lady A teaches her mentee classroom management. This seems important, as her mentee will practice in an orderly environment. It seems Lady A enacted her mentoring in a practical way. The mentee learned by seeing and doing. This approach is in line with the cognitive apprenticeship method of learning where novices learn by seeing and doing in authentic environments (Collins & Brown, 1989).

Classroom management and organisation emerged as key focal points mentors and mentees worked on together. Document analysis revealed that mentors advised their mentees in writing how the charts and learning centres should be prepared. For example:

Lady B*:* "Ensure that current children's work is displayed to motivate them".

Lady C: "There is need to display more charts on Social Studies".

Lady A: "Update your learning centres by putting relevant items with questions that are in line with the concepts that are currently being taught".

The advice given to student teachers is important and improves pupils' learning. Interesting to note from the above extracts is the fact that mentors reflected their roles through both verbal and written advices.

Mentoring practices also involved how to deliver lessons. It emerged from focus group discussions that mentors assisted mentees by providing demonstration lessons, observations, exhibitions and feedback. Similar findings also emerged from document analysis when I discovered that mentors wrote extensively about what and how mentees were supposed to improve their lesson delivery. For example, Lady C wrote,

> The teacher should make her voice audible enough to be heard by all learners … the introduction should be relevant, short and motivating.

The mentors helped student teachers on teaching practice to project their voices in such a way that the learners hear them properly and how to introduce lessons. This suggests that mentors play the role of supervisors and not assessors. For example, Lady D had this to say when I interviewed her:

> When marking I encourage the mentee to indicate where there is an error because we find out that the whole sentence would be cancelled yet the error is just a spelling mistake… And also marking must be done timeously such that when pupils do the next written work, the previous written work should be marked and corrected by and large. Always be appropriate in using media.

Drawing from the above quote, this school-based supervisor clearly taught the mentee how to assess children's work effectively. A teacher should be familiar with this critical component. Emerging from this narrative seems to be that Lady D does not force her mentee to accept her advice. Instead she 'encourages' the mentee to assess learners in the correct way. This further shows that she had respect for her mentee.

Responding to the same question about her mentoring practices regarding assessment of learners' work, Lady B expressed her views thus:

> It's about constructive marking. The marking should be constructive be very constructive and pupils should understand the comments that you write in books. You don't write it for yourself but for the child to learn. Whenever a mentee is marking in pupil's work s/he should see to it that she is communicating with the children even if the child is not there … on the spot remediation you will correct the child so that the child won't get zero on the work… And mark the corrections, some of the mentees they think that it is not important.

Emerging from the above narrative, Lady B seems to enact her mentoring role by focusing exactly on what a teacher is expected to know and do. The issue of writing constructive and motivating comments about learners' performance is critical. It is interesting to note that these school-based supervisors are playing an important role in teacher education despite the fact that they did not receive training in mentorship.

Mentors provided their student teachers on teaching practice with both verbal and written advice. The student teachers filed advice received from mentors and other supervisors in their teaching practice files. Lady C wrote the following comment as part of the advice she gave to her mentee:

> Encourage pupils to improve on their presentation of work in their exercise books. Also write encouraging comments so as to motivate the learners.

Lady C like Lady D above do not force their mentee to accept their advice. The above quote clearly shows that she encourages her mentee to take note of identified errors. This suggests that mentors' practices are practically focused on all aspects of the teachers' work. The comments and advice of mentors provided in written form enable student teachers and college-based supervisors to track the growth of these mentees.

Equally important is the fact that mentors concurred that they helped their mentees to learn how to teach all subjects in the primary school curriculum. For example, Lady E, as if speaking on behalf of all participants during a focus group discussion, pointed out that,

> … from my experience I have noticed that most students have got a phobia in general paper subjects, so he is right [referring to Sir F] by saying they should teach all subjects.

Contributing to the discussion on whether mentors allowed their mentees to teach all subjects, Lady C indicated that some student teachers are uncomfortable teaching certain primary school subjects, as she said:

> I think what she is trying to say, most of the students, the mentees they would prefer to teach mathematics, Shona most probably those subjects which are very easy for them. They would rather leave Home Economics, Art, PE …

Drawing from this conversation it is rather disturbing to note that some mentees only want to teach subjects that appear to be easier for them. This defeats the whole purpose of teaching practice, as student teachers are supposed to teach all subjects in the primary school curriculum.

Mentors agreed that mentees did not want or did not choose to teach content subjects. During the focus group discussions, all mentors agreed on the need for mentees to teach all subjects. Also emerging from the interviews was the practice of "diminishing or gradual withdrawal" of support by mentors thereby giving student teachers more and more responsibility, especially towards the end of their practicum. This is how Sir F expressed this view:

> Yes on the final year that's when we will be giving them their normal role, so you don't constantly check, you actually give them time to explore like he is a mentor now … is mature so I will be encouraging on just perfection of everything.

Emerging from this discussion is the view that Sir F provided more opportunities for student teachers to show what they can do on their own without strictly supervising them. What also seems to emerge from the above examples is that mentors' practices spread over a broad spectrum and tended to cover all aspects of a teacher's life.

4.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Mentors' support for pre-service teachers

Two categories emerged from the analysis of data on this sub-theme, namely areas where pre-service teachers needed greater support and the type of assistance mentors provided their mentees in scheming, planning and preparing a teaching practice file. These are critical components of the teaching practice phase.

4.6.2.1 Areas where pre-service teachers needed help

The teaching practice component provides pre-service teachers opportunities to put into practice the various theories they learnt during the initial phase of their teacher development programme (Hoxha, 2016; Moyo, 2002; Samkange, 2015; Mpofu & Hove, 2016; Grossman, 2010). More often than not mentors complain that teacher training institutions release student teachers for teaching practice without proper grounding in what they are expected to do. With this in mind, I attempted to find out from the mentors the components of teaching that would be of great assistance to pre-service teachers. As if speaking on behalf of all participants, during interviews, Lady E pointed out that:

> This is their first time in the field, so they don't even know. They need confidence to stand in front of the pupils. So first thing, I will explain to them on how to scheme like what I have said, you must come up with aims in your scheme. We talk about objectives, SMART objectives in the plan. I have to show them what we call SMART objectives and explain them. I have to talk to them on how to mark the exercise books, how to live in the conducive environment. Our environment should be smart and that pupils must be free to learn. These are some of the things that I talk to them.

The above statement indicates that this mentor focused on teaching the mentee to have confidence when teaching and coming up with relevant documents such as schemes of work and plans. This resembles what student teachers learn during their first two terms at college. More specifically, student teachers require help in scheming, planning and lesson delivery.

Answering a question about areas in which student teachers require more assistance, Lady B expressed her views as follows:

> The most important area is scheming, that is the syllabus interpretation and then we go to planning, how the topics or objectives are arranged in the syllabus, I explain to the mentees how to also divide them so that they fit our terms, three terms. The mentee should be able to interpret the syllabus. And also on the classroom management, how to present your classroom corners and charts, handwriting on the charts, labels and also science corners, not just corners that are dormant that would not communicate with the child. Let children love everything that you prepare for them. On marking I usually guide my mentee on marking the size of ticks and comments. I also help with relationships with other colleagues in the school, how to

> approach other people especially the people who are different from your age, so we help them with relationships.

According to Lady B, mentees needed more help in scheming, planning, lesson delivery and assessing pupils' work. This is in agreement with what Mudzielwana and Maphosa (2014) referred to when they pointed out that mentors are generally helpful to mentees in areas such as record making and keeping, as well as classroom management. Another critical issue that emerged from conversations with participants during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was the issue of teacher-pupil relationships. This is how Tawanda put it across during focus group discussions:

> Okay we have the dos and don'ts in the Ministry, the way we use the instrument which is the Education Act, we have girls, the girl child and some male mentees in that they must not get involved in a love affair with a pupil. The mentees have to also keep up-to-date registers; they need them on daily basis. Every Monday we need to check whether the student has schemed and planned and is up-to-date.

Drawing from the above comment, it seems pre-service teachers require more assistance in understanding rules and regulations governing teachers' operations. The Education Act is the instrument that provides the code of conduct for teachers. The issue of marking the attendance register is important as it shows whether learners come to school daily. It also makes the mentees responsible and accountable. The fact that the supervisor checks on the student teacher's records at the beginning of every week suggests that mentors are supervisors.

On the same issue, Lady C noted with concern that pre-service teachers needed more assistance on how to,

> … manage the class properly especially when we talk of voice projection being firm enough during lesson presentation.

Lesson delivery appears to be an area of concern to this school-based supervisor.

All seven participants agreed that pre-service teachers needed more help in scheming, planning, marking, syllabus interpretation, classroom management and lesson delivery. This suggests that colleges inadequately prepared pre-service teachers for their teaching practice.

4.6.3 Type of support given by mentors

It was quite clear from all the mentor participants that pre-service teachers exhibited deficiencies in their scheming, lesson planning and lesson delivery; hence, they also lacked confidence (Ambrosetti, 2012; Frost, 2013; Ehrich, 2017; Wasonga *et al.*, 2015; Genc, 2016). It was important for me to find out from participant mentors how they helped mentees to improve in these crucial components of the teaching profession.

4.6.3.1 Type of support mentors give in scheming

One of the areas that pre-service teachers needed more mentor support, identified above, was the aspect of scheming. Responding on the issue of how she helped her mentee in scheming, Lady D pointed out,

> in scheming I have helped the mentee to break down the syllabus topics into teachable units. I have helped the mentee to lay out the scheme properly.

The above quote suggests that Lady D helped her mentee on documentation of teaching practice records such as schemes of work. Asked to explain a little bit more about how she provided assistance to her mentee she pointed out that:

> Like in scheming we take the syllabus and then we will help the mentee as to where to find the content to teach, has to get the aims and break them into teachable units, how to formulate objectives from aims, thus what I teach the mentee. And also to come up with teaching methods, teaching strategies to apply and what steps to follow when s/he will be taking the lesson. Yes I also encourage my mentee to find and state the relevant e-ehe media which would be relevant to what she is delivering.

What emerges from this narrative suggests that the mentor provides hands-on experiences starting from scratch as if teaching the mentee anew. This narrative also suggests that the mentor rendered help to the mentee through dialogue. Of interest is the fact that the mentor has never received any mentoring training. It appears that Lady D's approach was based on her experience as a qualified teacher.

Another participant, Lady A, seems to use the same practical approach in initiating the mentee into the profession. She pointed out that:

> The most important areas in scheming that is the syllabus interpretation and how the topics are arranged in the syllabus. Because the first time they come they will be looking for areas to scheme, so I will get into that, we take our books and take our syllabuses, we explain to each other how we are going to go about it, the topics, we

> are going to cover and he will be just noting down so that when he goes away he is going to prepare the scheme and plan.

Emerging from the above conversation was that Lady A helped her mentee in scheming through dialogue. The initiation into the profession seems to take on a dialogical dimension as shown by the continued use of “we” suggesting that the relationship is collaborative. It appears that Lady A utilised a collaborative approach in developing her mentee’s scheming skills.

What seems to emerge from the above discussions is that mentors discuss with mentees in constructing various teaching practice documents such as schemes of work. Literature supports the need for a dialogical and collegial relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Aderibigbe, 2014; Kilminister & Jolly, 2000; Ehrich, 2017). Equally important is the focus on skills development anchored on what exactly needs to be done and how. This supports the finding by Anderson (2007) that effective mentoring contributes to the development of mentees’ skills.

The focus on syllabus interpretation, scheming, planning and lesson delivery seems to recur; this suggests that teacher-training institutions are not addressing this issue properly during the first phase of the teacher development programme. Scholars on teacher development argue that the mentoring relationship needs to equip mentees with the necessary skills to fit into the national education system effectively (Samkange, 2015; Sanders, 2005).

4.6.3.2 Support given by mentors in planning

All mentors concurred that mentees needed more help in planning and other important components of their course. Planning is a critical component of the teacher professional development of pre-service teachers. It was important to find out from mentor participants how they helped their mentees in terms of planning their lessons. What emerged from all narratives from mentors suggests that they helped their mentees to understand the structure of a detailed lesson plan from the introduction to the evaluation of the lesson. This is how Lady C assisted her mentee:

> Then planning, it has to come from the scheme. Discuss with the pre-service teacher the importance of the introduction; it has to arouse interest in the children when they are learning. And then how to distribute your time in the lesson steps so that you don’t dwell on one aspect for a long time making other areas suffer. We talk about

> the conclusion, why it is important to wind off in a way that will make the children want to know more next time, when you come to teach the same subjects.

Emerging from this conversation is that mentors help their mentees in planning through discussions focusing on various lesson components. This seems to be a very practical approach in terms of lesson planning. Lady C seems to take the mentee through all the critical lesson development steps in a relaxed atmosphere as evidence by her continued use of ‘we’.

Responding to the same issue about lesson planning, during a focus group discussion, Lady B had this to say:

> We look at the objectives and we also look at the e-eh steps, the teaching steps from the introduction, right up to the conclusion; how to distribute your time so that it fits the lesson. And also how to prepare for the lesson because the plan is the preparation, so what you state in the plan should help you, should guide you on how you are going to look for aids, media, whatever you are going to look for to use. So the plan is the guideline, therefore the mentee should know that it is very important. In fact we explain to each other, how we are going to go about it, the topics we are going to cover as is laid down in the scheme for each subject.

Lady B seems to help her mentee by working together from start to finish in developing lesson plans. This supports Vygostky’s concept of scaffolding where the more experienced mentor in this case provides a lot of assistance during the early stages of skills development then gradually diminishes (McLellan, 1994).

The above quotes represent the type of support provided by mentors as all the participants concurred that they supported mentees in coming up with concise lesson plans that respond to the dictates of the syllabus. They also paid attention to the timing of the lesson, which is crucial as it controls activities in each subject area for the achievement of objectives. This is in line with Lewis (2017) who argues that formulating the objectives is the first necessary step for producing a good lesson plan. Therefore, mentors gave mentees the necessary starting support. The sequence of the lesson is another area of support where steps should be coherent to assist in the understanding of the learnt concepts. The mentee’s attention was also drawn to the choice of media to be used. Specification of what the teacher intends to teach is an important component in the development of all teachers. This is in agreement with reviewed literature which contends that mentors’ role is to develop the mentee professionally and socially (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Hudson, 2016; Sheridan & Nguyen, 2015; Izadinia, 2015). Interesting from the above conversations is the collaboration between the mentors and their mentees in constructing teaching practice documents.

Responding to the issue about help given by mentors to their mentees on lesson planning, during the focus group discussion, Sir F brought in the dimension of lesson evaluation when he said:

> The mentee must evaluate his lessons in order to pick the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology he would have used. I would encourage the pre-service teacher to involve teacher-pupil activities and ee-eee pupil-pupil interactions as well as avoiding teacher-centred activities. The activities should take into consideration pupil's age. After the lesson, I ask the mentee to evaluate the lesson.

It is clear from the above quote that Sir F provides his mentee with practical lessons on lesson planning and evaluation. This may also suggest that teacher-training institutions inadequately prepare pre-service teachers for their teaching practice in terms of scheming, lesson planning and lesson evaluation. Reviewed literature supports the view that effective mentors assist their mentees in coming up with meaningful lesson plans and schemes (Hoxha, 2016; Samkange, 2015; Ehrich, 2017, Lewis, 2017; Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015, Daresh, 2003).

4.6.3.3: Type of support given by mentors for preparation of teaching practice file

The teaching practice file is one of the critical documents every student teacher on teaching practice is expected to have (D.T.E Handbook, 2015; Moyo. 2002; Pennanen *et al.*, 2015). The teaching practice file contains the student's personal details, college expectations, rules and regulations for teaching practice, college and school-based supervision reports, teaching notes, a column showing areas to improve, teacher resource materials and correspondence (Moyo, 2002). It is therefore essential that mentors be acquainted with its contents. It is against this background that I wanted to find out from the mentors how they helped their mentees to prepare such a file.

Most participants agreed that they asked their mentees about what their teachers' colleges expected in the teaching practice file then helped their mentees accordingly.

Responding to the question about support mentors offer their mentees in the preparation of the teaching practice file, Lady E said:

> Basically on the teaching practice file, we ask the mentee what they are expected to put in those files by the college, the requirements of the college and then we work along the requirements of the college. Basically there will be some teaching notes in the teaching practice file and also some crits in there from the college and local supervisors, and any other information which will assist them.

The above quotation suggests Lady E does not know what the teaching practice file should contain. Instead, she got such information from the mentee. Literature reviewed for this study stresses the importance of effective communication between colleges and schools if the mentoring relationship is to be effective (Cohen *et al.,* 2010; Brown & Steadman, 2011; Marimo, 2014; Musingafi & Mafumbate, 2014; Samkange, 2015). The fact that Lady E obtains such critical information from the mentees and not the college suggests weak communication between colleges and schools.

Responding to the same issue about help she gives her mentees in constructing the teaching practice file, Lady C had this to say:

> In the teaching practice file … I usually tell them to, how to divide the teaching practice file. Most of them come to the teaching practice without the knowledge of what exactly to put inside. Tell them how to divide this file and also to encourage them on putting teaching notes in those sections, so we usually tell them to divide the files according to the subjects they will be teaching most of … the time we tell them how to divide and how to deal with their teaching notes and also to make the teaching file presentable.

What emerges from this narrative is that Lady C seems to introduce the mentee to what a teaching practice file is and what it should contain. However, the source of information for the contents of the file is unclear from this discussion. This advice given to the mentee may be based on what the mentor also went through during her teaching practice when she was still a student. The issue of teaching notes seems to be a recurring issue and this suggests that mentors ensured that their mentees read widely to have adequate subject matter content, what Shulman (1986) referred to as content knowledge (CK).

While most mentor participants showed concern in terms of helping their mentees in organising their teaching practice files, a few others thought that the file was not important to the student. Lady D dismissed the file by saying:

> Anyway there is no provision for our signatures in this document like we have with other records, the plans, and schemes. We sometimes just peep and leave it for the mentee to do as expected.

This quotation suggests that this supervisor does not value this document. She seems to think that all the important documents need to have a section where mentors can sign.

