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**Challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the  
context of mentoring**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The study focused on the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring at a University of Technology. The major purpose was to investigate the kinds of challenges pre-service teachers face in teaching Accounting and how their respective school-based mentors respond to these challenges. It is vital to understand these challenges while learning to teach Accounting before a mentor can respond to them.

This study was located within an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist researcher is keen to address social issues in and through their research. To position this study within the context of learning while teaching within a context of mentoring, I utilized case study research methodology. The main purpose of utilizing case study methodology was to develop a deep understanding of the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting and the nature of mentoring. The voices and experiences of the respondents were used to explore and understand the reality embedded in the mentoring of pre-service teachers during teaching practice.

The research sites included six schools located in the Cape Metropole, Western Cape, South Africa. I used purposive sampling to select the participants for my study. I focused on Accounting as a 'vehicle' to guide my choice of sampling to explore how pre-service teachers learn while teaching Accounting. The sample of this study consisted of six pre-service teachers learning to teach Accounting in the fourth year B Ed:FET programme and their respective school-based Accounting mentors. The main reason for using the fourth year pre-service teachers was that in their final year of study they spend six months at a school to work alongside a school-based mentor. This time period gave the researcher sufficient time to explore challenges and how the school-based mentors respond to them.

The research methods used in this study were reflection journals, unstructured interviews, focus group interviews and fieldnotes. Reflective journals can provide the teacher educator with a valuable tool showing how pre-service teachers perceive and experience teaching practice while learning to teach (Mills, 2007:69). The pre-service teachers were requested to complete entries in a reflection journal on a weekly basis, to write on their experiences while learning to teach Accounting and to describe the nature of their school-based mentors' support.

The purpose of the unstructured interview with the pre-service teachers was to gain a better understanding of their challenges while learning to teach Accounting and their interaction with their mentors, if the information in their reflection journals were unclear. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the Accounting school-based mentors to ascertain the pre-service teachers' performance while learning to teach Accounting, and to gain perspective of the Accounting mentor's role as mentor. Two focus group interviews were conducted with the pre-service teachers to corroborate the challenges the pre-service teachers experience while learning to teach Accounting. A total of 96 reflection journal entries were collected from the pre-service teachers, 18 unstructured interviews were conducted with the pre-service teachers, 12 unstructured interviews were conducted with the school-based mentors and 2 focus group interviews were conducted.

Data revealed that despite mentoring having the potential to enhance the preparation of pre-service teachers, it does not always yield positive results. It also became clear in the data that the nature of the Accounting discipline requires a different type of mentoring as opposed to other disciplines. Hence a 'one size fits all' mentoring institutional policy does not yield the desired results of mentoring pre-service teachers in the B Ed:FET programme. Findings from this study suggest that the university must play a greater role in developing mentorship programmes to support pre-service teachers learning to teach during teaching practice, especially for Accounting pre-service teachers.

## DECLARATION

I, Karen Marion Dos Reis, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed

.....

Date

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband Jose Carlos Paiva Dos Reis for your love and support throughout this journey. To my three sons, Seth, Kairo and Kaylib for inspiring me to become a lifelong learner. Mommy loves you.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BEd	Bachelor of Education
CK	Content knowledge
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DoE	Department of Education
EMS	Economics Management and Science
FET	Further Education and Training
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HoD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NRF	National Research Fund
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PK	Pedagogical knowledge
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statements
RIFTAL	Research Innovation Fund for Teaching and Learning
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

# **CHAPTER 1.**

## **BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

### **1.1. Introduction and background**

No country can neglect the standard of training of their pre-service teachers and ongoing professional teacher development as this can influence the quality of education. In South Africa, post-1994, a great deal of attention has been focused on improving the education system, thus more emphasis was placed on improving the training of pre-service teachers (Quick and Siebörger, 2005; Van Wyk and Daniels, 2004). Over the last decade international and national studies provided strong arguments for Higher Education Institutions to play a pivotal role in developing and implementing mentoring programmes for pre-service teachers (Dreyer, 1998; Robinson, 2001; Martinez, 2004; Scholtz, 2006; Kardos and Johnson, 2008). There is a common belief by the aforementioned authors that mentoring pre-service teachers can provide better equipped teachers. As a result of these pronouncements a pilot study was conducted in 2009 to explore the experiences of the Bachelor of Education: Further Education and Training (B Ed:FET) Accounting pre-service teachers during teaching practice.

The pilot study was largely motivated by the lack of a formal mentorship programme in the B Ed:FET course. The pilot study assisted the researcher with the development of questions that are relevant to the study. It also helped to clarify concepts for the research design as Yin (2009:92) proposes. Conducting a pilot study provided the opportunity to explore various data collection methods to refine the actual research design. The researcher will now provide a detailed discussion of the pilot study conducted in 2009.

The pilot study of 2009 provided opportunities to explore how the pre-service teachers experienced the school-based interaction with mentor teachers while learning to teach Accounting. The pre-service teachers were placed in schools located in the Cape Town Metropole. Five pre-service teachers had individual Accounting school-based mentors and two pre-service teachers shared an Accounting mentor because they were at the same school. Three pre-service teachers were located at a previously disadvantaged school, three at previously advantaged schools and one student at a Further Education and Training College.



The research instruments used to collect data for the pilot study were open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, reflection journals and fieldnotes. The objectives of using these variety of instruments were to gain an understanding of the experiences of Accounting pre-service teachers and their respective school-based mentors and be able to triangulate the data for verification of authenticity.

The data of the pilot study indicated a discrepancy between the role expectations of the school-based mentor and pre-service teacher. The pre-service teachers wanted the mentors to provide mentoring assistance through ongoing observation of lessons, giving constructive feedback to become a competent Accounting teacher and to write a weekly report on their progress to the university lecturer. The school-based mentors appeared to be confused regarding their role expectations. In this regard they indicated that they were not requested in advance to mentor pre-service teachers. They were compelled by the principal of the school to mentor pre-service teachers as opposed to offering to mentor pre-service teachers voluntarily. Added to this, the mentors stated that they were unaware of the pre-service teachers' skills and knowledge acquired at university and were therefore unable to provide mentoring that was appropriate for pre-service teachers.

One of the mentors felt that he had more time for his administration duties because the pre-service teacher could take over his classes. Some mentors felt that mentoring the pre-service teachers was time consuming and the learners were required to adapt to the pre-service teachers' style of teaching.

A report on the national review of academic and professional programmes in education released by the Higher Education Council (2010:94), found many irregularities in the teaching practice policies of institutions. According to the report, "the professional integrity of many programmes is compromised by the poor conceptualisation and management of the work-based experience". The challenges posed in the report referred specifically to the relationships that exist between Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), schools and school-based mentors. The Higher Education Council (HEC) also identified problems related to how the teaching practice programmes are designed, monitored and assessed. The following weaknesses were found across the sector:

- ❖ Lack of clear frameworks for the responsibilities of school-based mentors.
- ❖ Lack of common understanding of mentoring and assessment rubrics.

- ❖ Lack of structured programmes of induction and support for school-based mentors.
- ❖ Limited value attached to assessment by school-based mentors.
- ❖ Lack of administrative support to manage the relationship with schools.

There were also a number of problems highlighted in this report with the preparation, supervision and assessment of pre-service teachers doing teaching practice, the most significant being:

- ❖ Lack of direction to ensure that students experience a range of learning environments during the course of their training; many students reproduce their own set of schooling experiences in their work-based learning.
- ❖ At many institutions students have to identify schools and arrange their own placement, often without guidance or assistance from the institution.
- ❖ Inadequate evaluation of the suitability of schools selected by students as sites for practical experience.
- ❖ Lack of human resources to enable academic staff to visit students on teaching practice with sufficient frequency and duration.
- ❖ As a result, largely due to a lack of human resources, generally inadequate professional supervision of pre-service teachers during teaching experience.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher explored the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring. Currently in the B Ed:FET programme Accounting pre-service teachers in their second and third year of study are evaluated during teaching practice by lecturers that are not necessarily specialists in the subject. Feedback by the lecturer is therefore not necessarily related to the pre-service teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge of Accounting. Pre-service teachers in their fourth year of study are evaluated by the subject specialist (lecturers) in their respective subject majors. However, lecturers are only required to evaluate the pre-service teachers twice in a particular subject over the six month period of their teaching practice internship. Furthermore, pre-service teachers are assigned a mentor teacher regardless of the mentor being experienced in teaching Accounting or qualified to teach Accounting.

The beneficiaries of this study would be the Accounting pre-service teachers, their mentors, Accounting teacher educators and school management. The students could benefit from this study, as the findings of the study can inform their practice as reflective practitioners.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

This section outlines a portion of the literature focusing on the experiences of pre-service teachers and school-based mentors during teaching practice. The role of Higher Education Institutions in implementing mentoring programmes for pre-service teachers and the benefits of mentoring in general are reviewed. Some of the literature revealed strengths and challenges of mentorship that assisted in framing the study.

Historically, mentoring was considered by humans as a manner in which the older generation assists the young to achieve their goals to become the next generation of wise people (Rapuleng, 2002:57). In teacher education, mentors are referred to as experienced and skilled teachers who actively engage with inexperienced teachers to obtain the required professional skills in teaching (Tomlinson, 1995:20). Mentoring is a method utilized to assist a student to understand and learn comprehensively from their daily experience (Hamilton, 2003:21). Effective mentoring can reduce professional isolation, provide assistance and feedback regarding mentees' performance and cultivate confidence within the mentee (Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder, 2006:387).

According to Kardos and Johnson (2008:5), mentors assist beginner teachers with macro and micro lesson planning and utilizing appropriate resources on how to present a lesson. Whilst it is not the aim of a mentorship programme to solve every problem that the mentee encounters, it should be structured flexibly to meet the personal and professional needs of the mentee (Van Wyk and Daniels, 2004:365). Rose (2005:91) concurs that mentees need to be navigated and challenged through an unfamiliar journey that will assist in defining them professionally and personally at the end of their initial training. However, the expertise required of the mentor often varies according to the objectives of the Higher Education Institution concerned (Hamilton, 2003:21).

Globally, the literature views mentoring as a valuable tool which assists professional and personal development of inexperienced teachers (Dreyer, 1998; Martinez, 2004; Rose, 2005; Mohono-Mahlatsi and van Tonder, 2006; Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007; Kardos and Johnson, 2008; Van Louw and Waghid, 2008). Dreyer (1998:111) contends that education systems globally cannot afford to neglect the standard of training teachers as this has an effect on their education system as a whole. Dreyer (1998:111) further states that if the South African education system wants to improve the standard of education, the use of school-based expert teachers to support pre-service teachers will contribute to uplifting the standard of education in the country. Empirical studies (Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder,

2006; Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007) in South African contexts conclude that although mentoring is useful, there is still room for improvement in the manner in which it is implemented by Higher Education Institutions. Van Louw and Waghid (2008; 208) strongly argue that “real life experiences of mentorship as a professional development strategy could contribute significantly to the conceptualization of mentorship in South Africa”. However, studies conducted in education regarding in depth experiences of mentors and mentees in a mentorship programme in the South African context specifically in Higher Education, remain limited.

Martinez (2004:106) believes that the international community is facing the challenge of, “providing the empirical warrant for mentoring”, thus revealing its, “real powers within prevailing context”. Agreeing with this notion, Betts and Pepe (2006:107) postulate that, regardless of the benefits of mentoring being widely accepted, it has not received the “rigorous empirical investigation to support its beliefs”. In a more recent study Kardos and Johnson (2008) indicate that in the United States of America, formal mentoring which pairs new teachers with experienced teachers is the main strategy by state and local policymakers to address new teachers’ “isolation, frustration and failure”. Evidence in a study by Davis and Higdon (2008:272) has shown that introducing mandatory mentoring programmes improves teacher quality and that the need for these programmes is increasing.

Although mentoring is widely advocated to enhance professional development it also comes with its strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, Tomlinson (1995:45) states that mentoring can cultivate motivation and promote commitment amongst mentees. Echoing this sentiment, Hamilton (2003:27) says mentoring can enhance mentees’ self-esteem, boost their morale and can gradually speed up their transition into their new role as teachers. However, Hamilton (2003:69) warns that mentees’ dependence on mentors can lead to them becoming less innovative and prevent them from developing professionally and personally. Further, Kardos and Johnson (2008:2) emphasise that not all mentoring programmes are carefully organized and that mentors are not always fully aware what their responsibilities are within programmes. Hence not indicating responsibilities of a mentor and mentee, can result in mentorship programmes being counter-productive.

The conceptual framework for this study draws primarily on the work of Tomlinson (1995:47) who argues that there are four basic forms of pre-service teachers’ learning in the context of mentoring, namely: (a) pre-service teachers learn from others’ teaching, (b) pre-service teachers learn through their own teaching attempts, (c) pre-service teachers learn through

progressively collaborating with other teachers and (d) pre-service teachers learn by exploring central ideas and broader issues. Tomlinson (1995:21) further contends:

“A mentor has to understand not just how adult student-teachers may learn to teach particular subject knowledge and skills, so as to assist them effectively, but this also requires an understanding of what the student-teachers are trying to do, that is, how teaching works. This in turn requires not only understanding how the relevant pupils may learn it, but also the nature of the basic capabilities, the subject skills and knowledge involved. On such an extensive basis a mentor may intelligently engage in the complex business of assisting the student-teacher to assist the pupils to learn.”

It is within this particular context of mentoring pre-service teachers that this study sought to explore the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring. This study is motivated by the lack of in depth empirical studies conducted in mentoring initiated by Higher Education institutions.

### **1.3. Research questions**

- ❖ What are the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring?
- ❖ How do the Accounting school-based mentors respond to the challenges faced by the pre-service teachers?
- ❖ What are the implications for mentoring relationship in this context?

### **1.4. Research objectives**

- ❖ To understand the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring.
- ❖ To inform the development of a structured mentorship programme for Accounting pre-service teachers in the B Ed:FET programme at a University of Technology.

### **1.5. Methodology**

#### **1.5.1. Research design**

This study was located within an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist researcher believes that the, “description of human actions are based on social meanings, people living together interpret the meanings of each other and these meanings change through social intercourse” (Bassegy, 1999:43). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2005:23) further postulates that researchers are keen to address social issues in and through their research

so as to understand the researched. Thus, to position this study within this context, I utilized case study research methodology.

Case study research is a process of finding out the realities of a specific situation which presents a problem that needs to be solved and is of interest to the researcher (Mcburney,1994:169). The main purpose of utilizing case study methodology is to develop a deep understanding of an inquiry in order to produce knowledge or to contribute to policy development (Simons, 2009:21). Gillham (2000:1) defines a case study as an investigation of a single or multiple units of human action and behaviour in contemporary real life contexts. Yin (2009:18) provides an explicit twofold definition of a case study:

It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

Case studies allow the researcher to interact with the participants during the course of the research process and to become a self-reflective practitioner, which allows the researchers to immerse themselves in the data to better understand it (Simons, 2009:23). Case study researchers should ensure that they maintain “an open mind”, to keep on seeking for data and to continuously review the analysis until the data makes sense (Gillham, 2000:13). Gillham (2000:18) suggests that the case study researcher starts by collecting data first and maintains an open mind. For example, as a researcher educator I know what it is like to be a teacher but I need to understand that I am studying people of different social and educational backgrounds and who do not necessarily perceive teaching the way I do.

According to Yin (2009:27) in case study research methodology there are five important components in the research design: (a) a study's question; (b) its proposition; (c) its unit(s) of analysis; (d) the logic linking the data to the propositions; and (e) the criteria for interpreting the findings. Research design with case studies is more unpredictable, for example the researcher needs to be flexible with designs and methods as the cases being studied evolve (Simons, 2009:31).