Another participant, Tawanda, also seemed not to value the teaching practice file when he said,

> … the teaching practice file is mainly the mentee's baby. I will advise him to use it effectively as the college expect.

This suggests that Tawanda does not see any value for the student teacher to have a teaching practice file. He only advises the mentee to adhere to college expectations. This may suggest a lack of knowledge on his part or that he does not see any value in it. Equally important is the fact that colleges do not provide adequate guidance on how mentors are supposed to operate.

The mentor participants agreed during the focus group discussions that they were not quite familiar with the requirements of the teaching practice file. Lady D seemed to have summarised the views of the other mentor participants in the following excerpt:

> We are not sure of the information in the teaching practice file. The file has no place for the mentor to sign that's what the pre-service teachers told us. In actual fact we do not concentrate on teaching practice file. We encourage them to file the supervisor's reports both from the college and school supervisors so that they refer to them from time to time.

This quotation suggests that Lady D did not understand how mentors are expected to help their mentees in the construction of the teaching practice file. She only encouraged the mentee to file supervision reports.

The narratives above seem to indicate that there is a need for teachers' colleges to work closely together with mentors in schools to enhance the mentorship programmes. Equally important is the fact that teacher development institutions need to develop in students a deeper understanding of the dynamics of teaching before releasing them for their teaching practice (McMahan & Garza, 2017; Corrigan & Loughran, 2008; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

4.6.4 Theme 2: Discussion of findings

Locally and internationally, mentors' roles include nurturing, counselling, guiding and supervising student teachers during their practicum (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Cherion, 2007; Hudson, 2016; Smith & Lynch, 2014; Mudzielwana, 2014). What emerged from participants in this study is largely in accordance with the scholarship on mentors' roles cited above. The mentor participants viewed their roles as involving planning teaching and learning programmes for their classes and advising student teachers on “what” and “how” to teach pupils. More specifically, the mentors provided instructional guidance to the mentees on practicum. Stated differently, the major roles of mentors that emerged during interviews include the gradual transformation of novice teachers into competent professionals.

On the issue of the approach, mentors enacted their duties from first contact until mentees completed their practicum; this seemed to be incremental (Alnajjar, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Liu, 2014; Hierdsfield *et al*, 2008). It emerged that, on first contact, their focus was on building a strong relationship with their mentees by acquainting each other with all the necessary personal details and familiarising the novice teacher with information to kick-start his/her teaching practice. This is a critical finding as it helps the two partners in constructing a firm basis for their subsequent interactions.

Providing mentees with the basics of teaching and survival skills seems to be the main activities of the mentors during the first days with their mentees. The mentors were quite clear when they pointed out that they teach the mentees how to interpret the syllabus and how to scheme and plan content to be taught for each term. Jita and Mokhele (2012) refer to this as “curriculum analysis” and most scholars on professional development refer to it as job-embedded professional learning (Frost, 2013; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). This was another vital finding in this study as it clearly spelled out how mentors initiated the novice teachers into the profession.

The study revealed that the next step by school-based mentors involved showing student teachers how schemes and detailed lesson plans are prepared. This was an essential finding as it spotlighted the role played by mentors and revealed that teacher training colleges send pre-service teachers out without adequate grounding on these important components critical to the teaching profession (Wasonga *et al.*, 2015; Ehrich, 2017; Genc, 2016). What is however interesting is that mentors teach their mentees how to prepare documents based on their own experiences. The mentor participants helped to develop the professional skills of their mentees through modelling; what Bandura (1976) labelled "imitation" learning.

In terms of classroom organisation, the mentors indicated that they demonstrated to their mentees how to prepare charts and organise learning centres for pupils. It appeared that discussion or dialogues characterise the way they teach student teachers. This seems to be a positive way of teaching and initiating novice teachers into the profession. This is also in accord with the argument that mentoring is a dialogical relationship (Ambrosetti, 2012; Hierdsfield *et al*, 2008; Aderibigbe 2014; Lai, 2006; Maphalala, 2013; Bradbury, 2010; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010).

The other aspects school-based mentors taught their mentees included providing demonstration lessons, professional conduct and ways to assess pupils' work. Stated differently, mentors' practices are dominated by learning by doing (Bandura, 1978). This supports reviewed literature that suggests that teaching practice should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to translate theory into practice (Hoxha, 2016; Moyo, 2002; Samkange, 2015). Whilst the manner mentors initiated the student teachers into the profession is commendable, it is rather disturbing to note that some student teachers are not comfortable in teaching content subjects offered in the primary school curriculum. It may be appropriate therefore to conclude that the final product is an insufficiently prepared teacher.

4.7 THEME 3: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MENTORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

The mentoring of pre-service teachers in Zimbabwe has been in place for more than a decade (MOHTE Letter, 2001). However, not much research has been conducted about the challenges mentors face in the execution of their duties, especially from the perspective of the participating school-based supervisors themselves. From the analysis of data on this component, three categories emerged, namely challenges in mentoring, support mentors received from colleges and from their schools and opportunities in mentoring.

4.7.1: Challenges faced by school-based supervisors in mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice

In the absence of training to provide mentorship to student teachers during practicum, school-based supervisors are likely to face several challenges during the enactment of their roles. This study, in part, investigated challenges faced by school-based supervisors mentoring student teachers on teaching practice. I started my interview by asking Lady D about the challenges she was facing in mentoring student teachers on teaching practice and she had this to say:

> Firstly the pre-service teachers mostly they come without much knowledge as to teaching and scheming. So we have challenges that even if I have finished my own schemes, I just have to sit with the mentee to teach her to scheme so it is a challenge which we find. Because you are supposed to be teaching your own pupils, but I have to sit with the mentee, which means I have an extra student to teach in the class.

According to Lady D, student teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge on teaching and scheming poses a serious challenge to her. She seems to feel that this places an extra load on her as she had to create time to teach the mentee in addition to her formal learners. The above quote suggests that teachers' colleges send student teachers for teaching practice when they are not fully prepared. The issue of scheming and lesson planning are fundamental in terms of effective teaching. Mentors seem to take over the responsibility of teaching student teachers basic skills. Asked to explain further, Lady D added:

> And then the other thing is, they also come and eh! they have got so many records to do. So instead of them teaching they will be concentrating more on the record books than the real teaching which they are supposed to be practising. So I find it a challenge, even if I want to give them, the mentee time to teach but she or he does not have time because of the records. The other thing is our timetable. We have the timetable where I am supposed to teach also my own lessons and the mentee is also supposed to be teaching also her lessons. They come from college with a certain number of lessons that they are supposed to teach, those subjects per day, but then it's clashing with mine because I am supposed to be teaching my own class.

Emerging from this quote seems to be that mentees spend most of their time preparing documents needed by their college. The multiplicity of documents militates against effective mentoring. Mentees end up failing to observe their mentors teaching. This defeats the whole purpose as student teachers learn through observing their mentors modelling excellent practices. The other challenge emerging from this conversation was the issue of timetabling. Coming up with a timetable suitable for both the mentor and mentee seems to be a problem affecting effective teaching and learning for learners.

The above quote seems to highlight most of the challenges mooted by mentors who participated in this study. It is clear from the above articulation that student teachers on teaching practice had serious deficiencies in terms of scheming and lesson delivery. An addition emerging from this articulation is the view that mentors have dual responsibilities, namely teaching their classes and simultaneously teaching the mentees the tricks of the trade. The statement, therefore, seems to highlight a conflict of interest in mentors who would like to improve pupils' pass rates and at the same time develop the teaching skills of their mentees. As pointed out by Lady E during focus discussions, "students have many documents to attend to at the same time it is difficult to have a timetable that can accommodate the two of us well. We are actually overloaded". This may be so because mentors are not trained to offer mentorship to student teachers on practicum.

Lady B brought to the fore another critical challenge faced by school-based supervisors mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice. She viewed differences in personalities between the mentor and mentee as a serious problem when she pointed out that:

> They have got different characters you might get someone who is so reserved. It is now the duty of the mentor to try and help that student to be free. It might take time … The other thing is that some of these students come from college raw. You might say take this syllabus and they say we do not know anything. Some of them do not want to be told what to do. They want to use textbooks instead of the syllabus so we teach them how to use the syllabus…

Emerging from this comment is that personality differences between the mentor and the mentee negatively affect effective learning of the latter. The issue of student teachers' unpreparedness for the teaching task also emerged from all the other data sources. This also suggests that teacher-training colleges send ill-prepared pre-service teachers for teaching practice. If this is true, the teacher training institutions are then defaulting on their responsibility.

Lady A, a mentor from a rural primary school, seems to face the problem of inadequacy of resources and a lack of knowledge concerning college requirements and expectations. This came out clearly during my interview with her when she pointed out that:

> Firstly, the challenges were of resources, usually in schools we do not have enough resources for example textbooks, syllabuses and teaching media, these ones are quite expensive especially for the mentees because they don't have enough money to buy the resources. However, most of the time they improvise but it's a challenge. The other challenge is that at times … I might not be well versed with the requirements of the college, they just come and tell us what the college expects us to do and we don't have the written information.

A shortage of resources in practising schools seems to be a serious challenge to school-based supervisors. The other challenge emerging from this conversation seems to be the lack of knowledge about college requirements on the part of the mentor. Asked how she dealt with this problem of a lack of knowledge concerning college expectations, Lady A explained that:

> …mostly it's the students, usually we don't have anything written from the college to clarify what we are supposed to do and the mentee says we are not supposed to do this and this, at times you get stuck then thus another challenge.

Emerging from this conversation is that colleges do not furnish school-based mentors with adequate information on how they should assist student teachers on teaching practice. Another challenge emerging from this articulation was a lack of resources. The problem of lack of resources is acute in some schools, especially in poor contexts where some schools even fail to provide syllabi, textbooks, stationery and media. This has been found to be profound in most developing countries (Donkoh & Dwamena, 2014) where a lack of resources is a common problem in rural and farm schools (Samkange, 2015).

A lack of electricity and adequate time for mentees to work on their teaching practice documents has been found to be another challenge faced by school-based supervisors. Sir F from a farm school expressed his displeasure concerning challenges he faced during the focus group discussion when he said:

> It seems as if their paper work is actually too much for them. Secondly where there is no electricity, they find it difficult to actually finish up their work especially in marking and planning. I find it that they would actually eeh their marking will spill over to the next day … Some of these pre-service teachers usually they dodge some of the lessons. They find some of the subjects to be challenging to them. Then they concentrate on the same subjects throughout the lesson delivery ... Some of them usually find it difficult, to actually participate in some of the co-curricular activities. When they will be busy doing their work, doing their charts, doing their media, writing their plan …

Three challenges emerge from the above conversation namely too much paper work for mentees, a lack of electricity and lack of knowledge of some subjects by mentees. Lack of electricity affects their preparation of lessons for the following. Too many records seem to discourage student teachers on teaching practice from taking part in co-curricular activities like sports. What appears to be a disturbing finding emerging from the above narrative was that mentees lack sufficient content to teach some primary school subjects.

Age differences emerged from the focus group interview with participants as another challenge faced by mentors. Age differences between the mentor and mentee negatively affected the mentoring relationship. Concerning the issue of age differences between the mentor and the mentee, Tawanda had this to say:

> The third one we have different student ages or mentees of different ages, a mentee can also be mature enough, more mature than the mentor … then he is likely to face problems here and there in terms of how they relate in the classroom situation with the mentor.

From the above quote, it seems that when the mentee is older than the mentor the situation is bound to be problematic because, culturally, the mentor may not feel comfortable to give instructions to someone older

During focus group discussion, the mentors agreed that gender differences also affect the mentoring of pre-service teachers. Lady C pointed out that:

> I need to say for example when we have got a male mentee usually they don't want to go for Home Economics lessons, say you are doing knitting or sewing they will say you are a lady and can do that for me and they don't want to go for these lessons.

What is emerging from this narrative seems to suggest that, in the African context, there are certain roles and activities that are determined by gender. These gender roles negatively affect pre-service teachers' teaching practice experiences, as they are likely not to teach all the subjects in the primary school curriculum.

All mentors bemoaned the lack of effective communication between colleges and schools, and between colleges and mentors in particular (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Marimo, 2014; Musingafi & Mafumbate, 2014). The majority of mentors viewed participation in college activities such as sports and attending college seminars by student teachers on teaching practice as serious challenges to them. The student teachers would usually deviate from what they had planned to do with their mentors. This came out clearly during interviews, for example, Lady C seemed to summarise all challenges faced by mentors in the following response:

> And also the other challenge we normally have is about the students who go for sports to the colleges, most of them they do not have enough time in the classroom and by the time they come back from sports, I mean the college activities, they will spend most of the time in the classroom writing their records, updating their records. So it's a challenge, so you will be seeing that s/he will no longer be performing duties which they are supposed to do.

It emerged that some mentees attended college-based activities without communicating with their mentors. The tone of mentors during the focus group discussions showed their concern about how these activities were disrupting effective teaching at their schools. This also seemed to affect the mentoring relationship and quality of teaching.

Asked to explain further, Lady C added that:

> And then the other challenge is on marking. Most of them they do their marking hurriedly because they will be, in fact they want enough time to go to their records. They do their marking hurriedly. So usually after the marking of the books most pupils might come back to you, Madam this answer, so and so was marked but mine was not marked. And the other challenge is students go for seminars they bring new, in fact they tell us new ideas which we won't know, like I think the challenge is really

> about, maybe some of them, they might lie to the mentor and you won't know because most of them they just tell you, it was said by so and so…whilst there is nowhere it is written.

The issue of too many documents seems to negatively affect the mentoring of student teachers on practicum. Student teachers hurriedly assess learners' work resulting in the latter complaining. The other challenge emerging from this conversation revolves around mentees going for college seminars and bringing back new information which the mentor might not be aware of. This seems to bring out the issues of poor communication between mentors and teacher-training colleges. This seemingly concurs with Maphosa and Ndamba's (2012) views that are in favour of teacher training institutions establishing effective communication linkages with the host schools for effective mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice.

Emerging from focus group discussions were other challenges faced by school-based mentors such as a plethora of responsibilities they were allocated by their schools. These negatively affected their mentoring roles (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). For example, during focus group discussions Lady D complained about being helping her mentee to teach computers when she was not computer literate. This is how she put it across, "I cannot help my student teacher teach computers when I am unable to open one..." The emerging findings above suggest that mentors are overloaded.

All the school-based supervisors who took part in this study complained about lack of consultation during allocation of student teachers. For example, during focus group discussions Lady E pointed out that, "we are just given students by heads. They don't ask us whether we want or not..."
, Lady E bitterly complained about being unfamiliar with some Early Childhood Development (ECD) records such as "the running record book" for the caregiver infant and toddler programme (CITP). She pointed out, "I am not aware of these records, but they just force me to help the student".
CITP covers children in age group zero to three years (Kuyayama-Tumbare, 2014). Mentoring student teachers on this course component emerged as a challenge because most mentors were not trained to handle the CITP component during their training, as it is a new phenomenon.

4.7.2 Support given to mentors having student teachers during teaching practice

Teacher support is a critical component in any education system if teachers are to teach effectively (Ambrosetti, 2012; Ochanji *et al.*, 2015; Heeralal, 2014; Hudson, 2013a; Tok & Yilma, 2011). In the same vein, mentors require support from various stakeholders such as school administrators and the teachers' colleges for effective mentoring. Internationally, mentors are trained for specific teacher education programmes (Ambrosett, 2012; Heeralal, 2014). Two categories emerged from the analysis of data on this sub-theme, namely college-based support and school-based support.

4.7.2.1 College-based support given to mentors

The teacher development institutions are the owners of the teacher development programmes and it is their responsibility to ensure that mentors are properly guiding student teachers on teaching practice. With this in mind, it was imperative for me to establish what types of support colleges provided to mentors in the schools.

As a starting point, I asked the mentors whether they had received any form of training from the teachers' colleges. It however emerged that four mentors never received any support such as workshops organised by the colleges. This is how Lady D expressed her views on this critical issue:

> No. That is very difficult … even if they give us the mentees in our classes, we are not even asked whether we want them or not … so you just mentor the student as you know but not that you had any training.

The above quote suggests that school heads do not consult mentors in the allocation of mentees. This is likely to affect the quality of the mentoring relationship negatively. Emerging from this narrative seems to be the view that mentors enact their roles with no training relying on their experiences.

During focus group discussions, Lady E also bemoaned the lack of support from the college when she pointed out that:

> The college does not give us any support apart from them giving us mentees. There is nothing more that we get from the colleges. Many a time when supervisors from college come to supervise the mentees, they want us sometimes to be out of the classroom so that they supervise the mentee without our concern. So we would not say we are getting assistance from them. They are much more interested in what, I mean their mentees than us the mentors.

According to Lady E colleges do not provide mentors with the much-needed support. Lady E seems to blame college lecturers for not involving mentors when supervising student teachers on teaching practice. Hence, mentors handled their students largely based on their experiences as former mentees during their training. This situation is rather worrisome, as expectations of colleges could have changed. This supports Ehrich's (2017:7) finding that mentoring is "problematic when there was lack of training or understanding about the goals of the program…"

Three participants claimed that they attended few workshops organised by the teachers' colleges and they greatly benefitted from the experiences. Responding to the question on whether she had received training to mentor student teachers from the college, Lady E pointed out that:

> Yaa –aa I can say I was trained because I was also a mentee before I became a mentor, well back when I was at college. So I learnt something from my mentor and that way, I can say I was trained, but to say I undergo the training of being a mentor…. Yes we go to different workshops done at Morgenster Teachers' College for mentors and mentees. I can say I got some skills there.

What emerged from this participant was that she never received any formal training to a become mentor except attending some workshops organised by teachers' colleges. The type of support they received seemed to be one-off workshops organised by colleges or the district-based education supervisors. Asked whether these workshops were on going, she pointed out, "No, no, no these workshops are held at least once in five years or just once". This quotation suggests that colleges do not hold frequent mentor professional development workshops.

In the same vein, Tawanda and Sir F claimed during focus group discussions that they each attended one workshop organised by teachers' colleges. Lady A also indicated that she attended one workshop organised by a teachers' college on mentoring pre-service teachers. She pointed out that, "I have attended only one".

Asked whether the workshop was helpful in improving her mentoring roles, she said:

> It was very important because the workshop I attended, we were both mentors and mentees. It was helpful because it clarified that the mentors' duties, what are the mentees' duties, how you are supposed to go about it, how I was supposed to teach the mentees. What is expected of me as a mentor and what is expected from the mentees by the college, so it was helpful?

Emerging from this conversation seems to be that Lady A values the mentorship workshop she attended. According to her, the workshop was critical in clarifying her role as a mentor. This seems critical as the workshop made clear expectations of both mentor and mentee. However, she seems to have attended only one off workshop.

Responding to the same question about the importance of college-organised workshops, Sir F had this to say, “That workshop was actually an eye opener to me”. As if summarising the importance of college initiated workshops on behalf of all participants during the focus group discussion, Lady E said that:

> Such workshops are important because first hand information is always good for someone; you interpret it exactly the way you understand, rather than someone giving you second hand information. They might leave out something that they think is not important, where as you should have used it as something that is important.

An important finding from the above quote seems to be the importance of receiving firsthand information from college lecturers.

The participants seemed to concur that college organised workshops were important in terms of providing mentors with college expectations, receiving firsthand information and clarification of mentor roles. However, what seems to be worrisome is the fact that these were one-time workshops with no follow-ups from the colleges. Reviewed literature has revealed the ineffectiveness of one-time types of professional development (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

Sir F viewed discussions with college lecturers held with mentors and mentees as one form of support he received from the college.

> The college usually visits these pre-service teachers to supervise them. By so doing once the lecturers have supervised the students, the mentor would be called in that classroom and when elaborating to or explaining to the pre-service teacher, the mentor will also be there and taking note of the challenges, the strengths and the weaknesses of the pre-service teacher. By doing so it is a very good support, which is being given by the college.

According to Sir F, discussions held between college lecturers on the one hand and mentor and mentee on the other are a form of support. While these discussions are helpful, they are not formal support channels for mentors.

What is coming out from the above narratives seems to be that colleges provide minimum support to mentors through one off workshops. Discussions mentors held with lecturers during their routine supervision visits to schools are important but inadequate as a support system. Hoxha (2016), Whitebook and Bellm (2014) and Ehrich (2017) recommend that support for mentors is critical for the improvement of the mentoring relationship.

4.7.2.2 School-based support for mentors

Turning to the type of support they received at their respective schools, participants cited help from school heads and TICs as critical in alleviating their duties as mentors. The majority of participants indicated that TICs helped them in supervising pre-service teachers on teaching practice. For example, Tawanda pointed out that:

> Yaah, they also supervise the mentees especially the TIC, he has that time. Then we also have demonstration lessons at different grade levels with the TICs whereby the mentors are going to demonstrate how best to teach a lesson in a particular subject area. The TIC has to identify that teacher who is able to deliver good lessons in a particular area.

Two critical findings emerge from this narrative. First, according to Tawanda, TICs help mentees by supervising them. This is critical for both the mentor and the mentee, as they received a second opinion on how they are progressing. Secondly, the use of demonstration lessons conducted by expert teachers helps both mentor and mentee with alternative role models. However, what remained silent from this conversation was the frequency of such practice.

From the focus group discussions, it appeared that these demonstration lessons, though they considered them effective, were not as regular as participants wished them to be. Lady E pointed out that, “the demonstration lessons are very few. These may be once a term...so they are not enough. We should have more demonstration lessons at school”. This suggests that demonstration lessons are effective as a support system for both mentors and mentees though not frequently conducted in schools.

Lady B also indicated that mentors at her school were encouraged to put forward challenges they were facing to the school administration who in turn promptly attended to them. She said that:

> The TIC encourages us to say out our challenges and then the administration sits to discuss the challenges. And we also request for materials for our mentees to use from administration. They supervise them and they encourage us to supervise them [mentees]. Then we sit and discuss.

According to Lady B, the TIC at her school received challenges from mentors for school head’s attention and solutions. The above narrative seems to suggest that mentors ask for materials to use from the school administration. Supervision of mentees by the school authorities seems to be another form of support Lady B received from the school.

Though the TICs and the respective school administrators seem to be helping mentors in the execution of their duties providing resources and supervising student teachers and writing reports, it appears that these were their routine duties. The provision of resources to students in form of charts, ballpoints, counter books and other teaching and learning materials as pointed out by Sir F during the focus group discussions, is important in reducing stress on the mentees.

The mentor participants concurred that their school heads and deputies also provided them with valuable support in the execution of their mentoring duties. For example, Lady A pointed out that:

> The school head and the deputy head help basically in …providing some of the resources, textbooks, syllabuses where possible and teaching media…at times they also arrange workshops for students and mentors together so that they map the way forward on how best they can help the mentors and mentees.

Suggestions emerging from this conversation are that Lady A received support from the school administration in form of teaching-learning resources such as stationery. Another form of support emerging from this discussion is workshops organised at school level.

Responding to the question about support received from the school head/deputy, Lady B expressed her views thus, “… the school head and deputy head also supervise the student teachers and they call us to discuss on how to improve”. Lady

B receives support from the school administration in form of mentee supervision and discussions. This suggests a form of collaboration between the school administration and the mentor in nurturing the mentee.

Similarly, Lady C pointed out that:

> The school head and the deputy help us with the resources. Most of the time, they give us the material to use. The mentee and the mentor are given materials like charts, ballpoint pens, counter books and they also help us in the supervision of the lessons and the record books.

The above quotation seems to show two types of support Lady C receives from the school administration. The school administration provides resources such as stationary and supervision of student teachers on practicum.

Findings from the above quotations suggest that some school heads and their deputies supported mentors through provision of teaching and learning resources, supervising mentees' records and lessons and setting the tone for their schools. However, what seems unclear is on what the help provided by the school heads, deputy heads and TICs is specifically on. It has emerged elsewhere in this study that the colleges do not provide schools with their expectations. It may not be surprising that these school-based supervisors use the standards at their schools as a yardstick to supervise and help student teachers during their teaching practice.

4.7.3 Opportunities in mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice

Mentoring is a relationship involving the mentor, who is the senior partner, and a mentee (Ambrosetti, 2012; Roff, 2012; Hudson and Sempowics, 2011). In this relationship, mentors also had several opportunities to learn from the mentees and the college; they may also have opportunities to reflect on their practices and grow personally and professionally (Ambrosetti, 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Jacobi, 1991). This study, in part, investigated opportunities for mentors during the enactment of their duties. For example, they learn from discussions with college lecturers during T.P. supervision routine visits. This is what Lady E meant during focus group discussions when she said:

> The college will visit the school doing their assessment and that way we discuss the issues and if there is any problem, we discuss with the college there, so they support

> us because we may lack something, we may not know something, and when they come we discuss the issues. We learn new things from lecturers.

The above quote suggests what Lady E learns from discussions with school-based supervisors when they visit schools for their routine supervision trips. In the process, mentors acquire new knowledge in terms of teaching approaches and ways of assisting their mentees.

The workshops organised by colleges and local staff development meetings held by districts educational officials (DEOs) or schools provide another crucial benefit for mentors. At such meetings, mentoring challenges are discussed and possible solutions proffered. For example, Tawanda had this to say about the benefits of mentorship workshops:

> …yes during the days when I was in the rural areas we had district workshops… We were trained, we had workshops in mentoring. Colleges were not part of the workshops but the District Officers saw that there was need to embark on such training. TICs or heads or deputy heads presented lesson demonstrations at different grade levels as well as school-based workshops.

The above comment suggests that Tawanda was equipped to help student teachers on teaching practice through district and school level workshops and demonstration lessons. However, while this form of support is highly appreciated, it is unclear whether the DEOs were aware of the college expectations; also whether these workshops were really targeted at improving the mentors' skills in helping their mentees.

All the mentors concurred that they benefitted from their mentees in various ways. It emerged from the focus group discussions that mentors appreciated the reduction of their workloads as they shared responsibilities with their mentees. In this regard, Lady C had this to say, "the students relieve us. They help us in many ways. If I want to go away, I know that there is someone with my class". Asked to say more, she added that, "we become friends with our mentees even after teaching practice".

Two benefits emerge from these two quotes above. First Lady C was of the view that she benefits from her mentee in that she may be away from school and her learners will continue to learn. It seems it is not easy for a primary school teacher to leave youngster unattended. Second, Lady C views the establishment of professional relationships as a benefit to her.

Lady B also brought up lasting professional relationships with pre-service teachers she helped during focus group discussions when she said:

> I think I have made relationships that are good with these mentees, some of them are now like my children, we work together. I mentored them a long time ago, but they still remember me. We are now in good relationships. I am now like a mother to them. We are like relatives. I have made a lot of friends and a lot of relatives from mentoring.

Drawing from this quotation, mentoring pre-service teachers can result in the construction of lasting professional development relationships.

Lady B also echoed similar sentiments during interviews when she pointed out that:

> I had an opportunity of meeting my friends and daughters and sons, from these mentees. Now my world has got a number of friends, relatives out there who even invite me when they have got some functions. Some even visit me just because I mentored them.

What seems to emerge from the above conversation is mentoring may lead to the establishment of permanent relationships. These relationships according to Lady B may even turn out to be like close relatives extending to their families.

Lady E reported that she benefitted a lot from working together with mentees, especially in the use of computers. She said that:

> I was taught how to operate a computer by my mentee. This was a great advantage because in ECD we now have a computer component, which I did not know.

This seems to be far-fetched, but from closer analysis, this was a great benefit since the use of computers is a recent development in the school curriculum. It appears those who trained earlier did not learn to use computers as part of their teacher education programmes. Asked to explain further on the use of computers, she added:

> With the ECD, we have got time to go to the computer laboratory and play with computers and the mentee is the one who will be in charge, teaching these children how to tackle the computer and I learn a lot on that.

The above conversation suggests that Lady C learnt the use of computers in teaching and learning from her mentee. The use of computers in ECD is encouraged in all schools in Zimbabwe, and the above quotation suggests that mentors also benefit from mentoring pre-service teachers.

Another school-based supervisor, Lady E, also expressed how she benefitted from mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice during the focus group discussion, as she excitedly stated:

> Ok, Aaaah they talked about what can I say they talked about the pre-reading book. I was not used to that, I was asking how do we do the pre-reading and they explained to me and I was to help pre-readers do pre-reading at ECD, now I can do it for the ECDs. That is the new information they have brought.

Emerging from this discussion is the view that Lady E learnt from her mentee how to teach pre-readers. In this case, Lady E was very clear that she learnt how to conduct pre-reading lessons from her mentee.

The above quotes, which were also in accord with all the mentor participants, seem to suggest that mentoring is a give and take relationship. Student teachers do not go for teaching practice empty handed, but they also brought new skills and teaching approaches which mentors may not have, as illustrated by the above few examples. As if agreeing with the other participants, Tawanda also revealed how he learnt from his mentee how to use modern technologies such as smart phones when he said,

> On the same issue of new information … the use of computers, the use of these cell phones and internet, the use of the Wi-Fi and so on. I was taught by my mentee.

Tawanda seems to be very frank that he learnt to use modern technologies like smart phones and internet from his mentee. This seems to suggest that mentoring is not a one-sided relationship where only mentees benefit.

The presence of student teachers in some schools was a real blessing as the mentees turned out to be of assistance to their mentors and other teachers. This was what Lady D said during interviews, when she excitedly pointed out that:

> Very well, we have benefitted a lot like now ah, we can scheme using computers here we can actually type our schemes because they – mentees are so well versed in computers. So most of the times, when we were faced with the introduction of our computer lab, we actually asked the mentees to do the typing for us,…, now a lot of mentors can do their own schemes through computers, because of these mentees.

What emerges from the above conversation seems to strengthen what the majority of participants said regarding the benefits and opportunities to learn something new from the mentees. At Lady D’s school mentors learnt to type their work from their mentees. This suggests a form of distributed leadership where expertise provides even a junior member of staff to lead seniors. This also suggests that mentorship is a give and take relationship, provided the involved individuals are open-minded.

Responding to the question about the opportunities she benefitted from mentoring student teachers on teaching practice, Lady A reported that she did not only learn how to use computers but also the latest teaching approaches from her mentee. Lady A had this to say about what she benefitted from the mentee she had at the time of the study:

> …the other thing I have benefitted on the methods we use, of which I learnt something new from them, how they do it. It’s not like as a mentor I know everything. But I also learn as they are teaching, as they are being told by their lecturers what to do. I am also learning a lot if things from them.

The above comment suggests that Lady A learnt new teaching approaches from her mentee. This narrative suggests that this mentor learnt new teaching approaches by observing her meant deliver lessons. This further suggests that mentoring is a reciprocal relationship.

The mentors agreed about how student teachers help them in training and coaching children, especially in relatively new games such as rugby. Regarding this issue, Lady C pointed out that, “Yes he also taught me how to train rugby and tennis”. It may be inferred from this conversation that mentoring pre-service teachers is not only about challenges but there are also benefits.

4.7.4 Theme 3: Discussion of findings

The study revealed that, in the Zimbabwean context, mentors faced numerous challenges in the execution of their duties such as sending ill-prepared student teachers on teaching practice, mentors lacking information about college expectations, infrequent professional development workshops, age differences between mentors and their mentees and inadequate resources. Reviewed literature has also shown that mentors faced several challenges in the execution of their mentoring duties (Hennisen, 2010; Leshem, 2012; Hobson *et al*, 2009).

This study revealed that some student teachers are sent by their teachers’ colleges ill prepared for teaching practice. This important finding emerged from the practitioners in the field. Moyo (2002) and Chakanyuka (2006) argue that student teachers should be released for teaching practice after acquiring sufficient theoretical knowledge about the main components involved in teaching such as how to prepare schemes, plans and other records. Sending student teachers for teaching practice with little knowledge about the basic requirements places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the mentors. This negatively affects the quality of teachers produced by the teacher education programme. In addition, literature reviewed supports the idea of mentors being trained for specific teacher development programmes (Hudson, 2013a; Ambrosetti, 2014; Heeralal, 2014; McMahanan, 2017). The fact that mentors in this study never received any mentorship formal training compounds the situation.

Another serious challenge faced by mentors is that colleges do not supply schools with formal information on what and how mentors should help mentees. However, literature emphasises the importance of understanding the goals of mentoring by the mentor and mentee (Marimo, 2014; Ochanji *et al.*, 2015). It is not far-fetched to conclude that the mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice in Zimbabwean schools is largely based on a process of trial and error.

Inadequate or a lack of professional development workshops for mentors was considered by participants in this study to be a serious challenge as it made life difficult for them. Literature consulted emphasises the need to train and professionally develop mentors to enhance the quality of mentoring practices (Ambrosetti, 2012; Samkange, 2015; Tok & Yilmaz, 2011; Wilder, 1992) because mentors should be kept updated. Supporting the need for mentor training, Hobson *et al.*, (2009) argue that if mentors are not trained, they continue to rely on their own experiences gained from their past and this may not be helpful.

Reviewed literature has also noted that school heads have the privilege to select and appoint mentors at schools (Samkange, 2015; Turner, 2006; Genc, 2016; Ambrosetti, 2012). The present study established that all mentor participants were not consulted in their appointment and had no input in the selection of their mentees. The non-involvement of mentors in this process emerged as one of the challenges negatively influencing the mentoring relationship.

Closely related to the above problem was the issue of age differences between mentors and mentees. It emerged from participants that the lack of consultation and age differences, especially if the mentor was younger than the mentee, negatively affects the mentoring relationship. What comes to the fore is the impact of cultural influence as it is regarded as a taboo in the Zimbabwean culture for someone younger to give orders or instructions to someone who is older (Gelfand, 1979; Gombe, 2011; Hamutyinei & Plangger, 2013). The general observation established in the literature was that mentors are normally older, wiser and more experienced than mentees (Kostovich & Thun, 2006: Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). The situation seems not always to be the case in the Zimbabwean context where, in some cases, mentors are younger than their mentees.

A lack of resources in most schools affected how mentors should enact their duties. It emerged that in most schools, especially in rural schools, student teachers bought their own manila paper to prepare charts and counter books for their records. Consequently, the majority of student teachers, particularly those from poor backgrounds, find it difficult to buy all the supplies. This militates against the quality of experiences and the whole mentorship programme as it limits their practices.

The issue of colleges recalling student teachers back to college, especially for tertiary games, has been cited as a critical issue. The mentors concurred that this affects the flow of teaching programmes in the host schools. In the majority of cases, mentees will be forced to deviate from their planned activities with their mentors. A need for coordination between colleges and schools during teaching practice is necessary if mentoring has to be effective (Marimo, 2014; Musingafi & Mafumbate, 2014; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012).

Another serious challenge for the mentors and mentees has been cited as the preparation of a plethora of records. It emerged that pre-service teachers spend most of their time preparing records instead of observing mentors teaching so that they can emulate them. Bandura (1978) argues in favour of learning through imitation or observation. This presents opportunities for student teachers to marry theory and practice in an authentic context (Hoxha, 2016; Moyo, 2002; Chakanyuka, 2006).

Another critical finding that emerged from participants is the lack of adequate support from the colleges and schools. Support for mentors has been found to be an essential component for any mentoring relationship (Heeralal, 2014; Hudson &

Hudson, 2016). The lack of support cited by mentors included a lack of staff development workshops and information concerning college expectations.

Though the mentors faced several challenges, the mentoring of pre-service teachers provides immense opportunities for them (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson, 2016; Roff, 2012; Ochanji *et al.*, 2015; Wasonga *et al.*, 2015). The mentors enjoyed the benefit of improving their leadership skills. They have the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and in turn grow as professionals (McMahan & Garza, 2017; Wasonga *et al.*, 2015).

Mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice provides mentors with opportunities to interact with lecturers during their routine supervisory and assessment visits to schools. In the process, mentors establish lasting professional and social relationships, not only with their mentees but also with college lecturers as well. Closely linked to this, especially during the post observation conferences lecturers have with students, is that mentors learn from lecturers.

Another very important benefit for mentoring pre-service teachers that emerged from this study was that mentors learn from their mentees how to use information technologies in their teaching. Many mentor participants confessed that they learnt a number of things from their mentees such as the use of computers and the latest teaching approaches such as the multi-faith approach in religious and moral education as well as coaching of new games such as rugby.