### **1.5.2. Sample**

This study included the total population of six final year students in the B Ed:FET Accounting programme during their internship at schools. This internship period provided sufficient opportunity to collect data. The pre-service teachers were placed in schools located in the Cape Town Metropole.

According to the University Teaching Practice policy, the pre-service teachers must be assigned a school-based mentor for each of their subject majors. The pre-service teachers were allowed to choose schools where they wanted to do their teaching practice internship. Accounting pre-service teachers were advised by the Accounting lecturer to choose mentors who were willing and committed to fulfill their mentoring tasks. After the Accounting pre-service teachers chose their respective schools, a letter was provided to inform their Accounting school-based mentors of the purpose of the study and to solicit their participation.

A one day workshop to orientate the Accounting pre-service teachers and their mentors of their role expectations during teaching practice was convened. The mentors who were unable to attend the workshop were given on-site orientation at their schools. Information about the Accounting B Ed:FET curriculum was provided to inform the mentors of prior knowledge and skills that pre-service teachers in the programme had acquired. Each participant received a manual containing the required information (see Appendix A).

### **1.5.3. Research method**

Bogdan and Biklen (1998:31) state that the methods used in a study should be consistent with the way in which the researcher connects ideas embodied in the methodology, while Gillham (2000:13) says that researchers should not be concerned if the various methods they used to collect data do not agree when analysing the data. This frequently happens when there is a distinct difference between what people relate to the researcher and to their actual doings in a particular situation. To deal with the aforementioned, the researcher should use theory to deal with the complexity of discrepancies between what people say and what they in fact do. Interviews and reflection journals are considered sub-methods within a case study (Gillham, 2000:13). To align this study with Gillham's (ibid) sentiment, the following research methods were utilized for data collection purposes: Reflection journals, unstructured interviews, focus group interviews and field-notes.

### **1.5.3.1. Reflection journals**

Mills (2007:69) explains that a reflection journal can provide the teacher educator with a valuable tool showing how pre-service teachers perceive and experience teaching practice. The pre-service teachers were requested to complete entries in a reflection journal on a weekly basis to report on their challenges while learning to teach Accounting and the nature of their school-based mentors' support. To orientate them on how to complete a reflection journal entry, examples of journals completed by pre-service teachers who participated in the pilot study were used. Moreover, pre-service teachers were given guidance on how many entries in the reflection journal were needed over the six month period.

### **1.5.3.2. Unstructured interviews**

The unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to question and engage with the school-based mentors and pre-service teachers, in no particular order, to gain an understanding of the pre-service teachers' professional growth (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:87) while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring. Unstructured interviews were conducted individually with the pre-service teachers. The purpose of the unstructured interview with the pre-service teachers were twofold; firstly, to gain more clarity of what they wrote in the reflection journal if information was unclear and secondly, to have a face to face interview about their challenges while learning to teach Accounting and how their school-based mentors responded to these challenges. The researcher also conducted unstructured interviews with the Accounting school-based mentors and posed questions regarding the performance of the pre-service teachers while learning to teach Accounting and to gain perspective of the Accounting mentor's role as mentor.

### **1.5.3.3. Focus group interviews**

The objective of conducting focus group interviews with the pre-service Accounting teachers was to investigate their concerns, beliefs, attitudes and experiences while learning to teach (Barnett, 2006:2). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:109), "group participants can stimulate each other to articulate their views or even to realize what their own views are". Hence the researcher conducted two focus group interviews with the pre-service teachers to corroborate the challenges they experienced while learning to teach Accounting, as well as to find out how the school-based mentors responded to the challenges the pre-service teachers faced. The first focus group interview was held at the end of the first term of



teaching practice and the second interview at the end of the second term of teaching practice.

#### 1.5.3.4. Field-notes

Field-notes were recorded while conducting the unstructured interviews with the pre-service teachers and school-based mentors. By keeping record of all the processes, a “historical record” of the study could be constructed to which the researcher could return later as suggested by Mouton (2005:107). Field-notes assist the researcher to form a detailed account of what he/she has heard, seen, experienced and thought in the process of collecting and reflecting on other data (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990:380). Keeping a record of the fieldwork assisted the researcher to structure a database of the overall procedures that were followed while collecting data (Mouton, 2005:107). A log book was kept to record dates when interviews with the Accounting pre-service teachers and their mentors were conducted. In addition, the field-notes were used to record the length of interviews and factors that influenced fieldwork, for example, timetable constraints and a teachers’ strike.

A detailed data collection plan and the methods utilized are illustrated in the table given below:

**Table 1.1:** Data collection plan

Number of respondents	Method utilized	Number of data collected as per respondent	Total number of data collection as per method
6	Unstructured interview	3	18
6 [mentor]	Unstructured interview	2	12
6	Focus group interview	-	2
6	Reflection journals	16	96

#### 1.6. Validity

To ensure validity, this study was aligned with the strategies recommended by Mills (2007:92-94) for qualitative researchers:

- ❖ A concerted effort was made to practice good listening skills during the interviews.
- ❖ A summative report of the field-notes was done as soon as possible to ensure that the essence of the visits were captured to include what transpired during an

unstructured interview.

- ❖ All the data was meticulously reported so that discrepant data could be further investigated.
- ❖ The researcher was candid about her work and made sure that she was explicit regarding any biases.
- ❖ Feedback from colleagues was sought on a regular basis as they were able to assist the researcher with aspects that she might have taken for granted within the study.
- ❖ To avoid contradictions within the study, colleagues were requested to read the research and give critical feedback.

### **1.7. Data analysis**

Verbatim transcriptions of the journals, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews were completed according to thematic analysis. The researcher aligned herself with the steps recommended by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2005:104) in coding the verbatim transcriptions. Transcripts were read in order to get a global impression of the content. Open coding was used to analyse the data. With open coding the researcher makes up codes when working through the data. When meaning was attached to a sentence or phrase, it was coded under the relevant code. The software package, Atlas.ti, was used as a tool to code, retrieve and build theory by connecting codes to develop categories (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:133). Yin (2009:128) emphasises that using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software does not analyse the data but merely acts as a tool to assist the researcher with data analysis and identification of themes.

Analysis of data within the context of pre-service teachers and school-based mentors' experiences was initiated to look for major themes situated in the data to develop explanations so that "theories, reasons and causes of social behaviour can be established" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:43). The reflection journals, field-notes and unstructured interviews were analysed according to reductive analysis. The researcher applied inductive and deductive analytical procedures to the data to look for major themes and to reduce the confusion of particular contexts within the study and to ensure it was applicable to the research (Tuckman, 1994:12). Thus themes were identified to highlight the challenges faced by pre-service teachers and the encounters with their school-based mentors while learning to teach Accounting.

### **1.8. Ethical considerations**

Due to the nature of the research, a number of ethical procedures had to be adhered to. The research was to be conducted in public schools, so permission had to be obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. In addition, consent from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology was required to include the pre-service teachers as participants in the study. All the participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study and to clarify the nature of the study. Written consent was given by all the participants and they were informed that pseudonyms would be used. Participation in this study was voluntary for the Accounting school-based mentors, however mandatory for the pre-service teachers as teaching practice forms part of the B Ed:FET curriculum.

### **1.9. Self-study**

The objective of examining the 'self' in case study research is that the researcher forms an integral part of the study (Simons, 2009:81). The researcher's personal beliefs and attitude will to some degree influence the actions of the researcher with the participants in the study (Simons, 2009:81). Simons (2009:94) recommends that the researcher remains flexible and have an open mind to interpretations of the participants that do not concur with the views of the researcher.

It is perceived as normal for researchers to come into a study with their own prejudices of what their expectations of the findings will be and what they would like to find in the data (Gillham, 2000:27). In this study the researcher interviewed and interacted with the participants. The researcher assumed the role of researcher and Accounting teacher educator. The researcher will therefore provided a brief description of her professional background to clarify potential biased notions she might bring to the findings of the data.

The researcher did her initial teacher education at Peninsula Technikon from 1992 to 1995, completing a Higher Diploma in Education Commerce majoring in Accounting, Economics and Typing. After the completion of the HDE: Commerce in December 1995, she obtained a teaching post at a previously disadvantaged school in the Cape Flats. She taught Accounting, Economics and Typing from grades 8 to 11 and was in that post for six years (1996-2002). The researcher found being a beginner teacher extremely challenging having to deal with unruly learners, unhelpful colleagues and administrative duties that were not clarified in detail during her training as a teacher. The researcher is not stating these challenges to disrespect the teacher trainers who taught her or the colleagues she worked

with at that particular school, but to provide additional information as to why she is conducting this study. The experiences the researcher faced as a beginner teacher prompted her to pursue further studies in education, mainly to empower herself for better prospects in the profession. In 2001, she enrolled, at the Cape Technikon, for the Baccalaureus Technologic degree in Commerce specializing in Accounting and Computer Application Technology. This degree was considered a postgraduate degree at what is now Cape Peninsula University of Technology. During the researcher's postgraduate studies she consequently obtained her second post at a previously advantaged school in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, in 2002, teaching Accounting, Economics and Economics and Management Science with Grades 8 to 12. Her teaching experience at this school was better because she was a more experienced teacher. In 2006, she obtained a scholarship from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology to be part of a 'Khula Project' to complete a Master's in Education degree and obtained a post as an Accounting lecturer. A position she still currently hold. The 'Khula project' is an initiative aimed at developing young academics to address the skills gap universities face as a result of retiring academics.

The researcher completed the Master's in Education degree in 2007. Her experiences of being a school teacher for a decade and currently being a teacher trainer for six years gave her an understanding of the training and support a pre-service teacher in a teacher education programme needs.

To develop an understanding of mentoring, she attended numerous training courses. In 2009 she attended a two day mentoring orientation programme offered as part of our staff development programme at the university. Added to this she was invited to join a committee whose aim was to develop a mentoring module for the B Ed:Honours programme. For this purpose funding was obtained from the institutional Research Innovation Fund for Teaching and Learning (RIFTAL). The Fund is primarily intended for relative small-scale projects (up to R50 000) designed to improve teaching and learning through educational research and innovation. The funding was utilized for training members of the committee in mentoring. After the training programme the committee members were requested to mentor an individual in an educational setting. The researcher mentored a student from another university for approximately six months.

The researcher is of the view that if pre-service teachers are given the best possible mentoring support from their lecturers and school-based mentors during their teaching practice, they will be equipped with the necessary coping strategies for the numerous

challenges they would be facing as novice teachers. Ultimately she is conducting this study to provide her with the necessary insights of improving teacher preparation.

#### **1.10. Overview of the dissertation: A summary**

*Chapter One* gives the background to the concerns about mentoring pre-service teachers during teaching practice as raised in the Higher Education Quality Committee report (2010). The researcher also discuss the rationale for a need to research how pre-service teachers learn to teach in Accounting in the context of mentoring, as well as defining the problem statement.

*Chapter Two* reviews the conceptual framework to provide a linkage from literature to the research questions and objectives .

In *Chapter Three* literature such as journal articles, theses and books related to mentoring are reviewed.

In *Chapter Four* the research method utilised in this research is outlined. A detailed discussion of the sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration is presented.

In *Chapter Five* a descriptive report on the findings of the challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach and how their school-based mentors responded to these challenges are given to answer the research questions.

*Chapter Six* presents a discussion of the data presented in Chapter 5.

*Chapter Seven* presents a summary of the findings, limitations of the research, significance of the study, recommendations, conclusions and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher presents the conceptual framework for this study. A conceptual framework can be used as a tool to assist the researcher to make sense of the data and for “providing clear links from the literature to the research goals and questions” (Smyth, 2004:167-168). The major purpose of this study is to explore how pre-service teachers learn to teach Accounting in a mentoring context. The aim is to examine the challenges and successes the pre-service teachers experience while learning to teach Accounting and how their Accounting school-based mentors responded to the challenges of these pre-service teachers.

The conceptual framework comprises the following main constructs within the study: pre-service teachers’ learning while teaching within the context of mentoring. The conceptual framework of this study primarily draws on the work of Tomlinson (1995) and Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) who provide extensive literature on teaching and learning within the context of mentoring. The concepts ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ are investigated to facilitate the understanding of how pre-service teachers learn to teach in a mentoring context. Constructivism is explored as the overarching theory or philosophy to inform the understanding of teaching and learning within the context of mentoring pre-service teachers. The researcher would like to note that the concept ‘constructivism’ is explored briefly to acknowledge that it is embedded in mentoring.

#### **2.2. Constructivism**

Constructivism, according to Richardson (1997:51), is the lens that is used to examine the world and thus provides a manner in which the events of teaching and learning are described and understood. In the early 19th and 20th century the role of the teacher was seen as being to impart knowledge to the learner, whilst constructivism provides the platform to create knowledge and understanding (Richardson,1997:51). Knowledge and skills were thought to be obtained through formal education and training.

The constructivist viewpoint considers what happens “inside the minds” of individuals (Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002:12). The following examples in Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:12) are provided to illustrate the constructivist viewpoint;

- ❖ Learning is a dual process where the learner accumulates and interprets information and knowledge according to their previous knowledge and personal experiences.
- ❖ Personal experiences, practice, literature and information from people are viewed as new ways to reconstruct the “learners’ existing internal knowledge”. Thus new information is not perceived as additional knowledge to be stored by the learner.
- ❖ The learner’s knowledge is viewed as being created personally regarding constructs of understanding that can be critically challenged in a purposeful manner particularly to the needs of a learner, hence the knowledge of the learner is no longer regarded as a storage of ‘transmitted information’.
- ❖ Learning is viewed as building knowledge pertaining to new or prior knowledge which is an ongoing process throughout a person’s lifetime. Moreover, knowledge is perceived as a creation of social and joint interaction amongst people.

Gagnon and Collay (2005:13) believe that constructivist learning is grounded in learners constructing their own meaning to achieve a particular task. Campbell and Brummet (2007:51) posit that to cultivate the culture of learning in a mentoring context, teacher educators should reposition their way of thinking in line with ‘constructivist perspectives of learning’. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:12) are of the opinion that mentoring is deeply embedded within the constructivist viewpoint. They believe that mentoring uses the idea that opportunities for potential learning include situations that enable the mentee to think or reflect about constructs that exist, and that the mentor should facilitate reflection. Further knowledge is created through the social and joint interaction of people. Hence learning of teaching occurs between the interaction of mentor and mentee. The ultimate objective of the mentoring relationship is to make it possible for the mentee to reflect on the mentor’s overall input and for the mentee to absorb and accumulate the input according to what is relevant to their own professional development. Wang and Odell (2007:478) stress that mentoring is not always aligned with the constructivist perspective of learning to teach and, as a result, mentoring according to the constructivist perspective remains limited. The foregoing researchers found that there is a variation of both mentor and novice teachers’ ideas of learning to teach which is different from constructivist mentoring.

Tomlinson (1995:29) advises that for pre-service teachers to become skilful at teaching they need two types of learning achievement. This includes learning to understand and clarify the

complex elements and procedures that are involved in any related aspect of teaching and, how to integrate the elements necessary for teaching. Accordingly the two types of learning need to be combined with the development of learning how to be aware of, and how to understand and react to a particular teaching situation. Tomlinson (1995:30) asserts that the two forms of learning are mandatory in teaching, and for pre-service teachers to develop these forms of learning, they will need ongoing active assistance from their mentors. To adhere to the foregoing considerations, Tomlinson (1995:30) stresses that mentors and pre-service teachers will not start their relationship with “blank slates”. Both pre-service teachers and their mentors come into the mentoring relationship with prior knowledge of teaching and learning. A detailed discussion of learning and teaching within the context of mentoring is presented in the following paragraphs.

### **2.3. Learning in a professional context**

Learning is a vital feature of peoples’ everyday lives. Learning is multidimensional as indicated by Elliot and Calderhead (1993:169) who state that irrespective of where or how learning occurs, it always remains the same phenomena. Tomlinson (1995:9) is of the opinion that learning is the process of acquiring abilities which may include values, attitudes and methods of behaving. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:3) believe that learning can provide the competitive edge to sustain global competition which is on the increase and ‘learning to learn’ is regarded as the most significant skill of life that enables individuals to achieve increased effectiveness in the world of work and to lead lives that are fulfilling. In this light several reasons for the importance of learning have been provided by Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:3).

- ❖ All the knowledge that a person possesses has been learned;
- ❖ Everything a person can do has been learned apart from basic reflexes, for example breathing.
- ❖ The development of attitudes, beliefs and values has been learned and consequently influences how people behave.

Literature distinguishes between professional learning and learning in general. Morrow (2007:63) argues that general learning is not only a result of teaching that happens in formal educational programmes but occurs from many other sources, for example within the community where an individual lives. Hence past experiences of individuals must be taken into account to prepare them for the future (Dewey, 1938:16).

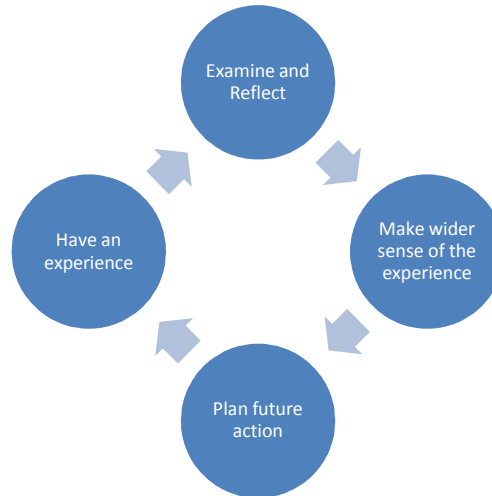


Professional learning takes place in different contexts for the student teacher. Pre-service teachers need to learn in a school context and the whole school environment, including management, should encourage professional debate and present challenges to develop pre-service teachers' orientation to the practice of teaching (Elliot and Calderhead, 1993:171). To establish close cooperation between all stakeholders involved in assisting pre-service teachers' learning *about* teaching requires three viewpoints concurrently: "the perspective of the individual learning to teach, the perspective of the teacher in a school, and the perspective of the teacher educator in the university setting" (Korthagen, 2004:1034). To illuminate the understanding of learning about teaching, Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006:1025) compiled the following principles:

**Tabel 2.1: Learning about teaching principles**

<b>Principle 1</b>	Learning about teaching involves continuously conflicting and competing demands
<b>Principle 2</b>	Learning about teaching requires a view of knowledge as a subject to be created rather than as a created subject
<b>Principle 3</b>	Learning about teaching requires a shift in focus from the curriculum to the learner
<b>Principle 4</b>	Learning about teaching is enhanced through (student) teacher research
<b>Principle 5</b>	Learning about teaching requires an emphasis on those learning to teach working closely with their peers
<b>Principle 6</b>	Learning about teaching requires meaningful relationships between schools, universities and student teachers.
<b>Principle 7</b>	Learning about teaching is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the program are modeled by the teacher educators in their own practice

When mentees learn, they are able to structure meanings which will expose them to new opportunities for their learning (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:218). Thus teaching and learning are ongoing for the mentee. Taking risks should be encouraged by the mentors as the mentee will experience unforeseen situations and learn how to deal with them (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:218). Hamilton (2003:28) proposes a 'learning from experience cycle' that can be utilized by mentors to promote the learning of their mentees. He postulates four stages that mentees experience whilst learning, as illustrated below:



**Figure 2.1:** The Learning from Experience Cycle

According to Hamilton (2003:29), at the first stage of the cycle mentors should assist mentees on how to plan, for example experiencing a lesson presentation as opposed to dictating how the lesson presentation should be done. The mentee will gain self-confidence and this will educate him/her on what the expectations of a teacher are. Although experience is a requirement for learning, it is insufficient on its own as pre-service teachers should reflect on their own experience to develop and understand new experiences (Matoti, Junqueira and Odora, 2011:1142). It is therefore crucial that at the second stage of the above model the mentee reflects and examines, for example, a lesson presentation. Otherwise learning from experience would not occur. The key role of the mentor is to assist the mentee to reflect on different parts of a particular experience that the mentee can learn from (Hamilton, 2003:30). At the third stage the mentor helps the mentee to draw on past experiences and knowledge to enable the mentee to connect these to the current situation. The mentor's personal professional experiences can assist the mentee to 'see the bigger picture' and to better understand the idiosyncrasies of the teaching profession (Hamilton, 2003:31). In this light Dewey (1938:25) argues that to understand the implications of a particular situation, individuals need to reflect on past experiences to assess how future experiences will be dealt with. The final stage of the learning cycle entails the mentor coaching the mentee to take into consideration their past experiences and challenges when drawing up a current plan of action to ensure that possible problems are taken into account (Hamilton, 2003:32). It is important that the mentors bear in mind that they are not responsible for the mentees' actions. However, their role as mentor is to ensure that the mentee derives optimal benefit from his/her experiences (Hamilton, 2003:34).

Learning to teach for the pre-service teacher is a difficult and time consuming process as it is challenging to obtain all the required aspects of a professional teacher (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:16). Tomlinson (1995) provides an overall framework to understand how pre-service teachers as mentees learn in a mentoring context. He proposes learning from others' teaching, learning through own teaching attempts, learning through progressive collaborative teaching and learning by exploring basic and background issues. These concepts will be discussed individually below.

### **2.3.1. Assisting pre-service teachers to learn from others' teaching**

Tomlinson (1995:47) is of the opinion that observation is influential in acquiring methods to take action. Observing the teaching of 'others', for example, mentors provide the pre-service teacher with ideas and action plans of potential teaching methods. Directly observing the mentor should be used as a source for the pre-service teachers to experiment with different teaching strategies as opposed to 'cloning the mentor teacher' (Tomlinson,1995:48).

A concern regarding observation is that mentor teachers are often reluctant to observe and assess pre-service teachers and instead prefer the role of offering general assistance (Frost, 1993:132). The aforementioned author emphasizes the need for a more systematic approach to address the lack of confidence displayed by mentors to observe and assess mentees. The basic aspect of such a systematic approach is to negotiate and agree upon expected competencies of the mentee and to utilize these as a basis of a profiling system. According to Frost (1993:132) the mentee should be observed regularly and a standard instrument, for example a checklist, should be utilized to assess these competencies.

Observation alone is not enough to assist the development of the pre-service teacher. Dewey (1938:25) contends that observation alone is insufficient to improve a situation. Pre-service teachers are not equipped to look for pitfalls and challenges of the mentor's teaching performance and therefore need assistance to familiarise themselves with the complete teaching cycle which is planning, attempt, monitoring and reflection (Tomlinson,1995:48).

To understand the complex nature of teaching, pre-service teachers should be given opportunities to understand the planning, action and reflection of teaching to create a connecting relationship between teaching and learning (Korthagen, 2004:1027). Hence mentors need to assist the pre-service teachers with unravelling the planning of the lesson, guiding what to observe, showing and encouraging, monitoring and reflection (Tomlinson,1995:48). Loughran (2002:42) views reflection as an important tool to 'learn

through practice'. Pre-service teachers should be encouraged to reflect on their teaching for learning to transpire (Darling-Hammond and Snyder, 2000:528).

### **2.3.2. Assisting pre-service teachers to learn through their own teaching attempts**

All students learn by doing (Schön, 1987:37). Doing is therefore essential for learning. Tomlinson (1995:49) agrees that learning is achieved by doing. Echoing a similar sentiment is Klases and Clutterbuck (2002:44) who argue that it is a myth that mentors need to teach the mentee at all times, but that learning comes from doing. The mentor should give the mentee an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and take initiative to implement their own strategies to rectify their mistakes.

For pre-service teachers to acquire the skill of teaching encompasses the ability to choose, decide flexibly and put together aspects of particular teaching methods (Tomlinson, 1995:49). Pre-service teachers therefore need more than just taking action to acquire the skill of teaching. To learn by doing requires the mentor to assist with planning the lesson and providing support with the actual teaching activity. Moreover, the mentor needs to give feedback after the lesson presentation and to encourage analysis and reflection (Tomlinson, 1995:49). Reflection provides the pre-service teacher an opportunity to make sense of the situation in which teaching occurs and to develop different viewpoints of teaching (Loughran, 2002:36).

### **2.3.3. Progressive collaborative teaching (PCT)**

Tomlinson (1995:51) asserts that while supporting pre-service teachers 'learning from others' teaching' and 'learning through their own teaching' are useful strategies on their own, it can be more powerful to combine the two. Collaboration between the mentor and pre-service teacher can play a vital role in the pre-service teacher's pursuit to learn to teach. Campbell and Brummet (2007:54) summarise collaboration in the following context of mentoring:

Collaboration with the school-based mentor is key to the learning process and is necessary if student teachers are to refine their teaching role orientation and move from knowing about teaching to knowing how to teach, and ultimately knowing why they teach. This is especially important for connecting pre-service teacher learning to inquiry in the highly contextualized situations that classrooms provide.

Collaboration is possible if the pre-service teacher works jointly with one or more mentors according to a structured way over a particular time frame (Tomlinson, 1995:51). The pre-service teacher will jointly plan with the mentor a particular lesson and co-teach. Mutual

monitoring of the lesson presentation will take place and they will jointly analyse and reflect on the presentation (Tomlinson, 1995:51). There are several advantages and disadvantages of progressive collaborative teaching, according to Tomlinson (1995:52/53), as presented in the table below:

**Tabel 2.2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Progressive Collaborative Teaching**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Repeated collaboration and assisted learning with respect to all aspects of the teaching cycle.	Needs explicit time that is time Consuming.
Allowing gradual but flexible 'scaffolding'.	Needs safeguarding against exploiting mentee assistance.
Allow pre-service teacher to learn from their own teaching in a real situation, without the full task demands.	Pre-service teacher needs to engage in PCT with at least two different teachers using contrasting styles.
Provides the basis for learning from another teacher.	There needs to be opportunities for the pre-service teacher to engage in independent development of ideas and teaching.
Assists mentors in their own professional development .	PCT poses challenges to the openness and flexibility of the pre-service teacher and mentor.

A valuable learning experience for pre-service teachers during teaching practice is possible if a collaboration between mentor and mentee takes place and this will contribute towards the “development of theories and philosophies of teaching” (Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010:425). Collaboration between the mentor and pre-service teacher will enhance mentoring during teaching practice. Added to this the pre-service teacher will view collaboration as an opportunity to establish a partnership with the mentor (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:351). To create a culture for mentoring, it will require a stance that is based on the conception that pre-service teachers and their mentors are both learners and collaborators (Campbell and Brummet, 2007:52).

#### **2.3.4. Learning to teach by exploring basic and background issues of teaching**

Teaching is a skill that requires an in-depth understanding of issues that are broader than planning and presenting lessons. In this light Tomlinson (1995:54) alludes to the fact that pre-service teachers' learning requires three sub-forms, namely: directly investigating specific issues relating to teaching and broader aspects of the school context; accessing literature relating to issues of teaching and, to arrange discussions which entail the

aforementioned sub-forms. It is thus essential for pre-service teachers to critically engage in the exploration of the proposed sub-forms provided by Tomlinson to develop their skill of teaching.

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:23) sum it up by stating that mentees should be provided with the opportunity to 'practice, adjust and to think carefully about their intentions and procedures in the place of work'. This must be done in a protected manner to ensure that confidence and competence is developed. In light of this, mentees' self-awareness and interpersonal skills should be developed in order for the mentees to operate effectively in the world of work. Furthermore, this will enable the mentee to develop a professional viewpoint in terms of positioning their performance in a broader context of society and place of work. In conclusion, the mentee will develop autonomy with regards to learning, which will enable the mentee to derive maximum benefits from all learning experiences and to explore on their own other avenues of learning initiatives.

#### **2.4. Teaching**

Teaching is considered as a type of social activity where teachers interact with learners to grasp what is taught in order to achieve the necessary outcomes of what needs to be known by the learners (Tomlinson, 1995:11). Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000:528) argue that teaching is an evolving process developed to enhance learning and is strongly influenced by the aims of learning. According to Dewey (1938:21) the role of the teachers is to examine the learners' needs and ensure that the environment where teaching occurs will sufficiently address and develop the learners' competencies. Thus, teachers are not only required to provide explicit information of content but should be able to clarify why the information is relevant and link it to real life context (Shulman,1986:9). Teaching has to deal with its purpose, for example the subject and the realities of the teaching process and the basic characteristics of the learners within a particular context (Tomlinson, 1995:11). Ultimately the objective of teaching is to promote learning ( Malderez and Bodóczy, 1999:12 and Morrow, 2007:23).

Dewey (1938:28) believes that teaching becomes more challenging for the teachers when they are dealing with children, for example, in their teenage years as opposed to toddlers. In this regard it becomes more difficult for the teacher to acquire knowledge of the history of individual learners' learning experiences and thus teaching of a particular subject matter becomes more complex. Similarly, Mishra and Koehler (2006:1020) describe teaching as a difficult activity which is influenced by various types of knowledge. Shulman (1986:8)

conceived of three knowledge domains in teacher education, namely: Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), Content knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Pedagogical knowledge of teaching refers to “generic principles of classroom organisation and management”. Content knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the formal knowledge teachers acquired in a particular field. According to Shulman (1986:9) pedagogical content knowledge comprises an understanding of the content and the complexity of a specific subject content. In the teaching profession, teachers are required to develop innovative ways to teach the content to facilitate the learners’ understanding.

According to Mishra and Koehler (2006:1020), there are numerous knowledge structures that relate to the basic nature of teaching, which include; knowledge of the subject matter and student thinking and learning. Elliot and Calderhead (1993:169) believe that knowledge growth in teaching begins before the pre-service teacher embarks on a formal teaching programme. Pre-service teachers’ ideas about how to teach are sometimes influenced by their past experiences of their own schooling (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:16). Echoing a similar sentiment is Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995:2) who state that pre-service teachers learn how to teach long before they begin their teacher education training. For example, pre-service teachers learned to teach during their primary and secondary education. The problem with the foregoing notion is that pre-service teachers perceive teaching as how their previous teachers modelled lessons in the classroom. Writing along the same lines Tomlinson (1995:30) says that pre-service teachers have been exposed to several years of teaching as learners and often focus on the superficiality of teaching as opposed to how it works. Hence the image that the pre-service teacher has of teaching does not encapsulate what teaching entails and cannot be utilized as a basis of planning and action in teaching (Elliot and Calderhead, 1993:169).

Tomlinson (1995:30) notes that pre-service teachers will start their formal teacher training programme with preconceived ideas regarding teaching. Hence pre-service teachers will have positive or negative notions of teaching and would know which style of teaching they would aspire to or avoid. Campbell and Brummet (2007:52) emphasise that the primary mentoring responsibility of a teacher education programme is to assist pre-service teachers to “critically examine the beliefs about teaching and learning they bring to the program”. The objective is to educate the students about teaching strategies they have not been exposed to as learners at their respective schools. Elliot and Calderhead (1993:173) warn that traditional university environments may not provide the support necessary for pre-service teachers to be able to understand previous ideas of teaching in their primary and secondary educational years, which is the root of their learning of teaching. The challenge therefore for tertiary

institutions is to develop professional growth of the pre-service teacher by incorporating their existing ideas of teaching and to increase their level of understanding of learning how to teach. Teaching, on the other hand, has become “intuitive and second nature” for experienced teachers (Elliot and Calderhead, 1993:170).