Mentors revealed that they enjoyed the privileges of going for the few mentorship workshops organised by their districts of education and teachers' colleges. This exposed them to new ideas and new friends. This suggests that mentoring is not all about challenges but that there are also benefits that go with the job.

4.8: EXPLAINING THE MENTORS' PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES

The explanation of mentors' perspectives and practices presented below is guided by what they reported in terms of their backgrounds and past experiences. It also emerged from the interviews and focus group discussion that mentors' perspectives were influenced by their conceptualisation of mentoring and how they were trained.

All participants concurred that were not formally trained to mentor student teachers on teaching practice. For example, Lady C pointed out that,

> A mentor is someone who is well experienced in the teaching profession… one who can be a role model, who can show the mentee what exactly to do at the right time.

Another participant, Lady D, said that a mentor is,

> … a qualified teacher who can lead, who can direct and who can show the way...

These two excerpts seem to suggest that mentors' perspectives and practices were influenced by the way they understood mentoring and what it entails. The above quotes seem to incorporate certain components of their previous experiences.

Another way of explaining the perspectives and practices of school-based mentors was through asking them whether they were trained for their mentoring duties. Responding to this question during focus group discussions, all participants agreed that any qualified teacher could be a mentor. Lady A, for example, was of the opinion that mentoring is about an experienced teacher being given a student to guide during their teaching practice. She pointed out that,

> it means there is someone who is experienced who is taking care or teaching someone who is less experienced how to do the job.

This seems to be the view of all participants and seems to influence not only their perspectives about mentoring but also how they interacted and enacted their mentoring practices.

The way mentors were trained seemed to influence how they enacted their duties. All mentor participants indicated that the colleges did not provide them with adequate information about how they were to provide assistance to their mentees. Re-examining what Lady A pointed out earlier (Theme 3) seems to provide a convincing explanation about mentors' practices. She pointed out that,

> … we don't have anything written from the college to clarify what we are supposed to do and the mentee says we are not supposed to do this and this, at times you get stuck then thus another challenge.

This excerpt seems to suggest that mentors' practices are shaped by the prevailing circumstances resulting in them using trial and error in mentoring student teachers on teaching practice. The lack of clear guidelines from the teachers' colleges seems to explain why there are differences in mentoring styles between and among mentors.

Closely related to the issue of a lack of clear guidelines was inadequate support from the colleges and school-based workshops. The participants bemoaned the lack of support from colleges. Lady C pointed out that,

> … I think it is necessary to have the workshops at college so that we could know the expectations needed.

As if agreeing with other participants on the need for colleges to support mentors, Sir F noted that,

> … such workshops are important because we need first-hand information.

This suggests that colleges do not provide sufficient support for school-based supervisors mentoring student teachers on teaching practice. This may also mean that the mentors' practices are shaped by what they agree to do with their mentees and their own experiences as student teachers.

The relationship between mentors and their mentees help to explain mentors' practices. Lady B pointed out that,

> They have got different characters [mentees] you might get someone who is so reserved.

Tawanda brought in a different dimension when he said,

> … we have different ages or mentees of different ages. A mentee can also be mature enough or more mature than the mentor…

This suggests that age differences between mentors and mentees influences the former's practices. To say this differently, culture influences mentors' practices as they may find it difficult to give instructions to someone older, especially in scenarios where the mentee happens to be older (Gelfand, 1979; Gombe, 2011; Hamutyinei & Plangger, 2013).

Participation in college activities while on TP coupled with poor communication seems to provide another dimension in trying to explain school-based supervisors' mentoring practices of student teachers during teaching practice. This emerged from all mentor participants during focus group discussions. Lady C put it succinctly when she said this,

> … them they do not have enough time in the classroom and by the time they come back … they will spend most of the time in the classroom writing their records,

> updating their records… so s/he will no longer be performing duties which they are supposed to do.

Tawanda also added his voice when he said,

> mentees go to college without communicating to us… and this interrupts the flow of work as they will be left behind.

What is emerging from these discussions is that mentors' practices are also influenced by the lack of effective communication between the mentors and mentees. Asked to elaborate on this issue to show how poor communication affects mentoring practices, he pointed out that,

> if communication is poor, mistrust can crop into the relationship causing a lot of animosity and acrimony.

What seems to emerge from the above quotations is that mentors' perspectives and practices are shaped by their experiences as student teachers, amount and quality of support from the colleges and schools, personality differences and effectiveness of communication between colleges and the host schools.

4.8.1 Discussion of findings

The study established that one's background and experiences shape one's thinking and the way one behaves. It emerged from this study that the mentors were not provided with formal training to be mentors. The way mentors' conceptualised mentoring is shaped by their past as pre-service teachers, what they were doing and how they enacted their roles. This partly explains why their understanding of what mentoring is was shaped by their experiences. They believed that any experienced and certified teacher is a competent mentor and is qualified for the task. This sharply contradicts scholarship on mentoring of pre-service teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hannova Research, 2014). Hudson and Hudson (2010) and Rowely (1999) contend that mentoring is a reciprocal relationship and that being a good teacher does not translate into being a good mentor. The literature reviewed is quite clear that mentors are expert teachers trained for a specific teacher development programme (Hobson *et al.*, 2016; Whitebook & Bellm, 2014). The information and expertise that mentors possessed influenced their mentoring practices

It emerged from all mentor participants that colleges did not supply them with what they were expected to do. This explains why they did not enact their roles uniformly.

It is not far-fetched to suggest that this compromised the quality of teachers produced by this particular teacher education programme as mentors guided mentees in any way they thought feasible.

Age differences and one's personality have been found to have a bearing on mentoring practices. The study established that, in situations where mentees were older than their mentors, the mentoring relationship was affected in one way or the other. Culturally, younger people are not expected to give orders and instructions to older people. Hence, it is critical for school heads to consult potential mentors in the allocation of mentees in schools

Poor communication between colleges and schools strained the mentoring relationship. It emerged from this study that student teachers on teaching practice sometimes left their schools for college activities such as sports without the knowledge of their mentors. This seems to have a negative effect on how mentors executed their duties. On returning from college activities, student teachers concentrated on updating their numerous records instead of observing the mentor modelling how to teach.

On a more positive note, the mentors' practices were also influenced by what the student teachers brought from college. It emerged that mentors learnt a lot from their mentees, especially in using information technology, new teaching approaches and coaching new games.

As noted above, the mentors' perspectives of mentoring and their practices could be explained from several angles including their background experiences and what student teachers brought into the new relationship.

4.9 THEME 4: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The above findings suggest that there are several challenges school-based mentors faced during the enactment of their duties. Participants in this study proffered several suggestions intended to improve mentorship of pre-service teachers on teaching practice in schools. For the purposes of clarity, the suggested improvements by participants are presented separately in terms of what stakeholders such as teachers' colleges, school heads and TICs could do.

4.9.1 Role of colleges in improving mentoring of pre-service teachers

The majority of the participants felt that colleges should provide more workshops and improve their communication with the schools. For example, Lady D, who seemed to be the most vocal during the focus group discussions, had this to say:

> No uh! Why? Because these expectations we were given them by the mentees. So how will I say I am familiar, when I am actually given the expectations of the college by the mentee? What if she or he is lying about the expectations? This is why we still go back to the same question whereby we say we need a workshop between mentors and mentees and supervisors so that we know the college expectations about us mentor and the mentees.

This conservation suggests that there is poor communication between colleges and student teachers' practising schools. Lady E was unhappy about receiving college expectations from her mentee. This may mean that the mentoring relationship was strained, as school-based supervisors were not fully acknowledged as key stakeholders in teacher development programmes. To improve this seemingly bad situation she suggests that holding a workshop with colleges would improve the situation. This seems to be important, as mentors will have the opportunity of hearing firsthand information about what they are to guide mentees from the college lecturers.

Probed further, Lady E felt that mentors should be provided with documents that clearly stipulate what they are expected to do:

> They gave us through the students [college expectations]. The students, they come, we chat, they say our college expectations are these and that….. then we go in such a line. For example the college expects us to have so many record books and then we follow that.

Lady E was of the opinion that mentoring could improve if colleges provide mentors with clearly documented guidelines. This suggests that mentor support for mentees will be uniform throughout.

All participants agreed that the provision of staff development workshops and improved communication between colleges and schools were of the utmost importance in improving the mentoring of student teachers during their teaching practice. In interviews, Lady B reiterated what other participants suggested when she said:

> Aaaah improving that school-based mentoring of these mentees, I would suggest that we also have a workshop whereby mentors and mentees are involved in that workshop from the supervisors…The workshop because we really don't know much about the expectations of the supervisors to the mentees. So in the workshop this when ah-h everything will be put into the open that what are the expectations, such that when I am supervising also the mentee, I know expectations of the college supervisors.

Emerging from this conversation is the point that both mentors and mentees be provided with a common platform to iron out their differences. This seems critical, as it is likely to remove sources of doubt or confusion.

The issue of the need to provide continuous staff development workshops for mentors and mentees seems to recur. Another participant Lady A she pointed out that:

> I think the college tries to –u-u- provide some in service courses for mentors and a-ah, it must also hold workshops with both mentors and mentees and administrators. A –ah they had to be some form of good collaboration between college and the mentors.

The provision of workshops and effective communication between colleges and schools where student teachers are for their teaching practice is critical in improving mentorship programmes for pre-service teachers. Lady C had this to say during focus group discussions:

> … to have enough workshops with mentors as they know what exactly is needed by the college. And also maybe to mention the workshop maybe somehow expensive, they can also put it in writing sending the newsletter or even should I say somehow creating a magazine which are supposed to go to the mentors…, to create a situation whereby they communicate with the mentors so that they (meaning mentors) know exactly what is happening at the college or what have changed here and there.

Lady C seems to introduce a new dimension of writing a newsletter to cut costs. This make senses as mentors in Zimbabwe are not trained to perform mentorship responsibilities. The above quotes seem to suggest that mentors were not comfortable to receive college expectations from students as they felt students might lie to them or hide certain critical information from them.

All participants agreed that if communication between schools and colleges is improved, the mentoring of pre-service teachers during their teaching practice would proceed smoothly. This emerged during interviews when Lady D pointed out that,

> I think the college has to improve their way of communicating with the mentees or the school, since most of the things, they are the mentees who tell us.

Lady D seems to support the call for effective communication between colleges and schools. Improved communication between schools and colleges is important for quick addressing of misunderstandings.

Another dimension that the majority of participants felt would improve the mentoring of pre-service teachers was through providing financial incentives to mentors. Lady D brought in another dimension during focus discussions that of incentives when she said:

> And also the college I think they should give remuneration to the mentors, because this is extra work. We are actually supervising the – the mentees on behalf of the college, but it seems like the college does not take notice of the mentors. Incentivising the mentors would motivate mentors.

Lady D was of the view that incentivising mentors improves mentoring of student teacher during practicum. This seems to be in accord with what happens in other contexts (Ambrosetti, 2014).

Lady E also added her voice on the issue of providing incentives to motivate mentors to perform their mentoring roles when she pointed out during focus group discussions that:

> I think on that note now that we are having the principal herself alright we would like to see a situation where sometimes you give some incentives to mentors, but all of them. Let us think for those who would have produced distinctive students. Just invite them, it would be nice, it would there where you just give them small presents, just wrap them nicely, even a plate just a dollar dinner plate nicely wrapped for mentors…

Emerging from the above conversation suggests that performance based incentives improve mentoring of student teachers on practicum. Though this is a policy issue which cannot be addressed successfully through this study, it seems this is a critical issue that needs urgent attention as this may dampen their spirit and affect the mentoring of student teachers on practicum.

The majority of participants felt that changing of the pre-service teacher education programme altogether improves student teacher mentoring in schools. Currently, the pre-service teacher education programme follows what is popularly known in Zimbabwe as the 2-5-2 teacher education programme. The argument put forward by the majority of participants was that the first two residential terms for the student teachers was inadequate for effective preparation for teaching practice. For example, three participants aired similar views when they said:

Lady D: "And ah-a it can also be improved if ah- if only the colleges would change the 2-5-2 to make it a 3-3-3 programme".

Lady E: "Yes, yes it has to be a 3-3-3 instead of 2-5-2, so that the mentees have enough time to grasp the concepts before they come to apply".

Sir F:

> I would like to think that a-a-a-h as we do have for the time being, we just need 3-4-3, Why? Because there is no[t] enough time for the mentee to be very much equipped with what is supposed to be implemented in the five terms… The two last terms should remain because they will be winding their course.

What seems to emerge from these three quotations is that student teachers need to have more contact time with college lecturers. Sir F even suggested a completely different teacher education programme though it resonates with suggestions of other participants.

Lady B expressed her views about improving mentoring when she said:

> The college is the motherboard it should equip student teachers' theoretical base. They should not release them without theory… The importance of teaching practice is that pre-service teacher is given a chance to put theory into practice, so they will not just say according to, according to without doing it with the child…

What seems to emerge from this conversation is that student teachers need to be given more time to learn the theory part of their teacher education course before they are send for teaching practice in schools. This is critical as most mentors complained that the student teachers' knowledge is weak.

All participants agreed that the obtaining scenario of large class sizes in schools, especially at ECD level, was negatively affecting effective mentoring of pre-service teachers on teaching practice. The consensus is that large class sizes should be reduced. Lady E pointed out that:

> Let's start by teacher-pupil ratio. You find what we learn at the college is different from what you get at the station, when you go out there. At the college in the books is written teacher pupil ratio for the ECD is 1:20 but when you go out there you find 1:40; 1:45; 1:50. So I think the college, the headmaster at the school they have to do something. They have to they have to talk about this teacher-pupil ratio so that the workload can be improved.

What seems to emerge from this excerpt is that teacher-pupil ratios in schools are not realistic. There is a mismatch between policy pronouncements and teacher-pupil ratios in the schools. Asked to explain a little bit more on the issue of big ECD class sizes, Lady E went on to say that:

> yaah for ECD pupils, you have to work with them as individual, so if you have 1:45, you cannot do all those activities you are supposed to do. The ECD pupil must be able to colour, to draw as an individual and the teacher following each one of them, they monitor, assessing, so the 1:20 it for better than 1:45 you find at the school there.

The above comment suggests observing the teacher-pupil ratio policy will improve the mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice as this allows them opportunities to put into practice the theory they learnt at college effectively during their initial residential phase. Whilst this is a noble suggestion, these are, however, issues of policy that may require the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to look into and not the teacher training colleges alone.

4.9.2 The role of the schools in improving mentoring of pre-service teachers

The participants agreed that at school level the TICs, the school heads and their deputies could play critical roles in improving the mentoring of student teachers during their teaching practice. The participants provided a number of suggestions on how these key figures could improve mentorship at their respective schools.

Making her contribution during the focus group discussion on how the school-based supervisor could improve mentoring of pre-service teachers in schools, Lady B noted that,

> The TIC should help improve relationship between the mentor and mentee.

Tawanda explained how TICs could help improve mentoring when he said:

> The TIC has a mammoth task in the sense that the TIC serves as a liaising officer between the administration and the other colleagues. Then the need for the TIC to also, to arrange separate workshops, but having briefed the authorities on what he wants to highlight in that particular area, so that the delivery of lessons and the day-to-day running of the institution goes on smoothly.

This quotation seems to suggest that the TIC is critical in spearheading school-based staff development programmes in consultation with school administration. This seems important as school-based professional development workshops are more relevant than externally led professional development programmes.

Lady C seems to believe that supervision of the mentor and the mentee by a TIC could improve the mentoring of students on teaching practice. She pointed out that:

> I also think the teacher- in-charge has to help in the supervision of the lessons and the record books, of both the mentor and mentee. Sometimes you might think that the mentor be very experienced but maybe he or she might be lacking here and there …I think the TIC is closer to the mentor to the extent that s/he has to observe, to supervise the records and correct where possible.

Lady C was of the opinion that giving TICs the mandate to supervise both the mentor and mentee improves mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice. Whilst all participants agreed that TICs should supervise the mentors and mentees, they bemoaned the lack of clear supervision guidelines. All participants concurred that TICs should have well documented supervision guidelines. This seems to be what Lady C was referring to during the focus group discussions when she said,

> Having clear supervision objectives will obviously direct the supervisors on areas of focus and progress will be a sure result.

All mentors and mentees concurred that TICs should coordinate and organise school-based workshops. This suggests transforming schools into communities of practice where teachers learn from each other to improve teaching and learning. Lady E, was supported by all participants during the focus group discussion when she pointed out that TICs should, "… mount workshops for mentors and mentees to support their mentoring activities".

Still focusing on the TIC, Sir F was of the opinion that they (TICs) should also be resource providers when he said:

> At the same time also the TIC must be very supportive to eeh, in the same vein should actually sit in caucus and supply some resources … They should be supportive not after faultfinding, assisting the mentor and the mentee, to encourage them to improve.

Whilst Sir F views the provision of resources by TICs as an important component for effective teaching to take place in school settings, this is normally the role of the school head. Perhaps, the TICs can play the role of bringing to the attention of the school administration issues pertaining to resource provision as a link person.

Turning to the part that school heads and their deputies can play in improving mentoring of student teachers during their practicum, participants concurred that these two stakeholders were the pillars of any successful mentorship relationship. In her contribution to the discussion of the role of the school heads and their deputies in improving mentoring in schools, Lady D pointed out that,

> The school head has just to supervise and checking on the mentor, the mentee if everything is going on well. The records and also provide resources to these mentee.

Lady D suggested that the school administration should supply resources and supervise both the mentor and the mentee. Whilst this seems critical this is one of the roles of any school administrator.

Coming from another dimension, Lady A suggested that school heads should always be in touch with relevant teachers' colleges. In her opinion, this would help to provide mentors with the latest information on how to assist the student teachers on teaching practice. She pointed out that:

> I think the school head should continue to source information, being the go-between the mentor and college. If the mentors are having problems and the mentees are having problems. I think they should work hand-in-hand with the college to resolve those problems, if there are there. Also they have to provide help, the resources on how best they can, for the mentee and mentor to have successful mentoring practices.