Numerous stages of pre-service teachers’ development and concerns during the mentoring process have been identified by Maynard and Furlong (1995:12-14). These are grouped as follows: ‘early idealism; survival; recognizing difficulties; hitting the plateau; and moving on’. At the first stage, early idealism, the pre-service teacher has several idealistic views of how teaching should be and tries to embark on teaching according to these views (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:12). At the survival stage, the pre-service teacher starts to realise that their idealistic views do not match the realities of teaching and becomes pre-occupied with survival strategies (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:12). In this regard pre-service teachers are fixated on finding ways to solve the problems they are facing. At the next stage, pre-service teachers become aware of the demands of teaching and are enthusiastic to perform adequately as a teacher (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:13). In this particular phase, pre-service teachers tend to concentrate more on different teaching styles and refer to challenges such as insufficient resources and classroom management issues. When pre-service teachers ‘hit the plateau’ stage, they have now found a method of teaching that the learners respond to and are adamant to maintain it (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:13). At the last stage, there is an indication that pre-service teachers are concerned about their pupils’ learning but are incapable of implementing effective intervention strategies to overcome this challenge (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:13). It is therefore imperative that the role of the mentor must be clear to assist pre-service teachers during the different stages of development and concerns.

Elliot and Calderhead (1993:73) examined several aspects of learning to teach. They believe that pre-service teachers need to develop a practical knowledge base, form concepts and interpersonal skills. Practical classroom knowledge can be understood in four terms; knowledge of learners, situation, subject matter and strategies. The pre-service teacher should firstly understand the background and capabilities of the learners in the classroom, and assess the school environment by developing an understanding of the classroom, school and community culture. Shulman (1987:14) argues that teachers should understand what they teach thus comprehend what they teach to critically engage learners. According to Maynard and Furlong (1995:15) school-based mentors are in a unique situation where they can assist pre-service teachers to develop ‘practical classroom knowledge’.



An aspect of learning how to teach raised by Adler and Reed (2002:25) is that content knowledge is not sufficient, as more emphasis should be on how to connect “learning of the subject with learning how students in schools acquire subject knowledge”. A more recent study confirmed the foregoing notion and revealed that pre-service teachers’ Pedagogical Content Knowledge in science was not sufficient to teach science during their internship. Pre-service teachers appeared to know the content of science but lacked the skills to present the content to the learners in an “innovative and creative manner” namely Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Botha and Reddy, 2011:266).

Good teaching requires hard work and effort, as indicated by Winberg (1999:35) who writes that it involves in-depth preparation and reflection. Furthermore, teaching does not start and end in the classroom. Selecting mentors who can perform numerous tasks is vital to the process of learning to teach (Zanting and Verloop: 2001:77).

## **2.5. The concept ‘mentoring’**

It is seldom that an individual is equipped to enter a profession without learning from a senior professional (Schön, 1987:37). Hence mentoring is considered to be one of the most ancient tools to assist in the development of humans (Winberg, 1999:6). In the modern world mentoring is becoming more popular in the workplace as it is beneficial to organisations and their staff. In a mentoring situation an individual aids or guides and directs another individual and it is considered an educational activity that is practiced globally (Michael and Ilan, 2008:1). Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:1) believe that mentoring is the best way to promote a person’s development and learning in numerous spheres of life. According to Tomlinson (1995:21) mentoring is learner-centred and is not driven by a curriculum as it facilitates learning at the pace which aligns itself with the mentee’s capabilities and needs.

Mentoring is an approach that addresses the skills required of the mentee for a particular profession and promotes independent learning. Moreover, it is an approach that is cost-efficient as mentees work alongside their mentors in the work place (Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002:29). Hamilton (2003:115) postulates that mentoring is not a miracle solution for staff development. It should be considered as an approach to empower and liberate mentees and benefit mentors. Furthermore, mentoring is an approach that can promote mentees developing their full potential.

The requirement of a mentor in education is to assist in the training of novice teachers, thus mentoring and training are related (Winberg, 1999:3). Training is a process that involves assisting individuals to develop skills and knowledge theoretically or in a practical context. The mentor helps the mentee to acquire an understanding of the links between theory taught at Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) and practice in the workplace. Therefore teacher education focuses on the framework of educational theory and methodology, and mentoring focuses on supporting the practice of the realities of teaching (Winberg, 1999:3).

In the context of teacher education Kardos and Johnson (2008:18) state that it is crucial that all inexperienced teachers who are also referred to in the literature as novice teachers be orientated in their place of work, and mentoring as a developmental tool can assist the change from the unknown to a known situation. Novice teachers in their first years of teaching benefit from mentoring as opposed to struggling on their own.

All learners in schools deserve highly skilled and competent teachers and in this light Martinez (2004:96) argues that mentoring, although, "promising and risky", can achieve the goal of preparing quality teachers. Mentoring is therefore viewed as an enabling and supportive process, and one of the goals of mentoring is to develop individuals to become quality teachers (Baker and McNicoll, 2006:29). Parker-Katz and Bay (2008:1259) summarise mentoring as "a process that can be beneficial to enhance the preparation of teachers".

Teacher learning is an integral part of mentoring. Depending on the quality of mentoring, it may influence the effectiveness of novice teachers and impact on their professional growth, motivation and learning (Kardos and Johnson, 2008:19). According to Martinez (2004:100) teaching has become highly complex and she stresses that mentoring new and pre-service teachers must be seen as a priority to equip them appropriately for the demands placed on them to be good teachers. It is evident that mentoring plays an important role during teaching practice as it entails giving advice and guidance to the mentee (Winberg,1999:3).

Mentoring, if done effectively, provides confidence to the mentee and reduces professional isolation (Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder, 2006:384). Kardos and Johnson (2008:18) have shown that novice teachers benefit from mentoring as opposed to struggling on their own. Hence the ultimate goal of mentoring is to ensure that mentees improve their teaching in order to enhance the pupils' learning (Portner, 2003:75). The culture of mentoring should thus encourage pre-service teachers to strive for ongoing professional development and to integrate their learning with the critical inquiry necessary when they become qualified

teachers (Campbell and Brummet, 2007:50). Mentoring ultimately entails developing a whole educational community to enhance all the stakeholders' ability to grow professionally (Corbett and Wright, 1993:232).

The debate on mentoring teachers as a method for professional development has not gained much attention in the South African educational sector compared to our international counterparts (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:212). Internationally, with particular reference to the USA, formal mentoring was introduced as a prioritised strategy to address obstacles such as frustration, failure and isolation faced by novice teachers (Kardos and Johnson, 2008:2). In the USA, educational stakeholders are realising the benefits of mentoring therefore more than 30 states have implemented mentoring programmes to assist novice teachers with their professional development (Portner, 2003:3). School districts are training experienced teachers to assist novice teachers to equip them with coping skills thus ensuring teacher retention. A realisation of the benefits of mentoring in the USA is that it can curtail isolation and assist in the retention of teachers. In this light models of mentoring will be reviewed to delve deeper into the conceptualisations of mentoring.

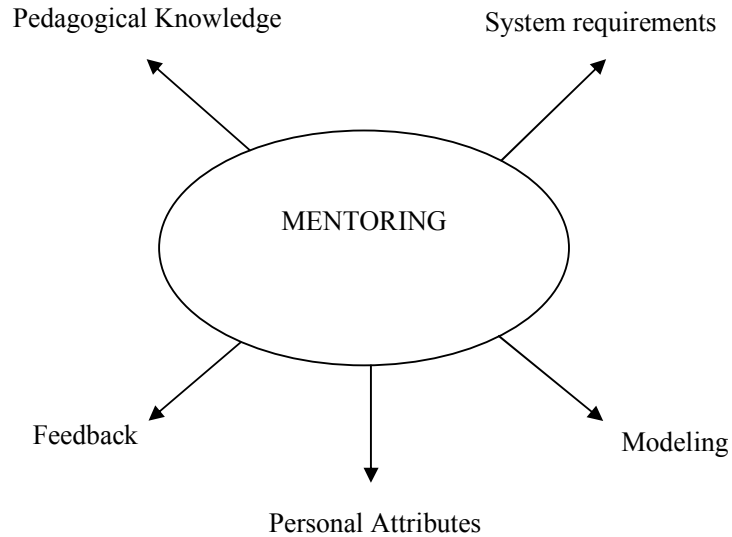
Numerous models of mentoring across disciplines in education are documented. Maynard and Furlong (1995:17) identified three different models of mentoring: the apprenticeship model, competency model and the reflective practitioner model. Schön (1987:37) strongly advocates the 'apprenticeship model' and believes that it is the 'method of choice' to equip individuals for the realities of the workplace. According to Maynard and Furlong (1995:18), in the apprenticeship model pre-service teachers work together with an experienced teacher that can provide ongoing feedback on their performance. The objective of this model is for the pre-service teacher to emulate the mentor and hence develop effective teaching skills. Critics such as Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000:528) are of the opinion that the apprenticeship model is inadequate to prepare pre-service teachers as the objective of the model is to emulate an experienced teacher as if the context of teaching will always remain the same. These authors stress that a conscious effort should be made by Higher Education Institutions to investigate factors that signify the situation in which the practice of teaching can occur.

In the competency model, school-based mentors are provided with a checklist by the university or school while they observe the pre-service teachers' overall teaching skills (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:19). The school-based mentors are required to 'coach' the pre-service teachers according to the prescribed checklist of what is expected of a teacher. The advantage of the competency model is that the school-based mentors are required to

continuously observe and provide feedback to the pre-service teacher on how to improve their skill of teaching (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:20). On the other hand the disadvantage of this model is that the autonomy of the pre-service teachers developing their own unique style of teaching is stifled (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:20).

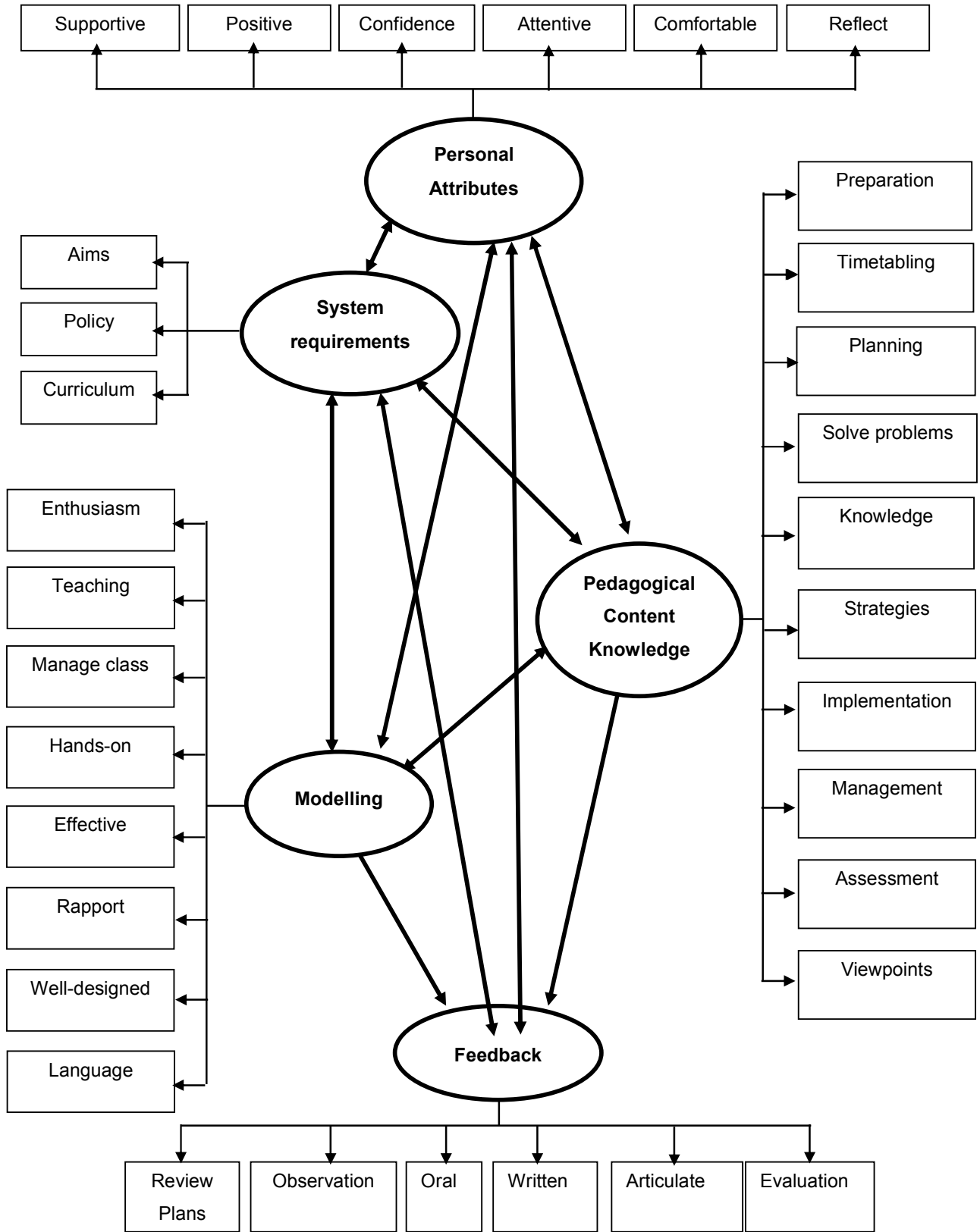
In the reflective model, Maynard and Furlong (1995:20) stress that reflection on teaching should be a component of learning how to teach. Loughran (2002:33) believes that experience of teaching is insufficient for learning how to teach, but reflection is an important requirement in this regard. Pre-service teachers should be guided by their school-based mentors to reflect on their own teaching in order to facilitate the learners' understanding of the subject matter (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:20). According to Maynard and Furlong (1993:75) pre-service teachers reflecting on previous work will create a new understanding and change their views of what can work in the classroom situation. Maynard and Furlong (1993:76) argue that the purpose of reflection should be to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues of working in certain ways, and therefore the mentor should encourage the mentee to engage in different methods of thinking. Reflection on teaching will give pre-service teachers an opportunity to delve deep into their own practice and thus develop more effective teaching skills. School-based mentors are therefore required to shift their role as coaches to 'co-inquirers' to facilitate the process of reflection (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:20).

Numerous models of mentoring across disciplines in education are documented. Hudson and Skamp (2002:7) developed the following model of mentoring to determine the factors and related mentoring characteristics and practices of primary science teaching. These authors argue that school-based mentors need to be aware of their personal attributes and their own practice to effectively develop their mentoring skills. Hudson and Skamp (2002:21) are of the opinion that subject-specific mentoring requirements must be identified for the mentoring process to be successful. The following diagram is an illustration of Hudson and Skamp's (2002:7) mentoring model:



**Figure 2.2:** Proposed Factors in the Mentoring of Pre-service Primary Teachers

Although the above factors of mentoring pre-service teachers were identified, Hudson and Skamp (2002:21) are of the opinion that subject-specific mentoring requirements must be identified for the mentoring process to be successful. In a later study Hudson, Skamp and Brookes (2005:665) developed a more advanced model to conceptualize effective mentoring to address the specific needs of pre-service primary Science teachers. These authors found that there was a high level of connection between the five factors and the variables associated with it. The following diagram illustrates this model of mentoring:



**Figure 2.3:** Mentoring for effective primary Science teaching

The result of the development of the five-factor model with their associated variables indicated that there is a “significant” connection between the five factors and ‘associated variables’ (Hudson, Skamp and Brookes, 2005:669). The authors believe that this five factor model can enhance the development of effective mentoring. For example if mentors are aware of their personal attributes, they will integrate these attributes and practices linked to this factor.

In light of reviewing the different models of mentoring in this chapter, a more detailed discussion of these models will be presented in Chapter 6.

## **2.6. Summary**

The conceptual framework has clarified the concepts ‘learning’, ‘teaching’ and ‘mentoring’. Different models of mentoring were identified. Prior research that informed this study were analysed and a brief discussion of mentoring embedded in ‘constructivism’ was highlighted.

Within the field of mentoring pre-service teachers and novice in-service teachers, there is considerable literature of theory and research that merits a special focus. Challenges faced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice have also been well documented in literature. This review of literature is presented in the following chapter, Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the review of related literature to gain a deeper understanding of mentoring. An overview of the following aspects of mentoring is discussed; roles of the mentor and mentee and implications of a mentoring relationship, as these are key aspects of the study. The issue of teaching practice in the South African context is reviewed to explore the challenges of pre-service teachers during their internship, as this could inform the development of an Accounting mentoring programme. Furthermore, teacher preparation and the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) regarding mentoring programmes are discussed as they provide an understanding of the position of HEI's as a stakeholder in the developing and implementation of a mentoring programme for pre-service teachers.

#### **3.1. Roles of a mentor**

Literature reviewed indicates several roles of the mentor to facilitate the professional development of a mentee (Tomlinson, 1995; Winberg, 1999; Hamilton, 2003; Portner, 2003; Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder, 2006; Campbell and Brummet, 2007; Michael and Ilan, 2008; Rheineck and Roland, 2008). A mentor's role is multifaceted and fulfilling a mentor's role should not be taken lightly (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007:297). Mentors are referred to as counsellors, role models and advisers who share their experience with inexperienced individuals and provide the mentee with information on the logistics of how the place of work functions (Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder, 2006:384).

The mentor's primary role is to purposefully bring the mentee to a standard of acceptable professionalism (Portner, 2003:7). A mentor can function optimally in their primary role by assessing, relating, guiding and coaching. The last two functions "draw upon the eclectic body of knowledge that informs the mentoring process and are carried out through a variety of skills and behaviours" (Portner, 2003:7). A mentor typically assists the mentee to understand the realities of the workplace and how to utilize their strengths to best influence situations (Hamilton, 2003:3). Corbett and Wright (1993:232) sum it up and state that the school-based mentor's role is not merely an administrative one or attending meetings, but encompasses collaborating with the pre-service teachers and lecturers.



Hamel and Fischer (2011:441) coined the phrase 'hidden labour' to exemplify the role of mentors. They are of the view that the work conducted by mentors is not explicitly detailed in the literature and that the daily experiences of mentors and mentees need more attention to highlight the role of mentors. In this regard they believe that if the foregoing notion is highlighted, mechanisms can be developed by the university to enhance the preparation of teachers. The review of literature in the context of mentoring in teacher education, however, highlighted the role of mentor as coach, expert, guide and reflective practitioner. For the purpose of this study the aforementioned roles of the mentor will be investigated.

### **3.1.1. Coach**

This study will draw strongly on the role of the mentor as coach as this role illustrates how the mentor can assist the mentee in their professional development as teachers in a structured mentorship programme. Coaching is described as a technique utilized to improve the performance of a mentee by identifying and addressing the skills that they lack (Hamilton, 2003:62). Coaching is most effective if the mentee is assisted by the mentor to practice a particular aspect of teaching. In an ideal situation a coach needs to observe the mentee before s/he provides feedback to assist improvement.

The role of a mentor as coach is to assist the mentee to locate resources, to improve their understanding of subject knowledge and to expand their skill of teaching (Portner, 2003:8). The foregoing can be achieved if the mentor shares their experiences of teaching, providing the mentee with examples of teaching methods and creating a pathway where mentees can, through self-reflection, take ownership of improving their teaching. According to Hamilton (2003:65), coaches need to be knowledgeable regarding the skills involving recognising what the mentee is doing wrong and providing detailed steps for mentees to improve their performance. To enable this notion, mentors should be able to provide feedback that the mentee can understand, practice and be motivated to act on.

Coaching as a function of mentoring entails the mentor observing the mentee and facilitating the enhancement of their practice. Observing the mentee's performance should not only entail note taking to provide feedback on how to improve their classroom action, but also to ascertain how the mentee plans a particular lesson, before embarking on observing the mentee (Hamilton, 2003:41). Feedback of an observation can be meaningful if the mentor arranges with the mentee meetings in the following order; a pre-class conference, classroom visit, and a post-class conference. A visit a few days prior to the lesson presentation by the mentee should be arranged to discuss what will be taught. The objective of the meeting is to

clarify the outcomes of the lesson, teaching methods to be used, and to consider if any adjustments to the lesson should be made. During the pre-class conference the mentor could ask questions that will encourage the mentee to enhance the lesson and therefore become a reflective practitioner (Hamilton, 2003:41/42). When the classroom visit takes place, the mentor is regarded as an “objective observer” while observing the mentee. Mentors should guard against becoming a participant in the mentee’s lesson as it is challenging to participate and observe at the same time. It is not necessary for a mentor to intervene on every situation that requires correction with regard to the mentee (Portner, 2003:70). Instead the mentor should intervene when a mentee has failed several times to cope with a particular problem. The mentor should consider if intervening will prevent an opportunity for the mentee to learn from their mistakes. In addition, the mentor should not only observe what the mentee is doing wrong but, instead, be interested in the standard of learning that is taking place. Hence what the mentor should look for is evidence of student learning and what he/she is contributing or might be posing as a barrier in the process of learning (Hamilton, 2003:45).

The post-classroom meeting will be conducted after the classroom visit. The mentor as coach meets with the mentee to discuss the observation made by the mentor. The goal for the mentor is to allow the mentee to establish the effectiveness of the lesson and to identify aspects of the lesson that enhanced, or were a barrier to, the learning of the pupils. The mentor must limit their observation to what they have seen or heard in the classroom, thus maintaining objectiveness. Hamilton (2003:45/46) suggests that mentors should avoid giving feedback on how the lesson should have been presented by the mentee.

### **3.1.2. Expert**

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:297) emphasize that mentors should be experts in their specific subject fields which is required for their role as mentor. The role of the mentor is to provide expert advice to the student teacher about the elements of their lesson presentation and to give suggestions for improvement. Similarly, Hamilton (2003:48) contends that the “wisest” role of the mentor would be to showcase their subject knowledge to a mentee. For example, the mentor shows the mentee how a lesson presentation is done following a particular teaching method, whilst the mentee observes the mentor who tells the mentee beforehand what the lesson will entail. The aforementioned is reflective of a teacher that models exemplary behaviour that is expected of a teacher.

Moberg (2008:836) describes wisdom as a behaviour that exudes positivity as wise people are capable of making practical decisions and are often drawn into conditions where such decisions are necessary. Wise people often choose to mentor as they realize how beneficial it can be to their own growth and development (Moberg, 2008:837). Whilst Moberg (2008:841) argues that wise people are more capable of mentoring, his research did not show evidence of the foregoing argument. In his study he found that wise persons are not more likely to be drawn to mentoring than people who are not perceived as wise. However, when the mentor and mentee engage in an open discussion about the development of the mentee, the collective decision they make appears to be wiser than making an individual decision. Consequently, mentors who lack in wisdom may have been forced to mentor and thus had no say in the matter.

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300) believe that expertise in a specific subject can only be gained through experience hence mentors who are experienced are able to provide greater assistance than mentors who are inexperienced. Echoing a similar sentiment are Botha and Reddy (2011:259) who strongly believe that learning to teach by the pre-service teacher can only be possible if the school-based mentor is an experienced teacher, while Moberg (2008:835) refers to a mentor as an experienced individual who takes over the responsibility of mentoring an inexperienced individual. The purpose of utilizing experienced teachers to mentor pre-service teachers is to assess the beliefs and probabilities that generate several practices in schools and to critically analyse how these school cultures influence the learning outcomes of students (Long, Moran, Harris and Ryan, 2007:171). In contrast to the view of the aforementioned researchers, Hamel and Fischer (2011:441) provide evidence in their study that regardless of the mentors' years of experience in teaching, all the mentors found it challenging to provide adequate time to assist the pre-service teachers with planning and providing feedback of their lessons.

Hamilton (2003:108) alludes to the fact that not any individual is suitable to fulfil the role of a mentor, regardless of their knowledge and experience in the workplace. Mentors are people who have a talent or skill in a specific field. However, a mentor is more than just an expert in his/her field, but is a person who has the desire and ability to share these skills and knowledge with others. People who display the opposite attitude of the foregoing sentiment should not be mentors (Winberg, 1999:7).

Mentors lead by example and they know that learning occurs when the mentee can initiate ideas of how to teach independently (Winberg, 1999:7). A mentor can stimulate ideas in the mentee and point them in the right direction, but ultimately the mentee must take full

responsibility for their teaching. Hamilton (2003:96/97) argues that it is not the mentor's role to 'clone' the mentee in their own image. This notion is given weight by Karel and Stead (2011:403) whose study found that mentors found it rewarding if their interns did not share similar interest and pursued other interest, thus the mentors did not want to create "a clone" of themselves. However, it is pertinent that the mentor illustrates behaviour that the mentee can critically analyse to develop a strategy to succeed in their careers. Thus the actions of the mentor are much more powerful than what they say to the mentee.

### **3.1.3. Guide**

It is essential that mentees are challenged, assisted and given guidance along a journey that they are not familiar with as this will help define their professionalism (Rheineck and Roland, 2008:91). To determine the competency of the mentee, the mentor assesses the mentee by collecting data about the manner in which he/she goes about learning and teaching. The purpose of assessment is to identify the professional needs of the mentee, and thus decisions can be based on various data to implement effective strategies to ensure professional development (Portner, 2003:8).

Recent literature suggests that the most difficult role of a mentor is to guide the pre-service teacher as opposed to dictating how to teach (Oetjen and Oetjen, 2009:101). Mentors need to develop an understanding of how pre-service teachers learn to teach specific subject content and generate skills to aid them effectively. Moreover, they need to develop an understanding of what the pre-service teacher is attempting to do in the classroom thus figuring out how teaching works (Tomlinson, 1995:21). This view is supported by Oetjen and Oetjen (2009:101) who state that mentors should act as a guide to enable the pre-service teachers to make appropriate decisions on how to embark on their task as teachers. Hence a mentor's role is not to illustrate the perfection of teaching but in fact create awareness that teaching is complex and ever-changing.

Mentors teach a range of classes in a school, and within the limitation of their own timetable they have to arrange observation and teaching periods for pre-service teachers for a particular time period. The major concern for mentors is to ensure that mentees are given an opportunity to create an awareness of possible problems, are given assignments that are challenging, and that a wide range of sufficient experience is obtained (McIntyre and Hagger, 1993:99). Hence it is vital that the mentor guides the mentee towards independence to create their own understanding of teaching and learning strategies (Portner, 2003:8). Decisions regarding teaching and learning should be driven through reflection thus

empowering the mentee to make informed decisions and take suitable action for future situations regarding teaching and learning. The aim of guiding the mentee is to wean the mentee away from depending on the mentor for ongoing guidance and suggestions. The objective of weaning the mentee is to make the mentor's role redundant, and to achieve this goal the mentee must display a level of autonomy, to show confidence when acting on decisions and to reflect on the accuracy of their actions (Portner, 2003:67).

Winberg (1999:26/27) recommends numerous types of mentor assistance to enhance the development of the mentee, such as orientation of the organisational culture, which refers to how the organisation operates, envisioning outcomes, active listening and positive feedback. Mentors need to orientate the mentee to the new environment and ensure that the mentee is treated as an equal by the members of staff. It is vital for the mentor to maintain objectivity as to stating how he/she feels about particular matters in the organisation. Each organisation has its own set of beliefs and the role of the mentor is to induct the mentee into the organisation's culture to ensure the mentee knows what is expected of him/her. With regard to envisioning outcomes, the mentor needs to encourage the mentee to think positively about their goal to achieve success and to become a teacher who can function independently. Listening attentively to the mentee can be an effective tool to assist the mentee to provide an opportunity to vocalise their problems and to develop problem solving skills. Positive feedback does not dictate to the mentee what to do or how to respond to a particular situation. Instead, it allows the mentee to make their own decisions regarding the challenges they are facing (Winberg, 1999:28).

Mentors should be competent in preparing and presenting lessons to guide the pre-service teachers with these aspects of teaching (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007:297). One example of lesson preparation is when relevant textbooks and other resources are consulted to present a particular topic within a subject. When presenting a lesson, the mentor has to display a level of competence that the pre-service teacher is able to emulate. Thus a mentor's advice should not only be limited to suggestions of how to improve the lesson, but to also delve deep into the actions of why a student teacher presented the lesson in a particular manner (Zanting and Verloop, 2001:59).

Dewey (1938:26) contends that all humans have desires. However, the strength of the desire will influence the effort that is acquired to achieve the desire. School-based mentor teachers' desire to support pre-service teachers learning to teach will influence the degree of effort they put in to enhance the professional development of the pre-service teacher. Teachers who are therefore willing and committed to their role as mentors can empower pre-service

teachers to act and think as learners by utilizing numerous investigative techniques to discover their strengths and weaknesses (Campbell and Brummet, 2007:50). For example, instead of rectifying the mistakes that occur during the mentee's lesson presentation, the mentor should instead pose questions to the mentee to analyze their own actions.

Mentors are considered to be helping hands. On the one hand mentors have a tendency to encourage and motivate their mentees to build confidence whilst, on the other hand, they tend to be more critical to encourage their mentees to strive for excellence in their practice. Whatever the style of mentoring, an element of care about their mentees should always be evident (Winberg, 1999:8).

#### **3.1.4. Reflective practitioner**

To reflect on practice plays a pivotal role in connecting practice and theory (Korthagen, 2004:1024). When an outcome of a particular task is not achieved, reflection can be utilized to assess the task and plan future action (Schön, 1987:26). A study conducted by Kriek and Grayson (2009:192) has shown that reflection is beneficial for teachers' professional development. Kriek and Grayson (2009:192) state that when teachers make a conscious effort to write down the strengths and challenges of their lessons and how they can make changes in their practice to make it more effective, their reflections are being utilized to enhance their professional development and develop their "meta-cognitive skills". Despite self-reflection being a useful tool for professional development, mentoring however provides a better understanding of the practice of teaching and ongoing learning for a pre-service teacher (Baker and McNicoll, 2006: 28).

Reflection can be used as a tool to facilitate the role of the mentor. Frost (1993:142) believes that reflective practice can only be learnt by doing. In order for mentors to develop reflective skills they must engage in reflection themselves, and this could be facilitated in a "collaborative and supportive framework". To ensure the foregoing sentiment mentors must firstly belong to a mentor support group. Secondly, mentors must be provided with guidelines to assist with their own reflection and, thirdly, there must be an ongoing link with HEI's with regard to mentor training. In this regard professionals who collaborate in forums to enhance professional development are able to transfer tacit knowledge which is in the 'heads of individuals' and not written explicitly in books (Sanchez, 2004:2). Hamel and Fischer (2011:438) found that pre-service teachers wanted their school-based mentors to be more explicit about how to teach, based on their actual day to day experiences of teaching and learning, thus 'gaining access to teachers' tacit knowledge'. According to Hamel and Fischer

(2011:438), the pre-service teachers viewed their school-based mentors' reluctance to share 'tacit knowledge' as their own opinions based on experience, as opposed to professional knowledge.