Lady A seems to suggest that school heads need to be constant with colleges and quickly addressing concerns of mentors and mentees. The establishment of viable communication links may help in the provision of latest information about mentoring mentees.

Tawanda felt that the head and deputy should actively be involved in organising school-based workshops for the mentors and mentees when he said,

> They [meaning head and deputy head] can conduct workshops on how best to deal with a student teacher.

Tawanda thought that school administrators should create opportunities for mentors and mentors to be involved in continuous professional development workshops. Continuous learning by the teacher is critical if teaching and learning is to change for the better (Villegers-Reimers, 2003; Wasonga *et al.*, 2015; Roff, 2012; Hobson, 2016).

Contributing to the discussion on improving Lady B pointed out that:

> I think to improve the mentoring of pre-service teachers; the school must help the teachers with resources, especially those that are bought. And also the school environment must also help the pre-service teachers to experiment and to explore whenever they feel that they want to help the children learn. There should be no limitations especially in different areas, such as science and so on, the school should not say the children here must not do this. And also I think the school must place mentees where they know mentors are ready to help…

Lady B views resource provision as critical in improving mentoring of student teachers on practicum. Provision of resources is central as it gives space for mentors and mentees to translate theory into practice differently (Ambrosetti, 2012; Ackley & Gall, 1992). In addition, Lady A is also of the view that creating opportunities for experimentation for mentees promotes effective mentoring. Allowing student teachers to experiment with new ideas and approaches enhance their professional growth.

In the same vein, Tawanda added his voice on the need for school heads to create favourable working environments for mentorship to be effective. This emerged during interviews when he said:

> The second area is for the administrators to also create a facility whereby a mentor, who is good at mentoring can be incentivised in one way or the other, so that there is

> going to be a competition among mentors in mentoring that would lead to distinctive students. Furthermore in terms of creating conducive environments, to the mentors especially in rural areas, where there is inadequate accommodation. There is need to provide good accommodation to the mentees, whereby, I am thinking of a situation whereby a student is allocated just a room, where he needs two rooms or the students are asked to live in one room being two.

Tawanda suggested that incentivising mentors creates competition among mentors. Whilst this makes sense, it is however not clear whether this incentive will be paid by the schools or the colleges. Whilst the provision of decent accommodation is essential for student teachers to work from and perform their best, most schools may not have adequate financial resources to cater for all pre-service teachers on teaching practice at each school.

4.9.3 Theme 4: Discussion of findings

Participants proffered several suggestions for improving the mentoring of pre-service teachers on teaching practice in schools. It was suggested that one way of improving mentorship of student teachers on teaching practice was by ensuring that teachers' colleges provide host schools with what they referred to as "written college expectations". This was a critical recommendation from mentor participants as it does not only result in uniformity but also acts as a guide for untrained mentors. A further suggestion that emerged from the participants in this study, and with the potential of improving mentorship, was to provide ongoing and sustained professional development to the teachers in the field and the student teachers. The importance of continuing teacher professional development is extensively documented in the literature (Hanover Research, 2014; Hobson, 2016; Hudson, 2010; Jita & Mokhele, 2012; De Monte, 2013; Villeger-Reimers, 2003).

The mentor participants concurred that if communication between colleges and host schools was made more effective and open, this would go a long way in improving the mentoring relationship. The consensus that emerged in the literature is that collaborative mentoring enhances the mentoring relationship (Aderibegbe, 2014; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Kincheloe, 2005; Lai, 2006; Maphalala, 2005; Samkange, 2015). Mentors showed that they were concerned about their mentee's absence from duty without their knowledge. This has been found to have a negative effect on the mentoring programmes.

Another important suggestion was that a model that allows student teachers to have more time to acquire enough theory before they are sent for teaching practice replaces the current Zimbabwean teacher education programme (2-5-2). This seems to be a well thought out suggestion from participants since teaching practice is all about learning to translate theory into practice. This is in accordance with literature reviewed for this study, which underscored the need for teachers to be adequately grounded in content and pedagogy before being sent out on TP (Corrigan & Loughram, 2008; Eryilmaz & Aypay, 2016; Musingafi & Mafumbate, 2012). This appeared to be logical as more time for the initial residential phase allows college lecturers to expose student teachers to more theory including microteaching before they are sent for their practicum. More importantly, this may reduce complaints from mentors who complain that student teachers come for teaching practice “when they are raw”.

On the other hand, school administrators were also called upon to improve their operations in several ways. It was suggested that TICs should organise school-based workshops on mentoring for the mentors and mentees. This is critical as it allows for the generation of relevant solutions to problems. It was further suggested that TICs, as departmental heads, should come up with guidelines on the supervision of student teachers that are well known by mentors. Whilst this was an important suggestion, perhaps it could be more appropriate for the colleges and TICs to produce joint documents for the supervision of student teachers. This will not only increase awareness in terms of college expectations but also increase ownership of the programme by the mentors.

It was also suggested that school heads and their deputies consider providing student teachers on teaching practice with resources to ease their financial challenges. This could likely make mentees more focused on their teaching practice. This seems to be a valid suggestion, considering that this benefits the mentees, mentors and learners. Literature has it that increasing resources into the system improves the quality of education in schools (Donkoh & Dwamena, 2014; Whitebook & Bellem, 2014).

The mentors also suggested that they should be incentivised, as this would improve their motivation and recognition. Their inferences agree with Hoxha (2016), who suggests that mentoring is an extra job that should be remunerated. In some contexts, mentors are recognised or even given a token of appreciation for the job they do (Wang & Odell, 2002). The present scenario in Zimbabwe shows that mentors are volunteers. In some schools in Zimbabwe and South Africa, mentoring of pre-service teachers is voluntary (Maphalala, 2013; Maphosa & Ndamba, 2012). While giving incentives to mentors is a noble suggestion, teachers' colleges have limited resources to carry out such a mammoth task. Teacher development in Zimbabwe is the duty of the government; hence, the relevant ministry should consider remunerating mentors.

4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 presented the main findings and discussion of the study. The study established that participants for this study were information rich (Yin, 2011); hence, they were suitable for this study. Three key themes emerged from the analysis of data for the present study. Firstly, how school-based supervisors' conceptualised mentoring. It emerged that mentors' understanding of mentoring was largely shaped by their experiences. Secondly, the study established that mentors played several roles. It also emerged that mentors experienced several challenges during the execution of their duties. Participants proffered numerous suggestions on how mentoring could be improved. Lastly, the study suggested a number of ways to explain how mentors' practices could be understood. The next chapter provides a summary of the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As highlighted in the reviewed literature, mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice is not a new phenomenon in the preparatory development of teachers. Practicum or teaching practice is now integral to the development of professionally effective teachers (Field & Field, 1994; Feimen–Nemser, 2003; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Gray *et al.*, 2017; Grossman, 2010; Grundnoff, 2011; Hamdan, 2015;). However, in the literature reviewed for this study, there is a dearth of information on mentoring of pre-service teachers during practicum from the perspective of school-based supervisors (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012; Pandey & Chaila, 2013). To fill this extensive gap in scholarship, this study explored school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring student teachers during their teaching practice in Masvingo province of Zimbabwe. Utilising a qualitative research approach, case study research design and being informed by the cognitive apprenticeship theory, the study explored how school-based supervisors conceptualised mentoring, how they viewed their roles, how their perspectives and practices could be explained, challenges and opportunities they faced and how the mentoring of pre-service teachers could be improved.

5.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study was to explore school-based supervisors' perspectives on their roles as mentors. Thus, my discussion is organised following the order of research objectives. First, I answer the question: *What are the perspectives of Zimbabwean school-based supervisors on mentoring primary school pre-service teachers*? Secondly, I discuss how school-based supervisors understand and enact their roles as mentors. Thirdly, I discuss the challenges and opportunities for mentors on the aspect of education. Fourthly, I discuss how the perspectives and practices of school-based supervisors can be understood and/or explained. Lastly, I discuss how school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice can be improved.

5.2.1School-based supervisors’ conceptualisation of mentoring

A comprehensive analysis of my findings with regard to the perspectives of Zimbabwean mentor teachers on mentoring primary pre-service teachers reflect that they view mentoring as the provision of leadership, guidance and support. The results seem to support findings by Chimhenga (2016), Heeralal (2014), Orchanji *et al.* (2015), Tulie and File (2009) and Samkange (2015) whose studies revealed mentoring as a process aimed at helping novice teachers to develop appropriate teaching behaviours and strategies through nurturing.

Although school-based supervisors view mentoring as a developmental relationship, as highlighted by Mukeredzi (2017), the findings revealed that they view this relationship as hierarchical, with mentors as senior partners. This seems to be what Lady C implied when she said, “when you are mentoring you are just being a leader. You are one person who will be showing the way... you are like a role model to someone looking up to you...you give directions”. Lady A also said, “...we (mentors) tell them (mentees) what to do...” Ambrosetti (2011), Bradbury (2010) and Kafai *et al.* (2008) oppose this argument, proffering rather that this relationship should be reciprocal and non-hierarchical if it has to produce better results. However, this finding emphasise findings by Chakanyuka (2006), Hudson and Sempowiczs (2011), Roff (2012) and Orland-Barak (2014) that the way mentors understand mentoring involves aspects clearly showing power and authority differentials between them and their mentees.

Mentors conceptualised mentoring in terms of how they functioned and operated at their schools. It is not therefore far-fetched to suggest that their experiences as pre-service teachers and their mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice shapes school-based supervisors’ understanding of mentoring.

Internationally, mentors are viewed as experienced teachers with high levels of expertise in teaching and who are trained to provide mentorship to pre-service teachers following a specific teacher development programme (Genc, 2016; Heeralal, 2014; McMahan and Garza, 2017; Tok & Yilmaz, 2011; Wetzel, 2017). However, according to school-based supervisors in this study, any certified teacher could be a mentor. Mentors even referred to their final year students as mentors to be. This implies that the mentors’ understanding of mentorship was shaped by their own historical experiences.

My findings revealed that mentors in Zimbabwe were appointed without due consideration of their mentorship training, but only on the basis that they were qualified teachers; hence, mentorship training to them was viewed as unnecessary. For example, this seems to be what Lady C was referring to when she described a mentor as:

> ...someone who is well experienced in teaching profession and a mentor is one who can be a role model, who can show the mentee what exactly to do at the right time.

The mentors never mentioned anything concerning training during the interviews and focus group discussions. Although mentors were not aware of reasons for their selection, they seem to indicate that school heads used unwritten criteria for appointing mentors. The study found that school heads selected mentors with leadership potential, experienced and hardworking. The three components are essential qualities of any mentor selected to provide mentorship to student teachers on teaching practice.

5.2.2 School-based supervisors’ role in mentoring

Several studies highlight the roles of mentors as those of nurturing, counselling, provision of guidance and supervision (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Hoxha, 2016; Liu, 2014; Mudzielwana, 2014; Roff, 2012; Samkange, 2015). What appears to be different from the literature seems to be the way mentors view these roles. The study revealed that mentors provided instructional leadership to mentees on teaching practice. They also believed that it was their responsibility to mould the behaviour of their mentees in terms of how they dress and interact with the community.

An important finding emerging from this study was that of providing instructional leadership. This involved inculcating the teaching craft into their mentees. Mentors in this study view their roles as hinging on the provision of guidance to their mentees on “what”, “when” and “how” to teach. More specifically, their focus was more on the provision of guidance to their mentees in terms of scheming, planning teaching and learning programmes for learners (4.7.1.2).

Studies by Samkange (2015) and Alnaljjar (2016) highlighted the importance of establishing familiarity between mentors and mentees during their first contact. Mentors in this study constructed their mentoring relationship by building a firm foundation with their mentees by first getting to know their likes and dislikes. This formed the basis for future interactions. Furthermore, mentees were introduced to learners as well as the teaching programme. Other approaches utilised by mentors to provide mentorship to their mentees revealed in this study include, amongst others, guiding mentees on the interpretation of the primary school curriculum, preparation of lesson plans as well as lesson modelling while mentees observe (4.7.1.2). Several scholars view the above approaches as effective guidance and support that could equip the mentees with the necessary teaching skills (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Chimenga, 2016; Johnson, 2000; Hoxha, 2016; Hudson & Hudson, 2016; Izadinia, 2015). However, the study also revealed that mentees are expected to imitate what they are told to do without questioning. This is what Bandura (1976) called imitation learning. Another challenge highlighted in this study was that some mentees do not want to teach content subjects in the primary school curriculum preferring non-examinable subjects such as music, physical education and other practical subjects. This may suggests that some mentees leave their teaching without adequate experience.

5.2.3 Challenges and opportunities in mentoring pre-service teachers

The findings of this study revealed several challenges faced by school-based mentors while offering mentoring and support to primary pre-service teachers. These include, amongst others, serious deficiencies in scheming, planning, lesson delivery and interpretation of official syllabi exhibited by pre-service teachers.This would seem to suggest that teacher development institutions do not adequately prepare pre-service teachers for teaching practice as highlighted by Ambrosetti (2012), Frost (2013), Samkange (2015) and Villagas-Reimers (2003). Pre-service teachers should be adequately grounded in content and pedagogical content knowledge through intensive lectures and microteaching (Moyo, 2002; Mukeredzi, 2015; Wetzel *et al.*, 2017; Villagas-Reimers, 2003). A lack of training by participating mentors also worsened the situation, as they did not have the capacity to close the gap created by teacher training institutions. This observation underlines findings by Ehrich (2017), Hudson (2014) as well as Tang and Choi (2007), which highlighted that most mentors were never subjected to training to equip them with the capacity and skills of providing mentorship to student teachers.

The study established that age and gender differences between mentors and their created serious challenges. In situations where mentees were older than their mentors or where the two were of the opposite gender, it was difficult for mentors to give instructions or orders. Cultural background was found to be the source of such challenges because in some cultures it is taboo for a younger person to give instructions or orders to elders (Gelfand, 1979; Gombe, 2011; Hamutyinei & Plangger, 2013). This seems to be what Tawanda was referring to when he said,

> ... we have different ages or mentees of different ages, a mentee can also be mature enough, more mature than the mentor ... then he is likely to face problems here in terms of how they relate in the classroom situation with the mentor.

These challenges compromised the efficacy of mentorship for pre-service teachers. Based on these findings, one can conclude that there is a dire need for teachers' colleges to provide host schools with sufficient information on the teacher development programmes and how to implement them as highlighted by Cohen *et al.* (2010), Ehrich (2017), Marimo (2014), Samkange (2015) and Ochanji *et al.* (2015).

The study established that teachers' colleges did not adequately support school-based mentors through mentor professional development workshops and the provision of college expectations to enable them to execute their duties efficiently. This contradicts findings by Ambrosetti (2012), and Hobson *et al.*, (2009) on the importance of providing ongoing professional development for mentors.

Poor communication between mentors and colleges was found to have a negative effect on mentoring of pre-service teachers on teaching practice. The mentors bitterly complained about the involvement of their mentees in college activities such as sports, without prior arrangements. This is what Lady C was referring to when she pointed out that,

> ...the other challenge we normally have is about the students who normally go for sports to the colleges... (4.9.1).

This concurs with the advice given by Chimhenga (2016), Gray *et al.* (2017), Musingafi and Mafumbate (2014), Ngara and Ngwarai (2012) and Samkange (2015) who argue in favour of establishing effective communication channels between host schools and colleges.

At school level, the study revealed that mentors received occasional support from TICs and school heads. The little support they received was in form of demonstration lessons, supervision and counselling of mentees. Mentor support is critical to the success of mentoring relationships (Hoxha, 2016; McMahan & Garza, 2017; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

Mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice revealed that it is not only about challenges but also about opportunities as well. For example, the study revealed that mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum accorded mentors the benefit of professional growth (Ackley & Gall, 1992; Aderibigbe, 2013; Ambrosettie, 2014; Mukeredzi, 2017; Hobson, 2016; Paris, 2012; Roff, 2012; Wasonga *et al.*, 2015). Mentors learnt how to lead and guide their mentees, especially from college lecturers during their routine supervisory visits. After each lesson observation, lecturers held post-observation discussions with the mentors and their mentees. This was found to benefit mentors by professionally exposing them to college expectations and learning the latest techniques and skills in guiding mentees. Closely related to this was the fact that the mentors and their mentees had immense opportunities in terms of identifying their own deficiencies and constructing what Sugai and Horner (2002) called “home grown solutions”. It also accorded mentors to reflect on their practices, which they subsequently improved.

The study established that mentors learnt from their mentees how to use and operate computers, access the internet, coach unfamiliar games such as baseball, tennis, hockey and rugby. This suggests that mentoring is a reciprocal relationship. This supports the finding by Allnajar (2016) that mentors have opportunities of learning new approaches from their mentees.

Another important benefit for mentoring pre-service teachers was that mentors enjoyed the privilege of getting first preference to attend the limited professional development workshops organised at school level or by their districts or colleges. These professional development workshops enhanced their professional growth and at the same time afforded them opportunities for networking and establishing professional and social relationships with colleagues from other institutions.

5.2.4 Explanation and/or understanding of mentors’ perspectives and practices

Internationally, mentors are trained to provide guidance to pre-service teachers on teaching practice (Genc, 2016; Hannova Research, 2014; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Hudson, 2013b; McMahan and Garza, 2017). However, this was not the case with participating school-based mentors in this study. Mentors in this study believed that any certified teacher was qualified to be a mentor. The study established that concepts of leadership, knowledge/expertise and experience influenced school-based supervisors’ understanding of mentoring.

The study revealed that mentors obtained college expectations from their mentees who often withheld information from their school-based supervisors. This situation was found to be rather disturbing as mentors ended up leading their mentees as they saw fit. It could also cause friction between the mentor and mentees if they did not operate in harmony. This explains the lack of uniformity in the way mentors enacted their roles. This supports findings by Ehrich (2017), Rowley (1999) and Samkange (2015) that emphasised the importance of providing school-based mentors with all the relevant information from teacher training institutions regarding how they were to guide their mentees.