In conclusion, despite the increasing attention of mentoring pre-service teachers, Hamel and Fischer (2011:434) argue that the position mentor teachers hold in the teacher fraternity continues to be vague. In their view finding teachers who are capable of mentoring pre-service teachers is a challenge due to the mismatch of role expectations between the mentor and mentee.

### **3.2. Roles of a mentee**

Recent literature pays attention to the role of a mentee as well. For mentees to experience optimal benefits of mentoring they should be aware of their role expectation and practice these expectations to the best of their ability (Karel and Stead, 2011:407). In a study conducted by Beard (2007:211) for Accounting students he emphasises that universities together with their students "should assume responsibility for ensuring that the internship will be a value-added experience". The responsibility of the students is to be clear about what their roles and objectives will be during the internship and find suitable work places that are aligned with these objectives. For students to become aware of their role as mentees they should be empowered through workshops on how schooling, teaching and the curriculum are structured (Long, Moran, Harris and Ryan, 2007:171).

Mentees can also hamper the mentoring relationship if they do not comply with the requirements of reflecting and talking with their mentors (Hamilton, 2003:108). This perspective is given weight by Johnson (2007:183) who adds that regardless of appointing the most competent mentor, a mentee can display behavioural traits that could lead to conflict. For example, the mentee could have a low self-esteem and could perceive critical feedback from the mentor as punitive. A mentee that is interested in learning will seek critical feedback from a mentor and will accept it without being defensive (Karel and Stead, 2011:406). If the mentee is not in agreement with the mentor's feedback it is important that a discussion is pursued for clarification. On the other side of the coin the mentor is also required to motivate the rationale behind the feedback provided to the mentee (Nillas, 2010:72).

It has been shown by Hamel and Fischer (2011:438) that mentees can be perceived as an additional burden to the mentors' workload. Hence mentees should tread carefully so that

they are “not intruding upon a mentor’s work environment”. It is therefore important that a mentee acknowledges the mentor’s input and concern for the mentee’s pursuit for learning (Karel and Stead, 2011:406). For mentees to illustrate a genuine interest in learning they should show initiative for seeking opportunities that are not confined to what is expected from them in the written mentorship policy, for example, offering their services to assist with the extra-mural activities or assisting marginal learners with additional classes (Karel and Stead, 2011:407).

### **3.3. Mentoring in the context of teaching practice**

Teaching practice is an essential component of teacher education programmes. It provides pre-service teachers the opportunity to experience the realities of being a teacher. Menter (1989:461) found that pre-service teachers perceive teaching practice as the “crux of their preparation for the teaching profession”. In other words teaching practice should be regarded as a system that needs continuous monitoring in a teacher education training programme. Marais and Meier (2004:221) argue that teaching practice in developing countries such as South Africa can be challenging. Challenges such as unqualified teachers, lack of resources and moreover a lack of discipline amongst learners and teachers can pose serious threats to pre-service teachers’ teaching practice experience. Quick and Sieborger (2005:4) point out that if these challenges are not met pre-service teachers could develop a negative perception of the teaching fraternity.

According to The South African Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education, 2000:12) pre-service teachers are given the opportunity during teaching practice to experience the “complicated nature and richness of the realities of teaching”. The objective of teaching practice is to introduce pre-service teachers more comprehensively to the requirements of being a teacher (Perry, 2004:2). Nillas (2010:62) is of the opinion that during teaching practice pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to apply the knowledge they obtained at university, practice different teaching methodologies, learn from their mistakes and develop their own teaching style. Teaching practice also enables the pre-service teacher to ascertain whether the correct career choice has been made (Nillas, 2010:62).

In a study conducted by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:356) there was a general consensus amongst the pre-service teachers who participated in the study that, although theory taught at university provided them with ample information on how to teach, it was during teaching practice that they were exposed to the real world of teaching. They therefore conclude that teaching practice enables pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between the theory that is



taught at HEI'S and practice (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:347). Dreyer (1998:110) concurs by emphasising that the more time pre-service teachers spend in schools, the greater the opportunity to integrate the theory of education and how to practice the theory in schools.

### **3.4. The role of Higher Education Institutions in mentoring**

More than a decade ago Dreyer (1998:111) pointed out that a country that neglects the standard of how they train their teachers will eventually influence the standard of their education negatively. Recent studies at national and international level revealed concerns regarding the quality of teacher preparation (Martinez, 2004; Campbell and Brummet, 2007 and Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010). Martinez (2004:102) places the blame on HEI's for the poor quality of teachers. Similarly, Campbell and Brummet (2007:51) accuse HEI's of continuously reproducing the status quo. The challenge remains for HEI's to therefore rethink their teacher education programs in order to ensure better quality teachers.

Research conducted by Quick and Siebörger (2005:4) has shown that, despite mentoring having so much potential to assist pre-service teachers during teaching practice, it does not always yield the desired outcomes. Disparities were found in the role expectation of mentors and HEI's during teaching practice in the South African context (Quick and Siebörger, 2005:3). Schools, on the one hand, expected HEI's to take a bigger level of responsibility regarding the supervision of pre-service teachers and also to provide feedback to mentors regarding the development of the students. On the other hand, HEI's wanted schools to take sole responsibility for the professional development of students during teaching practice (Quick and Siebörger, 2005:3). Their study showed that responsibilities should be shared fairly between schools and HEI's.

According to Campbell and Brummet (2007:53), lecturers' primary mentoring roles are those of "coach, critical friend and co-inquirer". As coaches, lecturers should assist pre-service teachers through discussions to ascertain what they know and provide strategies for understanding teaching and learning. Whilst supporting pre-service teachers' ways of thinking, as critical friends, lecturers should challenge the pre-service teachers' practices and actions. As co-inquirers, lecturers should see pre-service teachers as learning partners.

It can be argued that one of the core purposes of a teacher education programme is to influence the actions and thinking of pre-service teachers (Campbell and Brummet, 2007:52). Moreover, teacher education programmes should assist pre-service teachers to develop effective teaching skills and to comprehend the requirements of the teaching profession. A

tool that can assist HEI's to achieve this objective is mentoring. Several studies strongly argue that mentoring can be used as a valuable tool to enhance teacher preparation (Maynard and Furlong, 1993; Van Wyk and Daniels, 2004; Martinez, 2004; Davis and Higdon, 2008 and Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010). Hence the question remains what role should HEI's play to implement an effective mentoring programme?

According to Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:366) higher education institutions play a vital role in the implementation of an effective mentoring programme. Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:366) postulate that a mentoring programme requires a "vigorously critical process of integrated procedures of pre-planning of both mentor and mentee". To ensure that both mentor and mentee are briefed regarding the objectives of the mentoring programme, higher educational institutions are responsible for the following considerations: Firstly; who will be the person to coordinate the programme? Secondly, in what manner will the system be coordinated? Lastly, how will the mentors be selected? Mentoring programmes continuously need to be monitored. Regular meetings should be held with the mentor and mentee, and a level of commitment is necessary from all the participants to ensure an effective mentoring programme. Hence the structure and implementation of teacher education mentoring programmes need careful consideration, and HEI'S are saddled with the major task of how to implement an effective mentoring programme.

Mentoring pre-service teachers does not merely involve attaching them to a mentor but, rather, ensuring that meaningful mentoring takes place. Dreyer (1998:110) notes that a careful selection criterion for mentors must be in place to train mentors. The training must equip mentors to assist, coach and direct pre-service teachers. Echoing this sentiment Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113) assert that, when mentor training takes place, mentors should learn how to nurture, develop and understand the needs of student teachers. However, if mentor training does not take place, mentors will rely on their teaching experience to mentor pre-service teachers. Thus clear guidelines are important for mentors to know precisely how to guide student teachers (Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005:113). It is therefore necessary for lecturers (HEI's) and mentor teachers to work together in developing a mentoring programme conducive for teacher development (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007:305).

Martinez (2004:104) emphasises that mentoring should be structured according to the needs of the mentee. Moreover, Martinez suggests that mentoring programmes should be examined carefully to provide "convincing evidence" that mentoring has the potential to improve the quality of teacher education. Campbell and Brummet (2007:52) argue for a

“social learning structure” where pre-service teachers, mentors and lecturers create a common set of goals, unpack problem solving methods and are willing to learn from one another. They perceive the latter stakeholders as a “community of learners”. Frost (1993:144) contends that schools and higher education institutions have the option to maintain the status quo or to enhance professionalism. This author argues that the second option can only be achieved if the expectations of mentoring pre-service teachers are raised to develop critical pedagogy for both mentee and mentor. Furthermore, Frost (ibid) believes that the second option is the teaching profession’s hope for the development of quality teachers. The views expressed by this researcher on the development and implementation of teacher education mentoring programmes centre around the needs of the mentee to ensure the facilitation of their professional development and growth. Therefore it can be argued that the mentees’ needs should be a key component when structuring an effective mentoring programme. In light of the aforementioned, the needs of the mentee can be assessed during their teaching practice.

Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2007:34) propose that HEI’s embark on a public relations exercise before teaching practice to ensure that a good relationship exists between the pre-service teachers and all other stakeholders. Writing along the same lines, Dreyer (1998:111) emphasized that to upgrade the standard of education within the South African context, all the stakeholders in education would have to plan and implement a training programme that will train more functional teachers. To achieve this objective Dreyer (1998:111) suggests that experienced and qualified school-based teachers are used to assist students to ensure optimal learning, focusing on the repertoire of skills necessary to perform their future daily tasks as teachers. Equally important, HEI’s should create a profile of each school to provide as much detail as possible about the school to the pre-service teachers to inform their choice of school for teaching practice (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:357).

Quick and Siebörger (2005:4) propose three important aspects that could improve mentoring pre-service teachers during their teaching practice experience. Firstly, ongoing communication between mentors, lecturers and the teaching practice co-ordinators is important and can be facilitated by arranging meetings between the various stakeholders. Secondly, university lecturers should visit the schools more than is currently required of them to meet with the mentors and to observe lessons of the pre-service teachers. Thirdly, teaching practice could greatly improve if lesson presentations by students are observed by their subject lecturers.

### **3.5. Implications of structuring a mentoring programme**

Mentoring programmes encompass various aspects that require meticulous planning, implementation and monitoring for effective results (Hamilton, 2003:34). According to Hamilton (2003:34), at the initial phase of the mentoring programme the following aspects need to be communicated to the mentor, mentee and the supervisor of the programme. Firstly, the rationale of the mentorship programme; secondly the objectives; thirdly the responsibilities of the participants and lastly the regulation regarding confidentiality and other issues which may arise (Hamilton, 2003:34). The lack of these considerations could pose risks for an organisation as pointed out by Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:42). A mentorship programme that lacks explicit objectives and details can cause frustration and ultimately lead to poor mentoring, thus an attempt to introduce a follow-up programme could be rejected by the potential participants to the programme.

Kardos and Johnson (2008:2) note that not all mentoring programmes are carefully structured and mentors are not always aware of what is expected of them. Hence mentoring programmes that are disorganized are not a useful tool for the mentor and mentee and should be avoided as they will serve no purpose for the effective development of the mentee. It is thus evident that if mentor teachers are not aware of the purpose of a mentor programme it could influence their role as mentors negatively (Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010:425).

A vital step when developing a mentoring programme is to assess the needs and expectations of the mentees and mentors, otherwise the danger is that the programme can be underutilized and consequently be ineffective (Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002:42). Garvey and Alfred (2000:221) suggest that the following considerations be taken into account when developing a mentoring programme: (a) The role of the mentor must be specified and clear; (b) The organisation must understand the purpose of mentoring; (c) Mentoring is a process and it facilitates the learning of the mentee; (d) Both the mentor and the mentee must be committed; (d) Mentoring requires hard work and (e) the focus of the mentorship programme must be on the mentee (Garvey and Alfred, 2000:221). Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113) allude to the fact that a mentoring programme should address the specific needs of the pre-service teacher. For example a mentoring programme designed for pre-service teachers in Accounting might not necessarily be workable for pre-service teachers teaching History. Therefore careful considerations must be made when designing and implementing a mentoring programme for pre-service teachers, otherwise it could strain their learning during teaching practice. Furthermore, Quick and Siebörger (2005:4) postulate that gradual

changes by all stakeholders can lead to an improvement, and this can be achieved by co-ordinating the realistic intricacies of the teaching practice programme. Moreover, Hamel and Fischer (2011:441) argue that it is vital to develop a mentoring programme in “relation to the lived experiences of mentors and interns”.

Hamilton (2003:113) suggests several methods and principles to structure formal mentoring programmes that will facilitate the success of the programme which is to communicate, coordinate, monitor, be flexible and integrate. In light of these methods firstly, a detailed explanation should be provided to management and staff regarding the objectives of the mentoring programme. Secondly, staff should be informed when the mentees will be joining them and how the mentorship programme will align itself with the staff development activities. Thirdly, mentors should be trained to create an awareness of their role as mentors and what type of support will be offered during the mentoring programme. Lastly, clarity should be provided regarding the person who is responsible for initiating the first meeting. To arrange the first meeting between mentors and mentees a social event such as a lunch can be hosted to ensure that everyone taking part in the programme meet. The development of the mentoring relationship can be checked on a regular basis, for example once a month. In addition, in-depth interviews or questionnaires can be designed by an external person to evaluate the success of the programme.

According to Quick and Siebörger (2005:3), in a mentorship programme the mentor teachers' contribution is their classroom management and their subject expertise skills, whilst HEI's contribute towards the overall teacher professional development. Added to this, Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:110) assert that when pre-service teachers are learning from their mentors they are provided with an opportunity to gain skills and knowledge from an expert. Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:365) point out that whilst the object of a mentoring programme is not to solve every problem encountered, it should be flexibly designed to address the individual and professional requirements of the pre-service teachers.

The primary concern for mentor teachers is to engage in learning structures within a particular social context (Garvey and Alfred, 2000:218). The aforementioned sentiment should be given serious attention when mentors are trained for their role. Training for the mentor and mentee is crucial to achieve the objectives of a mentoring programme. Hamilton (2003:111), however, believes that a one day training session will not sustain the mentoring programme. An organisation that values mentoring as a tool for professional development will appoint a co-ordinator to monitor the mentorship programme and provide support to the

mentor and mentee. The co-ordinator should structure regular meetings with the mentor and mentee to assess if the objectives of the mentoring programme are being met.

Mentor training should not only be facilitated in workshops but can be done in other ways. Corbett and Wright (1993:231) propose the following ways to develop mentors: (a) to arrange formal meetings at university to enable the mentors to reflect on their role as mentors; (b) informal networking initiated by the mentors; (c) to link visits to the mentee by the lecturer also to the mentor; (d) principal's ongoing support plays an important role in the mentor's effectiveness and (e) HEI's could offer an accredited programme to train mentors.

Neglecting to train the mentor and mentee can result in the failure of the mentorship programme. A mentor's role encompasses that of a friend, parent and supervisor, thus a brief orientation session will not be sufficient to equip the mentor regarding the foregoing aspects (Hamilton, 2003:111). Mentees also need training to inform them regarding their role expectations of the mentorship programme, such as how to learn from experience and how to formalise their relationship with the mentor. The foregoing sentiments will minimise problems and enhance the learning of the mentee.

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:305) contend that in order to establish a meaningful mentoring programme more attention should be focused on the way the programme is structured. The realities of teaching practice should be investigated to provide appropriate guidance to mentors. The enhancement of mentoring programmes can only be possible if HEI's and schools co-ordinate the programme collectively to ensure effective mentoring (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007:305). To facilitate the aforementioned recommendation Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:357) assert that HEI's should take it a step further and arrange workshops with the schools to equip and assist mentor teachers, whilst Quick and Siebörger (2005:2) have shown that collaboration between mentor teachers and lecturers is vital. The greater the collaboration the greater assistance the pre-service teacher will receive regarding their professional development during teaching practice. In addition, when there is a strong collaboration between HEI's and schools, pre-service teachers will receive a better quality of mentoring and, consequently, a more meaningful learning experience (Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005:113). It is evident that collaboration between the stakeholders could result in realizing the optimal benefits of mentoring.

Schools' contribution to mentoring programmes during teaching practice can be valuable if HEI's communicate with them directly and give appropriate guidance of what is expected of school-based mentors (Quick and Siebörger, 2005:4). Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:365)

suggest that at the start of the mentoring programme all the stakeholders involved in the mentoring programme should: (a) develop an understanding of what the mentoring programme entails; (b) discuss and clarify the aims of mentoring; (c) describe clearly the needs of the mentees; (d) compile structured time frames for mentors and mentees to dialogue and (e) construct an instrument to evaluate the mentoring programme. The foregoing suggestions will ensure ongoing self-reflection of the mentees, thus developing their levels of competency. These considerations are supported by Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:434) who point out that a mentoring programme that focuses on developing the teaching competences of the pre-service teacher, and which illustrates empathy and understanding from the mentor, can be a valuable tool to enhance teacher preparation.

It is important that individuals are not forced into mentoring and that only individuals who are willing to be mentors be allowed to do so (Garvey and Alfred, 2000:221). The skills and qualities of the mentor will differ according to the aims of the mentoring programme and the manner in which the organization would like to achieve the objectives (Hamilton, 2003:21). Knowledgeable and skilled mentors should not be the only focus to ensure a successful mentorship programme (Hamilton, 2003:34). The responses of the mentees who participated in the study of Allan (2007:19) indicated that the choice of mentors should also be based on their personal qualities, as opposed to only their professional status within an organisation. This provides a clear indication that the criterion for choosing mentors should be based on the teachers' skills and qualities.

Mentoring programmes are most likely to fail if appropriate support is not provided from management and the coordinators of the programme (Hamilton, 2003:37). Mentoring programmes may cause less time for other obligations and conflict with the mentor's personal life and other commitments (Winberg, 1999:93). Therefore, before a teacher commits to the role of a mentor they should consider how it may impact on their other activities within the school context.

### **3.6. Overview of the mentoring relationship**

A mentor relationship that is built on mutual respect can enhance the learning of the mentee (Ali and Panther, 2008:37). Hence the mentor and mentee relationship should entail respect, professionalism and mutual trust. It is imperative that mentees are paired with mentors whom they have a professional connection with, meaning mentors who are willing and open minded individuals who the mentees can trust (Allan, 2007:19). The establishment of the foregoing behaviours can create an environment conducive for mentors to understand the needs of the

mentees and thus “encourage honest sharing of and reflecting on their experiences” (Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder, 2006:387).

A mentoring relationship changes over time, just as a parent’s relationship with their children changes as the children grow into adulthood. However, a mentor’s relationship with the mentee is not analogous to that of a parent and child, since the mentor from the beginning handles the mentee as an equal regardless of the mentee’s lack of experience, or of the age difference (Hamilton, 2003:104/105). Johnson (2007:21) provides a summary of the list of characteristics that uniquely describes the mentoring relationship and forms the aspects of mentoring that make it different from other relationship forms.

**Table 3.1: Summary of the characteristics that define mentoring relationship**

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>
Mentoring is a personal relationship that takes time to develop and is based on a platform of mutual interest and endures several phases.
Mentoring is reciprocal and both mentor and mentee benefit from the relationship.
Mentors are more experienced and are more accomplished in their profession than their mentees.
Mentors provide mentees with direction in their prospective careers and prepare them to achieve success.
Mentors provides mentees with emotional support.
Mentors model the integration of work and personal life and represent the requirements of a professional that the mentee is inspired to emulate.

In addition to the above characteristics, mentors need to have certain qualities to bring to the mentoring relationship. According to Corbett and Wright (1993:226), the ideal qualities of a mentor include: having an attitude that exudes positivity; being sensitive to the needs of mentees; enabling the mentee to develop their own unique method of teaching; providing advice instead of judgement; showing commitment to the requirements of the mentorship programme, and ensuring that learning is beneficial for both mentor and mentee. Moreover, the personality of a potential mentor plays an essential role in a mentoring relationship. The mentor must, formally or informally, display a genuine interest in the mentee and, according to Hamilton (2003:108), the foregoing sentiment is made possible by individuals who are keen to assist others and are interested in the growth and development of people. Echoing a similar view, Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:351) postulate that mentors who are willing to assist pre-service teachers are able to motivate them to pursue their career as teachers. These qualities of a mentor are vital to have for mentoring, as pre-service teachers could



have doubts about their ability to establish a professional relationship with their mentors as they enter into a situation that they are not familiar with (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:348).

According to Hamilton (2003:105/106) there are three stages in the mentoring relationship: early stages, middle stage and the final stage. In the early stages of the mentoring relationship the mentor and mentee get to know each other and decide to what extent their level of trust and friendship is. Mentors will, on the one hand, experience a lack of response by the mentee when feedback is given and will not often be challenged by the mentee. The mentee, on the other hand, might quietly resist the support of the mentor and might claim they do not need a mentor. During the middle stage, the relationship is settled and the mentors will find their role as beneficial and stimulating. Mentees will now be more comfortable to critically engage with their mentors regarding educational matters. At the final stages the mentoring relationship becomes more social and meetings become less frequent.

Portner (2003:71) states that mentors and mentees can maintain their relationship by engaging in informal talks about teaching, for example, over lunch as mentors and mentees often do not have regular contact due to other work-related and personal demands. Mentors should find ample time to mentor, as a fifteen or twenty minute talk will not facilitate the process of analysing and planning lessons (Portner, 2003:72). Added to this, Corbett and Wright (1993:230) report that in the final stages of the mentoring relationship mentees develop their own style of teaching and ideas about how pupils learn. In certain incidents the aforementioned created conflict between the mentor and mentee as the expected role of the mentor changed and therefore the mentor had to adapt to the independent style of the mentee. It is therefore essential for the mentor to allow the mentee to create their own unique style of being a practicing teacher.

### **3.7. Challenges pre-service teachers faced with their school-based mentors during teaching practice**

Despite literature providing details of an ideal mentoring relationship and what it should entail, several challenges have been revealed in national and international empirical studies that could negatively influence the mentoring relationship. Challenges faced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice have been well documented in the recent literature (Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010; Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009; Bradbury and Koballa, 2008; Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007; Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005; Quick and Siebörger, 2005).

### **3.7.1. Conflicting role expectations**

Bradbury and Koballa (2008:2140) explored the difficulties that arose in a mentoring relationship during a one year internship and claim that tension between the mentor and mentee is inevitable during an internship. School-based mentors and pre-service teachers had different expectations of the mentoring relationship and thus problems arose because they did not communicate their expectations at the beginning of the mentoring relationship. The mentors, on the one hand, expected the mentees to assume more responsibility of classroom duties and eventually become more autonomous as they would be when they become qualified teachers. The mentees on the other hand wanted the mentors to give them 'prescriptive advice' on how to teach. These findings are given weight by Hamel and Fischer (2011:438) whose study revealed that mentors appeared frustrated when the pre-service teachers expected the mentors to take initiative for planning lessons. Moreover, the mentors wanted the pre-service teachers to be more inquisitive about how to improve their teaching skills, while the pre-service teachers wanted the mentors to give ongoing feedback of their teaching without being requested to do so. To avoid conflicting role expectations, Portner (2003:69) recommends that setting ground rules at an early stage of the mentoring relationship will prevent confusion regarding the role expectation of the mentor and protocol to adhere to in the relationship.

### **3.7.2. Compelled to emulate mentor**

According to Zanting and Verloop (2001:77) pre-service teachers were compelled by their mentors to emulate their teaching style. For example, a pre-service teacher complained that her mentor wanted her to model his method of teaching and she refused as it did not suit her personality and her belief that there is not only one suitable method of teaching a particular subject. Hence pre-service teachers found it difficult to develop their own initiative for lesson preparation and other teaching duties (Zanting and Verloop, 2001:77).

Nillas (2010:72) found that in some cases the school-based mentors were not flexible when the pre-service teachers wanted to try new teaching methods and would communicate their viewpoint harshly. Similarly, Wang and Odell (2007:483) found that when pre-service teachers implemented their own style of teaching as opposed to emulating the mentor, learners in the classroom were confused about which strategy to apply to a task given by their teacher. Therefore conflict arose between the pre-service teacher and the school-based mentor, and pre-service teachers felt a lack of support by their mentors in this regard

because they had to defend their style of teaching to the mentor (Wang and Odell, 2007:484).

Wang and Odell's (2007:483) study revealed that pre-service teachers in certain cases avoid the advice of the mentor due to conflict regarding teaching style and attempt to devise their own coping strategies to overcome challenges, or seek advice from other teachers. Portner (2003:70) maintains that a mentor should not assume that the mentee will agree with their suggestions for improvement. It is crucial that the mentor and mentee work in unison and reach an agreement concerning the mentee's development.

According to Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:424), pre-service teachers' innovative ideas to explore new teaching methods may be prevented due to "power imbalances in the professional relationships" between pre-service and school-based mentors. They further note that to acquire a "balanced power relationship" requires mentors to be willing to have an open dialogue or even being challenged by pre-service teachers. This view is supported by Van Louw and Waghid (2008:217) who argue that a mentoring relationship should encompass "deliberative engagement" where mentors and mentees are committed to the requirements of mentoring and are willing to listen to each other without being dismissive. To illustrate the aforementioned statement, mentees should not be afraid to state their argument and there should be an agreement between mentor and mentee to agree to disagree. For deliberative engagement to happen, mentors should initiate new possibilities or strategies for the mentee to implement, thus creating an understanding for the mentee (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:218). Wang and Odell's (2007:482) study found that pre-service teachers expected their mentors to give them an opportunity to develop their own style of teaching through continuous 'reflective interactions' and to avoid being prescriptive about teaching. The view expressed by Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:434) is that although dissonance between the school-mentor and pre-service teacher is regarded as a negative aspect of teaching practice it could compel pre-service teachers to reflect on their overall experience and therefore learn from it.

### **3.7.3. Mentee exploitation**

There were a number of complaints by pre-service teachers who felt that their mentors exploited them (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:351; Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300). Complaints about mentors not attending to their classes and only giving the textbook to show the pre-service teachers where they should carry on with a lesson have been made (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:351). Pre-service teachers felt that while they

were still in a learning capacity they needed their mentors' ongoing support (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:351).

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300) revealed that mentor teachers perceived pre-service teachers as 'relief teachers' to make their workload lighter. In addition, pre-service teachers feel that mentors are evading their teaching responsibility when they (mentees) are requested to present a lesson which they did not develop, and also find it difficult to present someone else's ideas (Bradbury and Koballa, 2008:2139).

Mentee exploitation could be a result of mentor teachers not always being aware of their expected role as mentors (Hamel and Fischer, 2011:439). Pre-service teachers complained that mentors being unaware of what is expected of the pre-service teachers resulted in these mentees being given a workload that does not allow them to concentrate on other assignments required by the university (Hamel and Fischer, 2011:439). Added to this, pre-service teachers wanted mentors to notify them in advance if they wanted them to perform a particular task. In this regard Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300) propose that clear guidelines should be defined in respect of pre-service teachers' workload. Dissatisfaction in the mentoring relationship can occur when mentors exploit the mentees (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:355).

#### **3.7.4. Lack of constructive feedback**

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:305) found that most of the mentors in their study did not provide professional advice to pre-service teachers under their guidance, for example demonstrating lesson presentations, providing opportunities to venture new ideas and providing feedback on their attempts. Similar findings were reported by Kardos and Johnson (2008:10) who revealed, in their study, that mentors did not observe the mentees and had few discussions regarding managing a classroom, lesson planning and lesson presentation which resulted in minimal feedback received by the mentees. The need for feedback from mentor teachers is for the pre-service teachers to determine if their ideas on how to teach are plausible before they embark on a lesson presentation (Bradbury and Koballa, 2008:2138).

Whilst it was found that school-based mentors do provide feedback, the problem pre-service teachers faced was the lack of constructive feedback provided by teachers (Nillas, 2010:83). According to Nillas (2010:71) the pre-service teachers indicated that the school-based mentor provided feedback that was "inconsistent and unspecific". For example a pre-service

teacher wanted the mentor to give more than just a “good job” comment that s/he received for a lesson. The pre-service teachers felt that constructive feedback provided by the school-based mentor will positively influence their professional growth (Nillas, 2010:83). Pre-service teachers are motivated when they receive ongoing feedback from their mentors (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:351).

According to Hamel and Fischer (2011:438) pre-service teachers indicated that their mentors were enthusiastic about giving assistance with lesson planning but hardly gave feedback. The mentors on the other hand revealed that they were confused about the extent of the feedback that should be given to the pre-service teachers and revealed that time constraints is a factor that hinders “thoughtful and sustained feedback”. Another factor influencing feedback was indicated in a study conducted by Wilmore and Bratlien (2005:33), who found that an overwhelming number of pre-service teachers cited that their mentors were unable to give constructive feedback and attributed this factor to their mentors being unqualified to give mentoring. Hamel and Fischer (2011:439) found that even experienced mentor teachers are unclear about the type of feedback that should be given to pre-service teachers to ensure that they improve their teaching skills.

#### **3.7.5. Mentor distrust**

Kiggundu and Nayimuli, (2009:356) found that mentors would not allow student teachers to take over their classes as they felt that the student teachers were wasting time, since the mentors had to complete the syllabus before the academic year ended. This was a clear indication that the mentors had trust issues with the pre-service teachers and viewed the pre-service teachers as incompetent to teach. Consequently, the student teachers felt demoralised and incompetent. The foregoing feelings could have a detrimental effect on the pre-service teachers’ view of the teaching profession.

A number of challenges in the literature were reviewed to gain an understanding of pre-service teachers’ interactions with their school-based mentors during teaching practice. However, challenges pertinent to learning to teach in the South African context, which could influence the mentoring of pre-service teachers, were also reviewed to identify the type of mentor assistance pre-service teachers require, and that need to be addressed by Higher Education Institutions. The section below will discuss this category.

### **3.8. Challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach in South Africa**

South Africa is considered to be a developing country where there is great disparity between the socio-economic status of citizens (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:580). Morrow (2007:99) argues strongly that the seven roles of teachers outlined in the Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators pay no attention to the realities which most South African teachers face while working in previously disadvantaged communities, as there is a major difference between those teachers who work in schools which function efficiently and those that do not. In South Africa previously disadvantaged schools experience overcrowded classes and inadequate resources (Morrow, 2007:32). The concern raised by Kardos and Johnson (2008:2) is that previously disadvantaged schools or poverty-stricken schools experience difficulty attracting and retaining good teachers. According to Morrow (2007:56), most previously disadvantaged schools experience chronic teacher absenteeism, timetables that are inefficiently run and teacher-centred learning. Morrow (2007:96) gave the following summary of the conditions most South African teachers attempt to teach in:

The HIV prevalence rates, the Poverty Index, the levels of adult illiteracy and widespread unemployment, the lack of functioning and maintained school buildings and equipment, the failure of the delivery of stationery and books, the breakdown of school feeding schemes, the increasing linguistic and other diversities of learners, never mind the levels of gang-related activities, are not merely statistical abstractions to be included in annual reports of government departments. They are indicators of harsh and inescapable realities faced by many schoolteachers on a daily basis. The miracle is that any teaching takes place at all.