Mentors who participated in this study concurred that they were not aware of how they were appointed and equally critical was the fact that they had no input in selecting their mentees. This explains why there were some areas of conflict between mentors and their mentees. This suggests that if mentors were afforded opportunities to select their mentees such conflicts could be averted. Teaching practice provides mentees with opportunities for pre-service teachers to put into practice the theory that they learnt during their first residential phase at college (Grossman, 2010; Marimo, 2014; Moyo, 2002; Mpofu & Hove, 2016; Monteiro & Viera, 2016; Morrison, 2016; Mukeredzi, 2017; Tuli & File, 2009). The study revealed that some mentees were not given the opportunity to teach all subjects in the primary school curriculum since mentors focused on improving learners’ pass rate. In addition, pre-service teachers were released for teaching practice without sufficient grounding in content and lesson delivery approaches. This partly explains why mentors relegated their mentees to teaching non-examinable subjects and only allowing them to teach all subjects in some instances. The study also found that colleges are literary passing on their responsibility of training teachers to schools that are not adequately prepared for such a huge responsibility. This could be interpreted as defaulting on responsibility by teacher development institutions.

Chimhenga (2016), Gray *et al.* (2017) and Samkange (2015) argue that there is a need for effective communication between colleges and host schools. These studies established that communication between schools and colleges is rather poor. This also explains the relationships between mentors and their mentees. The mentors felt sidelined in most issues affecting their roles. For example, they indicated that they were not consulted in situations where students were called to college for sports, workshops or other functions.

5.2.5 Suggestions for improving mentoring pre-service teachers

Findings gleaned from this study suggest that school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers can be improved ensuring that mentors are provided with written regulations that clearly spell out “what” and “how” they are expected to guide their mentees. This was an important suggestion from mentor participants considering that they had no formal mentor training. Findings by Chimhenga, (2016), Hobson (2016) and McMahan and Garza (2017) show that it is important for school-based supervisors to be fully conversant with the requirements of the teacher development programmes of their mentees. This is critical as this may result in easing the roles of mentors as well as increasing uniformity and the quality of mentoring of pre-service teachers in schools.

The consensus in literature is that teachers need to be provided with ongoing professional development to keep them informed of the latest content and pedagogical approaches (De Monte, 2013; Genc, 2016; Jita & Mokhele, 2012; Mukeredzi, 2017; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Participants in this study agreed that colleges should provide mentors with continuous and sustained professional learning through workshops. This is a critical suggestion as it keeps school-based supervisors updated of any changes in the pre-service teacher development programme. The study revealed that a lack of continuous mentor learning has a negative effect on the mentoring relationship as mentors resorted to trial and error in the enactment of their roles.

Mentor participants suggested that there should be clear channels of communication between colleges and schools. This supports findings from the literature on the importance of effective communication between colleges and host schools (Heeralal, 2014; Gray *et al.*, 2017; Samkange, 2015; Sheridan & Young, 2017). The study revealed that mentors were not informed about the movements of their mentees and this was found to be a major disruption to the effective mentoring of pre-service teachers on practicum. This suggestion proposed by mentors is not only likely to reduce potential sources of conflicts, but also improves the allocation of teaching loads between mentors and their mentees.

Emerging from this study was that teachers' colleges released student teachers for teaching practice with very little knowledge of syllabus interpretation, scheming, lesson delivery, classroom management and time management. The mentors suggested that policymakers consider increasing the time student teachers spend during the initial residential phase. Their suggestion on this important component of preliminary teacher development is in accord with findings from literature (Ehrich, 2017; Eryilmaz & Aypay, 2016; Genc, 2016; Nguyen, 2017; Sunga, 2004). This makes a lot of sense considering that teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe provide only eight out of thirty-six months for student teachers to acquire the much-needed theory before they are attached to mentors in schools. The release of pre-service teachers for teaching practice without sufficient theoretical content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge was interpreted as defaulting on responsibility to mentors who also needed plenty of assistance from the programme owners.

Authorities in teacher education and development underscore the need for pre-service teachers to be provided with adequate resources (Abongdia *et al.*, 2015; Ackely & Gall, 1992; Donkon & Dwamena, 2014; Whitebook & Bellm, 2014). The mentors' proposed suggestion for the improvement of mentoring of pre-service teachers is in tandem with views from the scholarship that host schools provide mentees with all the stationery that student teachers require. This was considered an important suggestion as mentees would have the opportunity for rich practice.

The final suggestion emanating from mentors was the need for incentives as they carried the bulk of the work in the preparatory phase of teacher training in Zimbabwe. They are with students for five of the nine terms of the course. This was an important suggestion from the mentors as they are overloaded (Ambrosetti, 2014; Lynch & Smith, 2012). The mentors are conducting a dual role, teaching their mentees to become competent teachers and ensuring that pupils also experience quality teaching from them. I will revisit these issues again under recommendations of the study below. The findings in the literature show that mentoring is an extra job for mentor teachers who should be remunerated (Chimhenga, 2016; Hoxha, 2016; Samkange, 2015; Whitebook & Bellem, 2014). This is pertinent in this case.

5.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The following are the main findings of the study:

- School-based mentors viewed mentoring as a hierarchical relationship with mentors as senior partners. Their understanding of mentoring was found to be shaped by their past backgrounds and experiences in mentoring as pre-service teachers.
- The study established that school-based supervisors viewed all certified teachers as eligible for selection and appointment as mentors. Mentors believed that leadership potential, expertise and experience are necessary qualifications for one to be a mentor. They did not consider mentorship training as a critical component for mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice.
- School heads have the mandate to select mentors at their stations. The mentors felt that consultations were necessary in the selection process. School-based supervisors are not aware of the criteria school heads used in appointing mentors and they did not provide opportunities for mentors to select their mentees. The study established that this was one source of conflict between mentors and their mentees.
- This study established that mentors played several roles in the execution of their duties. The mentors’ roles involved nurturing, guiding, leading and supervising, and were similar to those in the scholarship on mentoring. The main difference was found in the way mentors enacted these critical roles. While literature emphasised dialogue and mutual understanding, mentors who participated in this study expected student teachers to accept their directives unquestioningly. The mentors viewed their mentees as people who had

nothing of importance they could bring into this relationship. The way mentors enacted their roles actually reflected power and authority. The study also revealed that mentors enacted their roles in an appropriate developmental style starting from syllabus interpretation, to documentation preparation, lesson delivery and finally, lesson management. They developed their mentees through demonstrations, modelling, observation and constructive feedback.

- The findings gleaned from this study revealed that mentors faced several challenges in mentoring pre-service teachers on teaching practice. One of the main challenges faced by school-based supervisors includes inadequate preparation of student teachers during their preparatory teacher development phase. This is because teachers' training colleges released student teachers for their practicum without sufficiently grounding them in the basics of teaching such as syllabus interpretation, scheming, lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management and how to assess pupils' progress. Poor communication between colleges and schools negatively influenced the effective mentoring of pre-service teachers. Colleges did not provide mentors with adequate information concerning "what" and "how" mentors should assist their mentees to develop the necessary professional competencies. The mentors received minimum support in form of ongoing professional development workshops from their school administrators and the colleges. This resulted in mentors relying on trial and error methods of enacting their mentoring duties. Age and gender differences between mentors and mentees were found to have an influence on the mentoring relationships in schools. Mentors who were younger than their mentees found it difficult to give orders or instructions. This was due to cultural contexts as some Zimbabweans regard it as taboo for the young to give instructions to older people. Furthermore, the study revealed that mentors are overloaded, which affects the quality of mentoring.
- Mentoring of pre-service teachers was found to have benefits for mentors in terms of social and professional growth. The mentors enjoyed certain privileges such as being the first to be considered to attend the limited professional development sessions offered by the colleges and the education

district authorities. The mentees taught their mentors how to use and operate computers and coaching non-traditional games such as baseball, tennis and rugby. Mentors had the opportunity of establishing lasting professional relationships with their mentees as well as interacting with college lecturers during their routine supervisory visits. Home grown solutions were created through lecturers after supervision discussions with mentors.

- Mentors’ perspectives and practices could be understood and explained from several angles. Their backgrounds and actual experiences in mentoring pre-service teachers helped to explain their conceptualisation of what mentoring is and how they enacted their roles. The study established that mentors are not trained to provide mentorship to pre-service teachers; hence, their practices were shaped by their experiences as student teachers and the prevailing conditions at their stations. The failure by teacher training colleges and schools to support mentors is a critical dimension, which helps to explain mentors’ perspectives and mentoring practices. A lack of consultation in the appointment and input by mentors in the selection of mentees partly explains the way mentors enacted their roles.
- Mentors proffered six critical suggestions on how mentoring of pre-service teachers could be improved. The study established that school-based supervisors strongly believed that mentoring could be improved if colleges provided them with documents showing them “what” and “how” to guide student teachers on teaching practice. The establishment of effective channels of communication between colleges and schools, and provision of on- going professional development were considered by mentors as critical in improving the mentoring of student teachers on practicum.
- Mentors also suggested that schools should provide pre-service teachers with adequate stationery to improve the quality of their mentoring roles. In addition, mentors felt that to improve the quality of experiences of student teachers during their teaching practice, the teacher development programme should be changed in such a way that they (student teachers) are provided more time to acquire adequate theoretical knowledge and content knowledge before being released to schools.

- Lastly, mentors believed that they should be incentivised since they are shouldering a huge responsibility in mentoring pre-service teachers and are expected to teach their own pupils at the same time.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study made it clear that mentor’s own backgrounds and experiences shape school-based supervisors’ understanding of mentoring. The provision of mentorship and support centred on guiding mentees on the interpretation of the primary school curriculum, preparing lesson plans as well as modelling lessons while mentees observe. The criteria used by school heads in the appointment of mentors seem to be posing a threat in the provision of school-based mentorship of primary pre-service teachers.

The lack of training of school-based mentors prior to their assumption of mentorship roles also poses a challenge since they have limited capacity and skills to provide effective mentorship.

The findings of this study revealed that mentors assisted their mentees to develop teaching skills. They start by establishing some form of familiarity with their mentees before focusing on the technicalities of teaching and the teaching craft. The mentors guided their mentees from syllabus interpretation to scheming, planning, lesson delivery and classroom management. It is noteworthy that school-based supervisors viewed themselves as senior partners in the mentoring relationship. According to mentors, student teachers brought very little into the relationship; hence, they regarded themselves as experts with mentees expected to accept everything they say and ordered them to do without question. It can be concluded that mentoring in this study was not characterised by mutuality, reciprocation and as non-hierarchical as suggested in the scholarship. More specifically, the relationship was hierarchical with clear power differentials between mentors and their mentees.

Mentors who participated in this study are well experienced and this experience shaped how they guided their mentees. An interesting finding that emerged from this study was that school heads do not consider gender and age differences when allocating mentees to mentors. The study established that in situations where mentors are younger than their mentees and of the opposite sex, the mentoring relationship faced challenges. In the cultural context of this study, it is taboo for youngsters to give orders to people older than they are. In some cultural contexts, age and gender are factors school heads need to consider when attaching student teachers on teaching practice to mentors. More specifically, the issue of culture, especially in terms of age and sex, is a critical factor that can promote or negatively influence the mentoring process.

The findings of this study indicated that mentors faced several challenges in the execution of their roles. Teacher training colleges released ill-prepared student teachers for teaching practice. The mentors concurred that colleges send “raw students” for teaching practice. Mentors complained that the students they are assigned to mentor exhibited many deficiencies in terms of syllabus interpretation, scheming, lesson planning and how to assess pupils’ progress. Teacher training colleges should address these basics before they release student teachers for their practicum. It is noteworthy that school-based supervisors who are not trained for such responsibilities are given such a huge responsibility. It is therefore apt to conclude that teacher training colleges are literally abdicating their mandate of training teachers to mentors who are ill equipped for such a critical role. The study revealed that colleges are overburdening mentors and their timetables are consequently crowded.

School heads and teacher training colleges did not provide adequate support to mentors. The findings of this study showed that teachers’ colleges with student teachers on teaching practice did not provide mentors with continuous professional development workshops. Equally critical is the fact that school heads and TICs provided sporadic teacher development workshops. School-based supervisors guide their mentees using trial and error methods. Closely related to inadequate support for mentors, the study established that colleges do not provide mentors with documents showing “what” and “how” student teachers on teaching practice guide their mentees. Whilst this provided mentors to find out context specific solutions to their challenges, the result was a lack of uniformity in guiding student teachers.

The study established that some school heads did not provide pre-service teachers on teaching practice with adequate resources. This affects the quality of mentees’ teaching practice experiences. Equally important was the fact that colleges and school heads released student teachers on teaching practice without prior arrangements with their mentors. It can be concluded that teaching programmes planned by the mentors and their mentees were seriously disrupted. In addition, this strained relationships between mentees and their mentors.

Student teachers on teaching practice have too many records which some mentors considered a serious challenge. Student teachers spent most of their time on documentation rather than observing mentors teaching so that they can copy good practices. Mentors found it a serious challenge as they teach their pupils, helping their mentees with their documents and teaching them how to teach, among other roles.

School-based supervisors enjoyed several benefits from mentoring student teachers. The study established a number of opportunities for mentors. For example, mentors learnt how to use ICTs in teaching pupils, how to coach non-traditional games such as baseball, tennis, hockey and rugby. Furthermore, mentors were given first preference to attend the limited workshops organised by colleges, districts and their schools through their cluster. Mentoring pre-service teachers, therefore, is not all about challenges but there are also benefits for those involved.

The study established that mentors' perspectives and practices could be understood and/or explained from four main dimensions which are past experiences, lack of training, poor support systems and culture. The study revealed that mentors utilised their experiences as student teachers and experience in mentoring in their conceptualisation and enactment of their mentoring roles. Mentors who participated in this study were not trained to guide student teachers on teaching practice as recommended in scholarship. This partly explains why and how mentors enacted their roles anchoring their practices by trial and error. Poor support from the school heads and colleges helped to explain the lack of uniformity in the way mentors guided student teachers on teaching practice.

Mentors proffered six critical suggestions for the improvement of mentoring of pre-service teachers on teaching practice. They suggested that mentoring of student teachers when teacher-training colleges provided written guidelines to help them in their mentoring roles. Mentors should be supported by organising workshops for them and engaging them in a positive communication climate. The study established that mentors play a critical role in the preparatory training of pre-service teachers and consequently mentors suggested that they be given a token of appreciation in the form of monetary incentives. The mentors were of the opinion that student teachers should be provided with all the stationery they needed. To the mentors, this will enhance the quality of the mentees' experiences. The study established that colleges released ill-prepared student teachers for teaching practice. Mentors suggested that increasing the period student teachers are at college before teaching practice would enable student teachers to have more theoretical knowledge and content knowledge, which is crucial in teaching pupils in schools. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that these suggestions are important as they came from practitioners in the field.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations presented here are intended to provide possible improvements when conducting such studies in future.

The study utilised a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Comparable in similar studies, findings of this research may not be generalised to other contexts. The study involved only seven teachers (mentors) who supervised students from three teachers' colleges in the Masvingo province and district out of ten province and 15 teachers' colleges. The inclusion of other stakeholders, such as school heads, TICs and mentees may yield similar or different results.

The period of six months of data collection for this study is inadequate and perhaps more time and participants may enable the findings to be generalised. The limited number of participants coupled with a limited data collection period limits the generalisation of the findings of this study.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Whilst the study has its own limitations, as stated above, and being aware that it cannot exhaustively solve all the issues and concerns on a critical issue such as mentoring, I do however feel that this study will make a modest contribution to the existing scholarship on preparatory teacher development programmes. Literature on mentoring, especially from the perspective of school-based supervisors, is still limited to non-existent in Zimbabwe. Hence, the study contributes knowledge to scholarship on mentoring using the Zimbabwean context as an example.

The study opens debate on the quality of mentoring of pre-service teachers in Zimbabwean schools. Many questions remain unanswered about “what” and “how” mentoring should be implemented. Equally important, the study questions the logic of continuing to have untrained school-based supervisors shouldering the bulk of the responsibility in the initial development of the country’s future teachers. Scholarship on mentoring of student teachers on practicum argues that mentors should be trained (Ambrosetti 2014; Heeralal, 2014; Tok & Yilma, 2011). This study provides new knowledge on mentoring of student teachers on practicum by untrained mentors.

The study revealed that student teachers released by teacher training colleges for teaching practice are “raw”, and that untrained and unsupported mentors struggle on their own. The study contributes to the ongoing debate about teacher initial development and mentoring. The study provides new knowledge on how untrained mentors almost shoulder the responsibility of developing new teachers as they are with mentees for the greater part of the training. Such critical issues raised by this study beg for answers and require immediate attention. The study suggests that there is need for more research is to address these issues and many others raised in this study.

The study brought to the fore the need for mentors to be given training as it does not only bring about the much needed and elusive quality in teacher development, but also aligns with international standards as revealed by the literature reviewed for this study (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2012). More specifically, the study makes a bold statement that, it is erroneous to think that any qualified or certified teacher is eligible to become a mentor. I therefore, recommend the training of mentors for their roles. Mentoring is not an innate skill, but a learned one (Hudson & Hudson, 2016).

The study contributes to the debate raging in Zimbabwe about the quality of the teacher development programmes offered in Zimbabwe (Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). The study established that student teachers released by colleges for teaching practice were incapable of interpreting the primary school curriculum, scheming and planning, let alone lesson delivery. This critical finding makes a modest contribution to the ongoing discourses about the best practices in preliminary teacher development programmes. This study makes a modest contribution by initiating debate on the quality of teacher education programmes in Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

The study recommends that policymakers consider extending the pre-service teachers' initial residential phase from the current two terms to three. This allows lecturers to expose student teachers to more theory before sending them out to schools. Thus, the study provokes debate on such an important policy issue in the country.

The study contributes new knowledge on how ill-supported school-based supervisors help student teachers develop teaching skills. The study revealed that mentors felt short-changed in terms of support by teacher education colleges. Literature is very clear that school-based supervisors should receive ongoing support from teacher programme owners (Genc, 2016; Watsonga *et al.,* 2015). The study makes a bold statement that sending students on teaching practice without adequate support for mentors is a wrong approach in developing future teachers for the country. The study established that mentors resorted to the use of their own experiences in mentoring their mentees. This partly explains the lack of uniformity in mentoring student teachers on practicum. As stated above, all this is likely to contribute to the production of low quality teachers by teachers' colleges. This awareness, made to the teachers' colleges and the relevant authorities, is an important contribution of this the study.

This study also makes a submission to the relevant authorities to consider how they can appreciate the important contribution mentors are making in the development of teachers for the nation. In other contexts, mentoring is a paid job (Wilder, 1992). This study provides a new dimension where mentors are not paid but still continue to work without complaining.

This study demonstrated that mentoring pre-service teachers on practicum is not only about challenges. The study established that student teachers also had something to offer for their mentors. The findings of this study clearly showed that some mentors could not use ICTs in their teaching. This study revealed that mentoring is some form of cheap in-service training to older teachers. Pre-service teachers did not only teach their mentors how to operate modern machines such as computers but they also taught them how to coach new games such as baseball, tennis, hockey and rugby, which are being emphasised in the primary school curriculum. However, the study calls for further research on how to spread the use of ICTs into schools using student teachers on practicum.

Finally yet importantly, the study made an important contribution to my personal professional growth. The study has made me, as a college principal, reflect on how I lead and direct the preparatory training of teachers at my college. This study made me aware of the many areas that I need to explore further and improve in the training of teachers at my college. Interaction with other college principals will enable me to share my experiences and possibly influence them to introduce changes for the betterment of the country's teacher development programmes. I also had the opportunity to share experiences not only with my supervisor but also with several colleagues such as school heads, mentors, mentees and fellow doctoral students. Professionally I am now better informed about how to conduct research ethically and understand the difficulties experienced by mentors in schools as well as other deficiencies in the teacher preparation programme.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND POLICY

Below are recommendations for the improvement of mentoring in schools:

5.7.1 Recommendations for practice

- Colleges should train school-based supervisors for their mentoring roles. This will not only increase uniformity in mentoring but also improves the development of new teachers in general.
- Colleges should provide ongoing professional development for mentors. This helps to empower school-based supervisors and enhances the quality of the product. .

5.7.2 Recommendations for policy

- The Department of Teacher Education (DTE) at the University of Zimbabwe, as the standards control institution for all teachers' colleges in the country, should consider coming up with a comprehensive document detailing the "what" and "how" of mentoring student teachers during teaching practice. The document should also include mentor selection criteria.

- Policymakers should consider reviewing the whole teacher education programme. The study established that colleges released pre-service teachers who are not sufficiently equipped for the teaching tasks in schools. Mentors complained that their mentees lacked basic skills such as syllabus interpretation, scheming and planning lessons. It was established that mentors start teaching their mentees anew. It is suggested that the teacher education development programme should be changed from 2-5-2 to 3-4-2. Such a change is likely to provide lecturers with adequate time to expose student teachers to more theory and microteaching sessions. This is likely going to reduce the mentors' responsibility of teaching mentees and at the same time provide student teachers with sufficient content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. As it currently stands, colleges are abdicating their responsibility of training teachers, shouldering it on ill-prepared mentors.
- The policymakers should consider incentivising mentors who are playing a critical role in the development of future teachers for the nation. The study established that mentors are pivotal in the preparatory development of teachers as they have student teachers for the bulk of their training programme. At the same time, mentors are also expected to teach their pupils, and thus overloading their schedules. It is therefore reasonable to recommend that they be given a token of appreciation for the work they are doing for the country.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following are recommendations for further study on this topic:

- This study focussed on school-based supervisors' perspectives on mentoring in one province and three teachers' colleges in the country. Further studies may focus on mentoring in other provinces and even include more participants to provide a broader view on this vital field of study.
- This study found that there is no framework guiding the selection of mentors and ways mentors should enact their roles. Other researchers can consider investigating policies that can improve the mentoring of student teachers on teaching practice.

- The study established that student teachers on teaching practice teach their mentors how to use ICTs in teaching and learning. This was happening by default. Other researchers could investigate how student teachers on teaching practice in schools can be organised in a more formal role to assist their mentors and other staff in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning.

5.9 FINAL REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

Below are my final reflections on this study.

There are limited studies in Zimbabwe that focus on mentors' perspectives on mentoring of pre-service teachers during their practicum. The study unravelled and unpacked most of the concerns of school-based supervisors who are mentors of students on teaching practice. As a principal of one of the teachers' colleges in Masvingo, I learnt several lessons about how mentors conceptualised mentoring, their roles, challenges and how mentoring of pre-service teachers can be improved. The study revealed that mentors required ongoing support in the form of workshops, especially from teacher training colleges. I was, however, surprised with the zeal and willingness of school-based mentors to assist in developing essential teaching skills despite the unfavourable conditions in which they operated. The mentors should be provided with sufficient guiding documents clearly showing how they can effectively enact their mentoring roles.

This study has actually changed my thinking about mentoring of pre-service teachers. I used to believe that mentors, as qualified and experienced teachers, could guide students without direction from teachers' colleges. This study proved me wrong as those in the field clearly advised me that there was a need for student teachers to be adequately grounded in the theory of teaching before they are sent to practise in schools. This study revealed that the first two terms, when student teachers are in college with their lecturers, are inadequate to acquire the necessary teaching skills. Student teachers need to have the skills to interpret the syllabi used during teaching practice and ways to prepare schemes of work and plan lessons for pupils. I am now aware that mentors and colleges need to collaborate in the development of teachers for the nation. I was guided by the philosophy that learning can best be achieved through practise. I am now convinced that if mentors are trained and continuously supported through continuing professional development workshops, they can be more effective in the development of high quality teachers for the country.

This study taught me that mentoring was not all about problems but that mentors had immense opportunities to learn and grow professionally. I was surprised and humbled by the way mentors openly pointed out that they learnt how to use ICTs in their teaching and in the coaching of non-traditional games as well as reflecting on their practices, which were influenced by their mentees. This has taught me a very important lesson in life about appreciating the good work when my juniors often perform better than I do. This proved to me that people could not be experts in everything; hence, the issue of collaboration and working as a team becomes critical.

Equally important, were the interactions I had with my supervisor, fellow doctoral students, school heads and mentors that were instrumental in helping me to grow professionally. I have come to appreciate the simple logic that in life every human being has a role to play.

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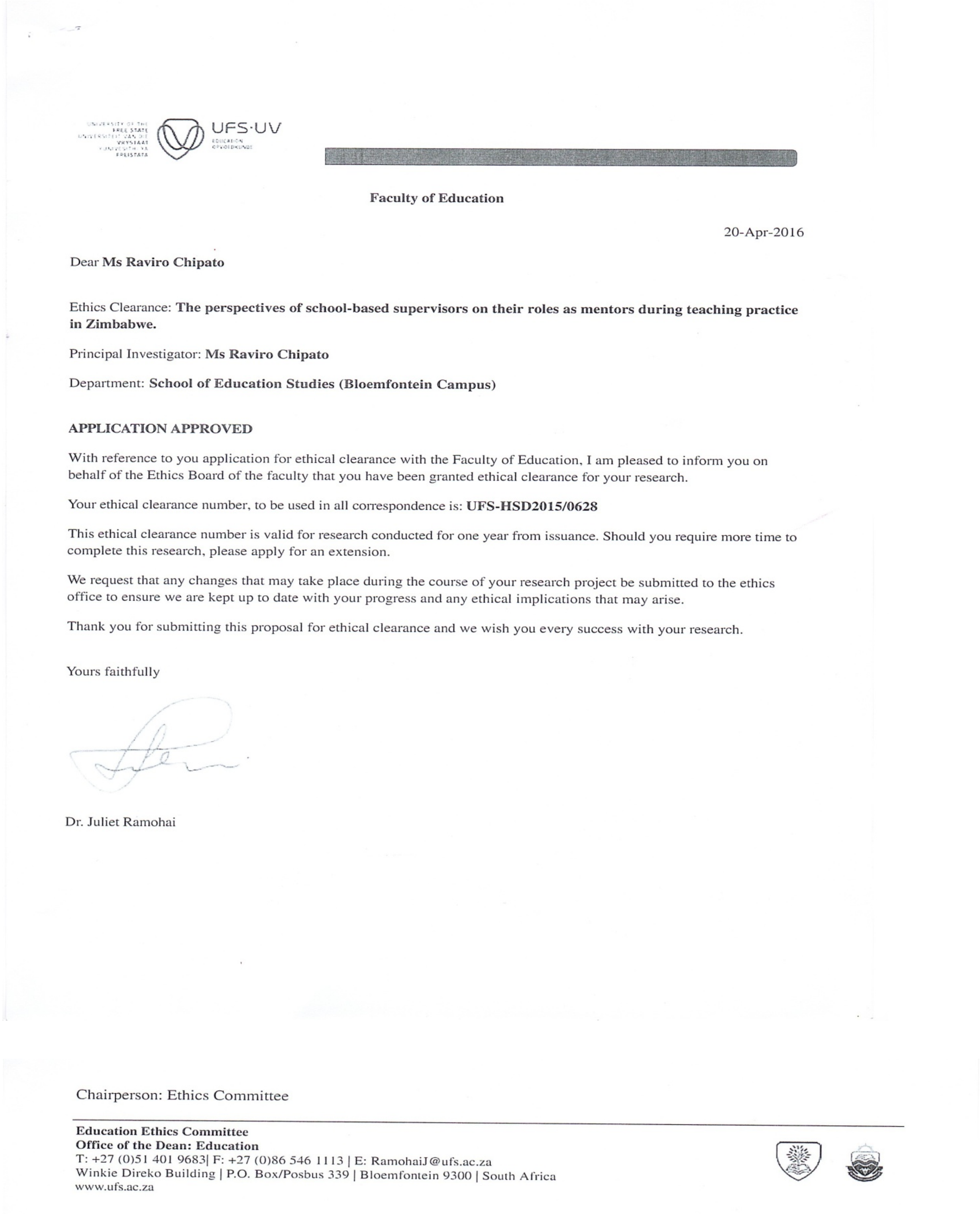
Appendices

APPENDIX A: Ethical Clearance letter from the University of Free State



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
EDUCATION
OPVOEDKUNDE

Faculty of Education

20-Apr-2016

Dear **Ms Raviro Chipato**

Ethics Clearance: **The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.**

Principal Investigator: **Ms Raviro Chipato**

Department: **School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to you application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2015/0628**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Juliet Ramohai

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee
Office of the Dean: Education
T: +27 (0)51 401 9683| F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: RamohaiJ@ufs.ac.za
Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B: Application letter to Ministry to carry out research.

Morgenster Teachers' College
P.O. Morgenster
Masvingo

17 May 2016

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O. Box 89
Causeway
Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to carry out research in Masvingo Province

I hereby request for permission to conduct research in selected primary schools in Masvingo Province, specifically in Masvingo District.

My name is Raviro Chipato, and I am presently studying for a PhD degree with the University of the Free State. As part of my Doctoral programme, I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest with a view to making a contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the issue under study. The title of my research project is:

The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives of mentors on their roles during teaching practice for professional development. I am particularly interested in the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe; the challenges they face and how mentorship can be improved to better serve as vehicles for the teachers' professional development in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. The study has the potential to benefit Principals of teachers' colleges, lecturers, mentors, mentees, the University of Zimbabwe, the two ministries and policy makers by pointing out challenges, the successes and need for supporting teachers in their professional development.

The study will involve (i) Interviews with 7mentors at their schools; (i) Focus group discussions with 7mentors; (iii) Reading and analysing supervision reports from the students files, who are being mentored by the seven participating mentors. The interviews will take 30 – 45 minutes and the focus group discussion will also take 1 ½ hours.

I undertake to observe confidentiality and to protect participants from physical and /or psychological harm. No names of the schools and /or persons shall be used in any reports of the research. All participants will be asked to participate voluntarily in the study and may withdraw at any time should they so wish.

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide written reports to The Ministry f Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, The University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education the standards control department. I will also share my research findings with primary school teachers in Masvingo district, and possibly with other districts as well.

I attach a letter of recommendation from my research supervisor regarding the study and my progress.

If you need any further information and / or have suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me and / or my research supervisor Professor Loyiso C. Jita on jitalc@ufs.ac.za or +27514017522.

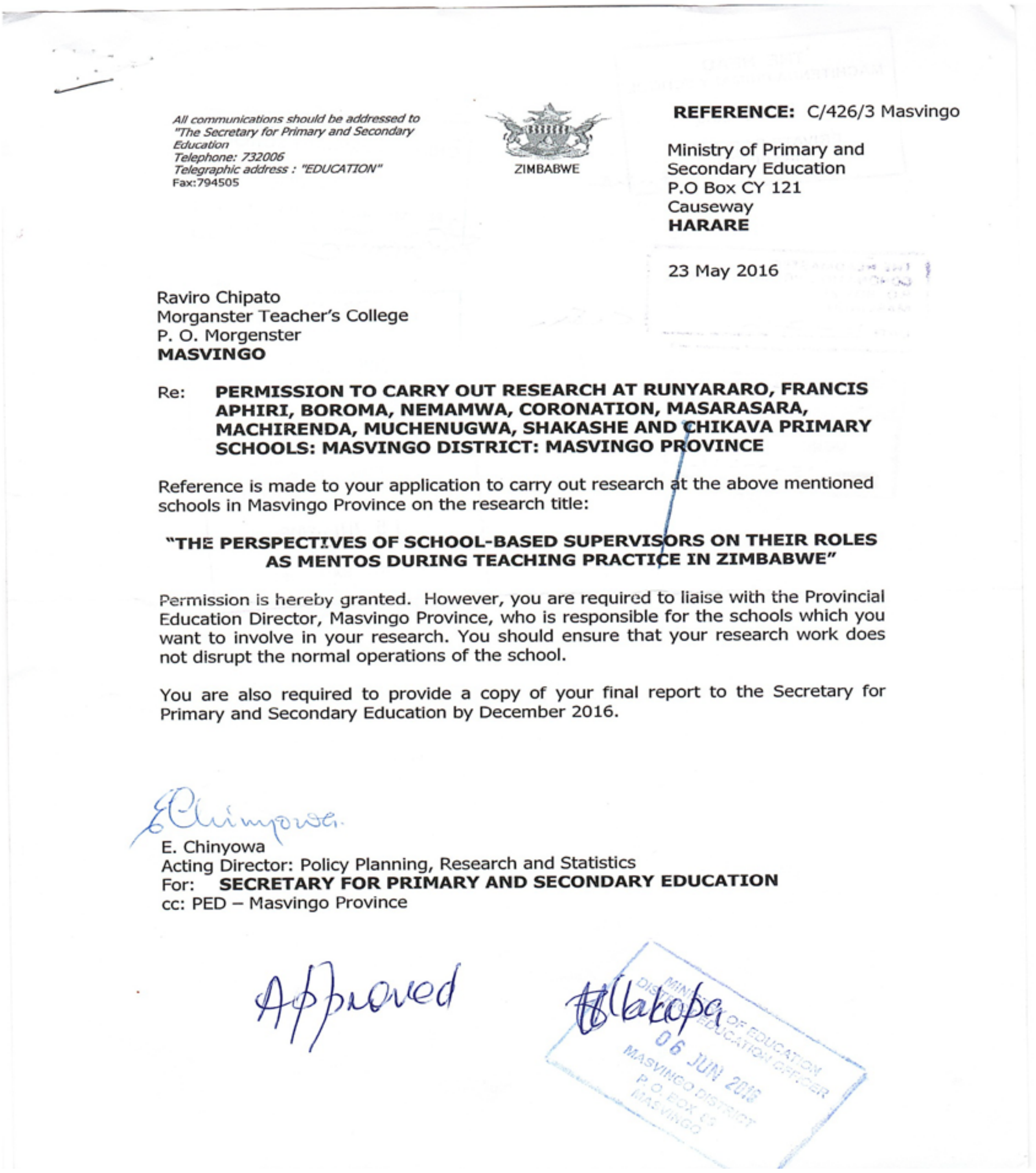
Thank you for your kind consideration to my request.

Yours sincerely

Raviro Chipato

Cell: +263772287081 (e-mail : estinazim01@gmail.com)

APPENDIX C: Letter of Approval from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education granting permission to carry out the study.



All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax:794505

ZIMBABWE

REFERENCE: C/426/3 Masvingo

Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

23 May 2016

Raviro Chipato
Morganster Teacher's College
P. O. Morgenster
MASVINGO

Re: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT RUNYARARO, FRANCIS APHIRI, BOROMA, NEMAMWA, CORONATION, MASARASARA, MACHIRENDA, MUCHENUGWA, SHAKASHE AND CHIKAVA PRIMARY SCHOOLS: MASVINGO DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the research title:

"THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISORS ON THEIR ROLES AS MENTOS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE IN ZIMBABWE"

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director, Masvingo Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school.

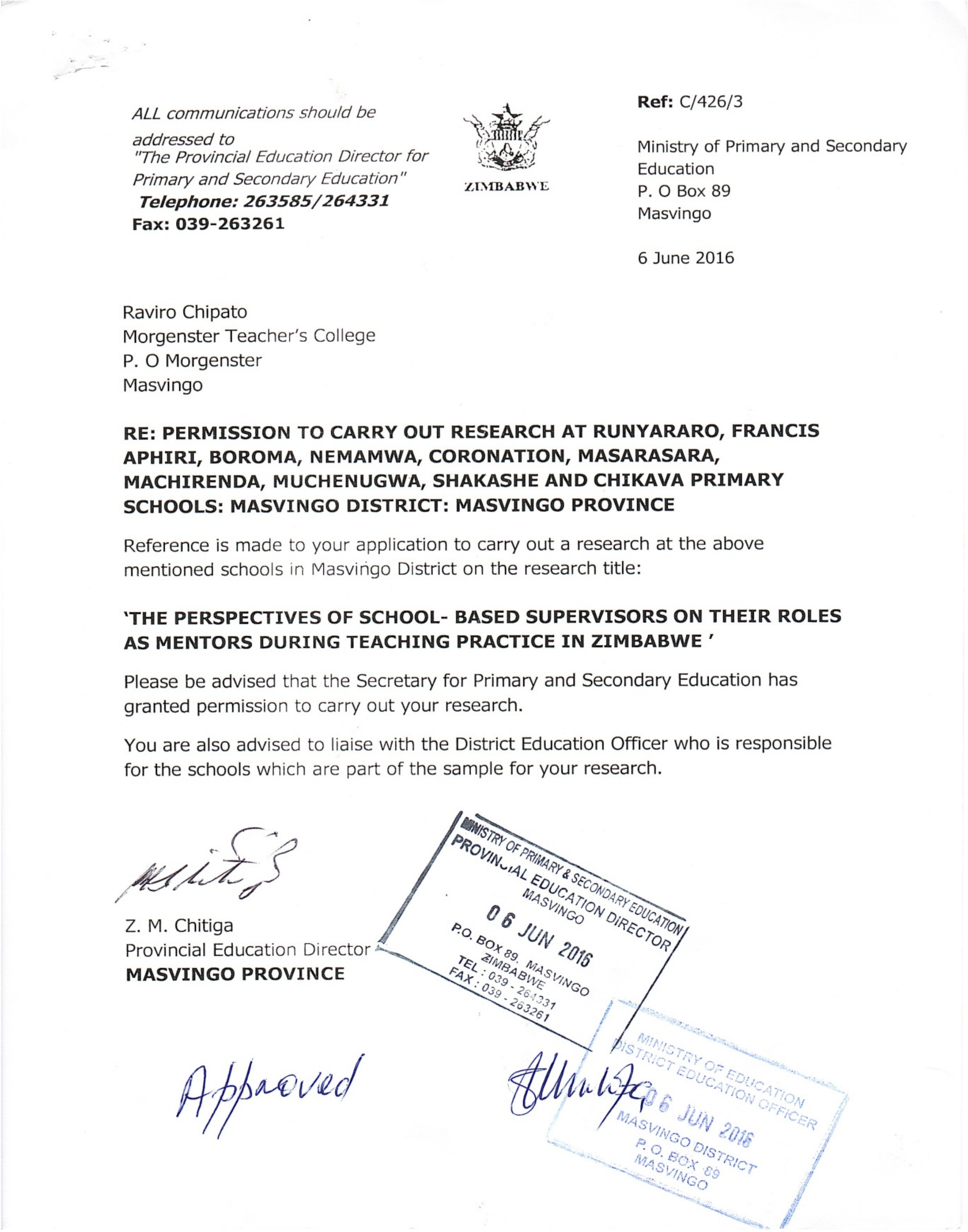
You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by December 2016.

EChinyowa.
E. Chinyowa
Acting Director: Policy Planning, Research and Statistics
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc: PED – Masvingo Province

Approved

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
06 JUN 2016
MASVINGO DISTRICT
P.O. BOX [illegible]
MASVINGO

APPENDIX D: Letter of Approval from the Provincial Education Director (Masvingo Province) and Approval from the District Education Officer (Masvingo District) granting permission to carry out the study.



ALL communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 263585/264331
Fax: 039-263261

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P. O Box 89
Masvingo

6 June 2016

Raviro Chipato
Morgenster Teacher's College
P. O Morgenster
Masvingo

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT RUNYARARO, FRANCIS APHIRI, BOROMA, NEMAMWA, CORONATION, MASARASARA, MACHIRENDA, MUCHENUGWA, SHAKASHE AND CHIKAVA PRIMARY SCHOOLS: MASVINGO DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo District on the research title:

'THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL- BASED SUPERVISORS ON THEIR ROLES AS MENTORS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE IN ZIMBABWE '

Please be advised that the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education has granted permission to carry out your research.

You are also advised to liaise with the District Education Officer who is responsible for the schools which are part of the sample for your research.

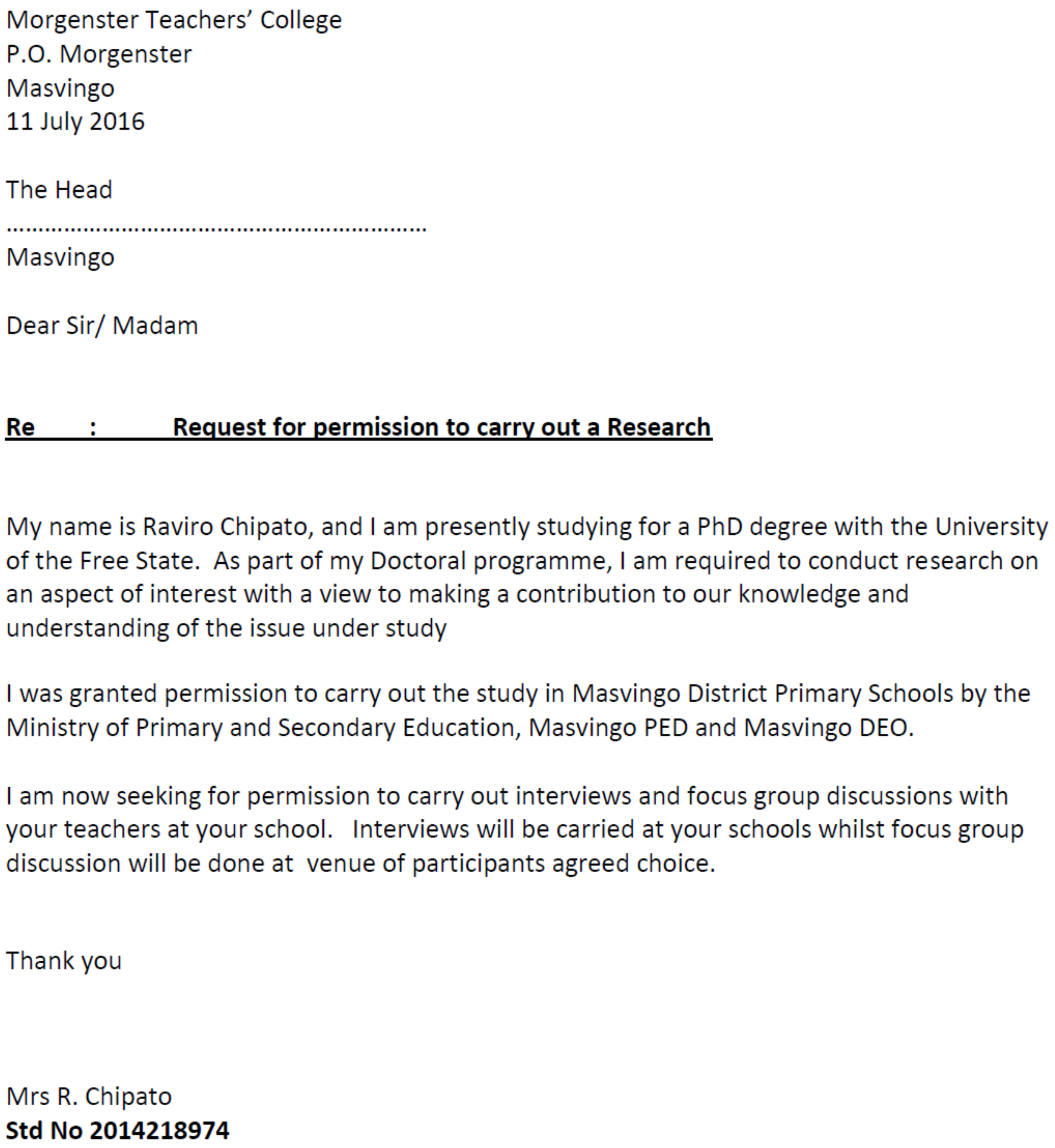
Z. M. Chitiga
Provincial Education Director
MASVINGO PROVINCE

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASVINGO
06 JUN 2016
P.O. BOX 89, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE
TEL : 039 - 264331
FAX : 039 - 263261

Approved

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
06 JUN 2016
MASVINGO DISTRICT
P. O. BOX 89
MASVINGO

APPENDIX E: Application letter to school heads



Morgenster Teachers' College
P.O. Morgenster
Masvingo
11 July 2016

The Head
………………………………………………………
Masvingo

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re : Request for permission to carry out a Research

My name is Raviro Chipato, and I am presently studying for a PhD degree with the University of the Free State. As part of my Doctoral programme, I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest with a view to making a contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the issue under study

I was granted permission to carry out the study in Masvingo District Primary Schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Masvingo PED and Masvingo DEO.

I am now seeking for permission to carry out interviews and focus group discussions with your teachers at your school. Interviews will be carried at your schools whilst focus group discussion will be done at venue of participants agreed choice.

Thank you

Mrs R. Chipato
Std No 2014218974

APPENDIX F: Interview invitation letter for participants and consent form

Morgenster Teachers' College
P.O. Morgenster
Masvingo

13 July 2016

The mentor
……………………………..Primary School
Masvingo

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I hereby invite you to participate in interviews on school based supervision of primary pre-service teachers. My name is Raviro Chipato. I am presently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies, I am required to conduct research on mentoring and I am interested in the roles of school-based supervisors on mentoring of primary pre-service teachers.

The title of my thesis is: The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of my study is to understand the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles in mentoring pre-service teachers during their teaching practice. The study will be done in Masvingo district schools only. The interview will be done with the view of improving quality of mentoring.

The interview will be face to face dialogue with me concerning your perspectives on mentoring and how you enact your mentoring roles. It will also focus on how you perceive your roles and how you mentor the primary pre-service teachers, the opportunities, challenges and what you consider to be the way forward if mentoring has to be effective. The interview is expected to take between 30 – 45 minutes. I will video tape the interviews.

You have been identified on the basis of your mentoring experience. I will observe confidentiality. I will protect you from physical, social and /or psychology harm. At no time will your name or school be disclosed in the study report, pseudonyms or labels or false names will be used. Your participation is voluntary and you will have the right to withdraw if you so wish anytime for any reason.

The study's findings are meant for educational use only.

In the event that you need any further information or you experience any discomfort with the interviews do not hesitate to inform me or contact my supervisor (Prof Loyiso. C. Jita).

Yours sincerely

Raviro Chipato
0772287081
estinazim01@gmail.com

Supervisor
+27514017522
jitalc@ufs.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to participate in the research study entitled

The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

Please complete the attached consent form

- *I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.*
- *I understand what the study is about, why I have been approached to participate*
- *I understand what the potential benefits and risks are.*
- *I grant the researcher permission to video tape our discussion(s).*
- *I give the researcher permission to make use of the information collected from my participation, for research purposes only.*

Participant's
Signature……………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………

Researcher's
Signature……………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………

APPENDIX G: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - MENTORS

Topic: The perspective of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

1) Background Information.
   a) How long have you been teaching?
   b) For how long have you been a mentor?
   c) Do you enjoy mentoring pre-service teachers/ mentees? Why?

2) Let us discuss about your understanding of mentoring.
   a) Can you tell me what you understand by mentoring? Can you elaborate a bit.
   b) Who are the people selected to be mentors at your school? Why?
   c) How were you selected to be a mentor? Can you give me 3 or 4 reasons?

3) Let us talk a little bit about the role(s) of mentors.
   a) Can you mention 4 or 5 roles of a mentor? Explain a little bit about each role.
   b) What do you do when you are assigned to mentor a pre-service teacher i.e the first time s/he comes into your class? Can you explain a little bit more?
   c) Can you tell me 4 or 5 areas pre-service teachers mostly need your help? Explain how you help them on each aspect.
   d) What help have you given mentees in terms of:
      i) Scheming
      ii) Planning
      iii) Teaching Practice File Section – Areas to improve

4) Let us turn to the challenges you are facing in mentoring of pre-service
   a) Can you tell me 4 or 5 challenges you are facing in mentoring of pre-service teachers? Explain briefly each of the challenges.
   b) What actions do you take to address each of these challenges? Explain in detail.
   c) Were you trained to provide mentorship to pre-service teachers? If not trained how are you coping?
   d) How many teaching practice mentorship workshops have you attended? How important were these workshops in improving your mentorship skills?
   e) How does mentor-mentee relationship affect mentoring?
      (i) Positively
      (ii) Negatively
   f) Are you familiar with the college expectations in mentoring pre-service teachers? (Probe)
   g) What type(s) of support do you get from:
      - the college
      - the T.I.C
      - The school head/Deputy head?

5) Let us talk about how school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers can be improved.
   a) Can you tell me 4 or 5 things that could be done to improve school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers? Explain a little bit more on each suggestion.

b) What can the following stakeholders do to improve school-based mentoring of pre-service teachers?
   - -The College
   - -The school head/Deputy head
   - The T.I.C.

6) Do you have any other suggestion on how school-based mentoring can be improved?

7) What improvements have you noticed so far in the primary pre-service teachers currently under your supervision? Have you benefited yourself from mentoring of primary pre-service teachers during your entire mentoring period?

APPENDIX H: Focus group discussion invitation letter for participants and consent form

Morgenster Teachers' College
P.O. Morgenster
Masvingo

13 July 2016

The Mentor
……………………………………….Primary School
Masvingo

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I hereby invite you to participate in focus group discussions on mentoring. My name is Raviro Chipato, and I am currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest as part of my study and I am interested in the perspectives of mentors on their roles as school-based supervisors.

The title of my thesis is: The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of my study is to understand the perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles in mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice, with the view to improve the quality and efficacy of teaching and learning in primary schools. The study will be confined to Masvingo District.

You will discuss with other participants your experiences as mentors on your roles as school-based supervisors of pre-service teachers during teaching practice. The discussion will cover inter alia how mentors understand their roles as school-based supervisors. It will also focus on how the mentors perceive their roles and how they mentor the primary pre-service teachers, the opportunities, challenges and what they consider to be the way forward if the mentoring has to be effective. The group discussion is expected to last about 1 ½ hours. I will video tape the group discussion.

You have been identified on the basis of your in-depth knowledge on mentoring. I undertake to observe confidentiality and protect you from physical, social and/or psychological harm. At no time will your name or school be revealed in the report of this study. Pseudonyms or false names will be used. Your participation is voluntary and you will have the right to withdraw at any time you so wish. Results of the study will be used for educational purposes only.

In the event that you need any further information or you experience any discomfort with the interviews do not hesitate to inform me or contact my supervisor (Prof Loyiso C. Jita).

Yours sincerely

Raviro Chipato
0772287081

estinazim01@gmail.com

Supervisor
+27514017522

jitalc@ufs.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to participate in the research study entitled

The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

Please complete the attached consent form

- *I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.*
- *I understand what the study is about, why I have been approached to participate*
- *I understand what the potential benefits and risks are.*
- *I grant the researcher permission to video tape our discussion(s).*
- *I give the researcher permission to make use of the information collected from my participation, for research purposes only.*

Participant's
Signature……………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………

Researcher's
Signature…………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………

APPENDIX I: Focus Group Protocol

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROTOCOL - MENTORS

Topic

The perspectives of school-based supervisors on their roles as mentors during teaching practice in Zimbabwe.

Introductions and setting of ground rules for the proceedings

1) Background
   - May you please tell me how long you have been a teacher? Of those years how many of them were you a mentor?
   - Which year group students have you mentored?
2) Let us discuss what you perceive as your roles in supervision of primary pre-service teachers during the time they are attached to you.
   - May you identify at least 4 roles?
   - Who should carry out these roles and why do you think so?
3) Let us talk about the mentoring of primary pre-service teachers during teaching practice.
   - What do you understand by mentoring?
   - Let us talk about your roles as mentors of primary pre-service teachers during teaching practice (TP).
4) Can you revisit your first encounter with the primary pre-service teacher when she came into your classroom for the first time? What did you tell her/him? Go over your experiences on the first day with the student - elaborate.
5) You supervise students of different levels during Teaching Practice. What will be your focus for primary pre-service teachers who will be in (a) first year (b) second year (c) third and final year?

Tell me, do you think the help you give to the mentee should take into consideration their level i.e. first, second or third year, can you explain.

6) Primary pre-service teachers have several teaching practice records, let us discuss the help you may offer these mentee with their

   - Scheming
   - Planning
   - Marking of pupil's work
   - Teaching and learning media
   - Teaching Practice Files
   - Any other record.

7) As a mentor you have a good number of stakeholders you work with in the process of mentoring the primary pre-service teachers during Teaching Practice. Can we discuss your expectations from the following stakeholders?

   - The primary pre-service teachers (mentee)
   - The school head, deputy head, teacher in Charge.
   - The college
   - The external assessors

8) Talking about the "areas to improve". What is it that you think you could do in this section to improve the quality of the primary pre-service teachers' teaching skills. In your report what specific comments have you made in this section?

   - Give the comments you have made on the primary pre-service teachers' professional development in this section?

- Do you perceive / see any significance in what you have done in this area so far? Give at least 4 improvements achieved.

9) Let us discuss your roles in supervising the primary pre-service teachers during teaching practice.

   - What are your successes in your role as a supervisor of primary pre-service teachers during their teaching practice time? Give at least 4 or more successes.
   - What are your challenges in your role as a supervisor of primary pre-service teachers during their teaching practice time? Give at least 4 or more challenges.
   - What do you perceive as your opportunities in your role as a supervisor of primary pre-service teachers during their teaching practice time? Give at least 4 or more opportunities
   - What major recommendations can you give to improve the quality of student teacher supervision during teaching practice?

10) Relationship between the mentor and primary pre-service teacher is important, does outside class relationships affect your working together in any way - elaborate.

11) Besides classroom supervision, how else did you help the primary pre-service teacher attached to you?

12) Can we reflect and discuss a bit on the challenges in mentoring?

   - What about the successes of your mentoring process?
   - What four or more opportunities has this mentoring programme opened for you?

13) Would you like to think about how you were trained as a teacher?

   - Discuss how it prepared or not prepared you for mentoring?

- What would you give as most appropriate training programme to equip teachers for mentoring?

14) Let us discuss how you see the mentoring process of the primary pre-service teachers. If you were to plan such a programme how would you organize it to make it more effective for the mentor, mentee and the programme itself?

Thank you colleagues for such a wonderful experience.

Good day!!! God bless!!!

APPENDIX J: Document Analysis Protocol/Schedule

The analysis of documents was informed by the following questions:

How do school-based supervisors enact their roles?

The following sub-questions guided document analysis for this study:

1) *How do school-based supervisors enact their roles?*
2) *What types of support and guidance do mentors provide their mentees?*

NB: Documents analysed supervision written advice/feedback they gave their mentees, kept in the student teachers' teaching practice files (Areas to improve section).