It must be noted that not all previously disadvantaged schools are considered to be dysfunctional. However, there are strong arguments in the literature that dysfunctional schools should be avoided as sites for mentoring pre-service teachers.

#### **3.8.1. Dysfunctional schools**

A concern raised by Ficke, Horak, Meyer and Van Lingen (2008:72) is that some teachers at dysfunctional schools who participated as mentors were sometimes unsure what their duties as teachers entailed. They state that these teachers did their schooling at dysfunctional schools and were often not exposed to good role models of teaching. The danger of this phenomenon is that these teachers are often incapable of assisting mentees as they were not exposed to schools which had good practice.

The danger of schools that are dysfunctional with respect to teaching and learning are that they may demoralise pre-service teachers and lead them to reconsider their choice of becoming a teacher. Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113) warn that it may be good for pre-

service teachers to be exposed to a school that functions well but could paint a picture of “unrealistic expectation of the profession”. It would therefore be ideal for pre-service teachers to do their teaching practice at schools that are not necessarily well-resourced but have good teachers. However, HEI'S should play a pivotal role in placing students.

### **3.8.2. Language barrier**

South Africa has eleven national languages. However, the languages of instruction at schools and universities are exclusively Afrikaans and English (Joubert, 2010:39). The language Policy and Plan for South Africa strongly advocates for learners to learn in their mother tongue. Despite the aforementioned policy the Education Department in South Africa encourages teaching in English, a language that is often not the home language of most learners (Adams and Sewry, 2010:1). A study by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:262) showed that a large number of learners are attending schools that exclusively teach in English, even though it was their second language.

The educators located in the Western Cape who participated in the study conducted by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:259) reported that 87,5% of their learners had isi-Xhosa as a first language followed by Afrikaans and other languages. According to O'Connor and Geiger (2009:259) second language English learners experience academic challenges, for example having to repeat a grade or proceeding to the next grade without the required knowledge of the previous grade's work. Furthermore teachers are expected to provide additional time to learners who are unable to keep up with the syllabus due to their language barrier (O'Connor and Geiger, 2009:260).

Teachers lack training to deal with learners who are second language English speakers and often these teachers have limited English proficiency to teach learners (Adams and Sewry, 2010:2). Teachers expressed the need for formal training to teach learners who are second language English speakers as learning through their own attempts proved to be unsuccessful (O'Connor and Geiger, 2009:264). Hence O'Connor and Geiger (2009:265) recommend that both in-service and pre-service teachers in the Western Cape are provided with training in second language acquisition, bilingualism and isiXhosa language.

### **3.8.3. Classroom management**

Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:425) contend that pre-service teachers are often ill-equipped to deal with the realities of classroom practice. Obstacles facing pre-service teachers during teaching practice could be their inability to cope with situations that are not familiar to them, in particular classroom management. This view is supported by Nillas (2010:75) who argues that challenges linked to classroom management “generally rank very high on difficulty for pre-service teachers”.

Heeralal and Bayaga (2011:102) recently conducted a study with final year B Ed and PGCE pre-service teachers at a South African university and found that a major concern for the pre-service teachers was the learners’ behaviour in the classroom. Most of the pre-service teachers complained about the learners’ disinterest for what was happening in the classroom. Similar findings were that the learners were not co-operative, for example, they were disruptive in class and did not actively engage in classroom activities (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:350). Nillas (2010:84) believes that pre-service teachers experience difficulty with classroom management due to the lack of realistic situations provided at university prior to teaching practice.

### **3.8.4. Pre-service teachers choose own placement**

Another problematic aspect found in the literature regarding teaching practice is that pre-service teachers tend to focus more on the logistical aspect of teaching practice than the quality aspect of teaching practice. For example, in a study conducted by Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113) students chose schools that were close to where they live as opposed to a school that would provide them with a teaching practice experience where they could learn well and that might be supportive. It was evident, as shown by these researchers that the pre-service teachers were not concerned about the quality of the school and the type of mentor assistance that would be provided. This concern was also raised in the report of the South African Higher Education Council (2010:94) that pre-service teachers are allowed to choose their own placements without the guidance of the tertiary institution. Karel and Stead (2011:406) on the other hand are in favour of students taking responsibility of finding a mentor that is a professional role model and shares similar interests as ‘personal chemistry is important for a good mentoring relationship’. In the South African context it is evident that the focus for many pre-service teachers is the location of the school as opposed to the quality of the mentoring.



### **3.8.5. The effects of Outcomes-based curriculum on teaching Accounting**

The South African school curriculum has moved towards a more learner-centred approach since the introduction and implementation of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the institution of Curriculum 2005 in 1997 (Joubert, 2010:1). The major aim of the implementation of Curriculum 2005 was to address the inequalities that existed in education during the apartheid era and to bridge the disparities between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged schools (Joubert, 2010:2).

In a report released to review the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2009:39), it stated that there is an enormous gap in the knowledge required for Grade 10 than what is currently provided in Grade 9 specifically for the subject Accounting. The transition to Accounting in Grade 10 was perceived as problematic due to the fact that in the Senior Phase the subject is grouped with two other subjects namely Business Studies and Economics. It was found that the teachers who offer the subject Economics Management and Science (EMS) are not adequately trained to teach all three subjects and therefore concentrated on the subject they know best. Moreover the learning area EMS in the Senior Phase content aims for “breadth rather than depth, resulting in inadequate preparation” to specialize in Grade 10 Accounting (Department of Education, 2009:39).

Schreuder (2009:99), who conducted an empirical study on The Role of Economic and Management Science in preparing learners for Accounting in Grade 10, identified three challenges with regard to the transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10. Firstly, teachers who are unqualified to teach Accounting often neglect to teach the subject and tend to focus more on Economics and Business Studies. Secondly, all of the EMS teachers who participated in the study revealed that time allocated for Accounting is insufficient “to do justice to the content they need to address” (Schreuder, 2009:99). Lastly, Grade 10 Accounting teachers need to dedicate a term to teach the learners the basics of Accounting before the Grade 10 syllabus can commence. Teachers are therefore compelled to offer additional classes after school to complete the Grade 10 Accounting syllabus. The foregoing challenges therefore put strain on the teachers as Accounting is a cumulative process and each new piece of information is added to what the learners already are required to know about the topic.

### **3.9. Summary**

The review of related literature focused on mentoring as a tool for professional development. The roles of a mentor and mentee, as well as an overview of the mentoring relationship were discussed. Mentoring in the context of teaching practice was highlighted and the role of Higher Education Institutions in mentoring pre-service teachers and the implications of structuring a mentoring programme were emphasised. In the final section of the chapter, the challenges pre-service teachers face with school-based mentors and challenges that learning to teach in South Africa pose were investigated. While the literature review has given perspectives on mentoring of pre-service teachers, the next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the research design and methods.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In the preceding chapter the review of related literature was presented. This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology. A detailed overview is provided of the research design followed by a review of qualitative research methodology. Within this methodology, a case study research approach is explained. The data collection and sampling methods is then presented. This is followed by a background of the Accounting pre-service teachers and their respective school-based mentors. The final section of this chapter provides a discussion of the data analysis, validity and reliability issues related to the study.

#### **4.2. Research Design**

The major aim of a research design is to assist the researcher to collect and analyse evidence that addresses the research questions, hence a research design deals with a “logical problem and not a logistical problem” (Yin, 2009:27). Furthermore, a research design provides a detailed explanation of planned activities within a research project (Tuckman, 1994:16). This study aims to provide explicit details using substantial evidence from the data collected on the Accounting pre-service teachers’ challenges in learning to teach Accounting during their internship and, furthermore, how their school-based mentors responded to these challenges.

This study was located in an interpretivist research paradigm. The purpose of research in an interpretivist paradigm is to develop knowledge through interpretation and describing a particular phenomenon of the world in an attempt to share meanings with other researchers or stakeholders (Bassey, 1999:44). Reality in an interpretivist paradigm exists and is understood to be “fallible because of humans’ imperfections” (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:20). Simons (2009:35) states that the primary values of the interpretivist paradigm are to understand a particular phenomenon and the personal experiences of the participants under study. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2005:20) provide the following description for interpretive theory.

Knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reason, meaning making and self-understanding. Interpretivist knowledge is dispersed and distributed. The researcher has to look at different places and at different things in order to understand a phenomenon. That is why interpretivist

research is a communal process, informed by participating practitioners and scrutinised and/or endorsed by others.

In an interpretivist research paradigm concepts of what is real differ from person to person, thus the researcher goes into the field and observes what is 'out there' in order to make sense of individuals' lived experiences (Bassey, 1999:43). In an interpretivist paradigm the researcher accepts that asking continuous questions or through observation they could change the situations studied (Bassey, 1999:43). Interpretivist researchers see themselves as possible variables in a study and thus often use personal pronouns when they write their report (Bassey, 1999:43).

The interpretivist researcher opposes the positivist's notion that the world can be understood in general terms regarding human actions (Bassey, 1999:43). The positivist paradigm argues, on the one hand, that the world operates by laws of cause and effect, but post-positivist research, on the other hand, argues that the content of data can better clarify details of reality even though it does not directly measure the reality under consideration (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:17). Moreover, post-positivist research captures feelings of the participants under study which is indicative of the aforementioned paradigm. In an interpretivist framework the researcher understands that errors can occur in observation and that all theories can be revised as opposed to positivist research that believes that the purpose of science is to reveal the truth. The interpretivist believes that the purpose of science is to constantly improve the realities they are facing even though the aforementioned notion can never be achieved (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:20). In light of the foregoing notions provided by several researchers on the aims of using an interpretivist paradigm, the researcher concurs with Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2005:16) who believe that an interpretivist framework should "presuppose a discursive qualitative approach". Hence a brief overview relevant to this paradigm is offered below.

#### **4.2.1. Qualitative research methodology**

The objective of qualitative research is to understand the behaviour and experiences of humans in order to grasp a series of happenings by which humans construct meaning and to provide details of what those meanings are (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:38). A strength of qualitative research as noted by Gillham (2000:10) is that it enables the researcher to clarify the data and yield possible explanations for human behaviour or actions. A major concern for qualitative researchers is the participants' perspectives on their lived experiences and meanings they attach to their experiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:7). In this study the aim

is to develop an understanding of the pre-service Accounting teachers' challenges while learning to teach in a mentoring context.

Qualitative research is characterized as a process where the researcher and the participants under study have discussions in order to understand or explore the phenomena of the inquiry (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:7). Gillham (2000:11) points out that emotional behaviour of individuals is to some degree determined by its context. Therefore, if the researcher wants to understand people in their everyday lives they should be studied in a real-life context to ascertain how they operate. Qualitative researchers are concerned with context and therefore go to the setting in which the study is rooted (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:4). Added to this, qualitative researchers understand that people's actions are best understood when they are observed in a setting where actions happen (Lave and Wenger, 1991:35).

A qualitative research design is flexible, meaning that the qualitative researcher conducts the study with a plan formulated as a potential method of addressing the research questions. However, the researchers know that their initial plan can change as they proceed in a study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:49). Qualitative methods enable the researcher to explore situations where there is a dearth of information and to investigate a case from the inside, meaning to observe a particular phenomenon from the participants' perspective (Gillham, 2000:11). In a qualitative study the researcher wants to understand and explain an inquiry by using evidence from the data collected and from literature reviewed of what the phenomenon of the study entails (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:3/4).

Qualitative methods are descriptive as the researcher forms an opinion of data that were already collected (Gillham, 2000:10). The kind of data collected in a qualitative study concentrates mainly on what individuals tell the researcher about what they do which thus enables the researcher to grasp the meaning of the situation of the individual (Gillham, 2000:10). Bogdan and Biklen (1998:6) postulate that the direction in which the researcher journeys will reveal itself after data has been collected and after spending time with the participants.

#### **4.2.2. Case study research**

A case study is an investigation of single or multiple units of human actions and behaviour in contemporary real life context (Gillham, 2000:1). Yin (2009:18) provides a detailed twofold definition of a case study;

It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

The aim of case study research is to provide specific details of a particular situation to inform practice, establish the worth of the case and to add to the body of knowledge of the topic under study (Simons, 2009:24). Case study research is suitable for studying phenomena linked to humans to establish the meaning of living in the real world (Gillham, 2000:2). Simons (2009:61) gives three pivotal explanations why studies of humans within a case are prominent. Firstly, to establish an understanding of policies and programmes, the researcher must observe and interview the individuals who act on these policies within a specific programme. Secondly, case study research is a process that explores how people interact with each other thus enabling the researcher to capture the real life experiences of people in a particular programme. Thirdly, the interpretation of the lived experiences of humans within a programme in a particular social context will assist the researcher to grasp how these social factors affect the individuals who are studied in the case.

A case study is conducted when a researcher has limited control over the current situation of the participants in the study (Yin, 2009:13). This study fits with this foregoing notion as the researcher had limited control over the type of mentoring the Accounting pre-service teachers received at their respective schools. Case studies, however, allow the researcher to interact with the participants during the course of the research process and, moreover, to become a self-reflexive practitioner allowing the researchers to immerse themselves in the data to better understand it (Simons, 2009:23). It is imperative that case study researchers maintain "an open mind", to keep on seeking for data and to continuously review the analysis until the data makes sense (Gillham, 2000:13). Gillham (2000:18) further suggests that the case study researcher starts by collecting data first and maintains an open mind. For example, as a researcher educator I know what teaching entails but what I need to understand is that I am studying people of different social and educational backgrounds who might not perceive teaching the way I do.

It is important to note in a case study why individuals act in a particular way in certain situations and the rationale behind the way they think (Simons, 2009:70). To take cognisance of this notion, Simons (2009:70) suggests the researcher explores the history and the social context of individuals in the study to assist the researcher interpret the meaning and influence of their purposes and actions. Simons (2009:70) warns that although it is important

to recognize the history and social context of individuals in a case, the researcher should be careful not to always link peoples' previous lived experiences and their current actions in case study research. It is therefore important for the researcher to choose relevant information regarding the individual's history within the context of the case.

Yin (2009:11) firmly believes that case study is the methodology of choice when investigating people in their real life context and further states that unlike examining history, evidence such as direct observation and interviews of the participants involved is included in the study. Using qualitative methods to do case studies will give the researcher the opportunity to do an in-depth study of complex programmes and policies (Simons, 2009:23). Case study methods give the researcher an opportunity to capture the "holistic and meaningful characteristic" of the realities of peoples' everyday lives (Yin, 2009:4).

Conducting case study research is challenging and to produce an exemplary case study takes more than implementing particular methods. Yin (2009:185) describes five characteristics of an exemplary case study:

- ❖ **The case study must be significant** – To produce a case study of a particular significance is often not possible for researchers if resources are limited and if the topic is not considered important. A case study would be perceived as exemplary if it is unique, of national importance and captures the interest of the public (Yin, 2009:185).
- ❖ **The case study must be complete** – There are three ways to characterize if a study is "complete". Firstly, ensuring that the difference between the phenomenon under study and the related context are explained meticulously. Secondly, the researcher must display thorough collection of evidence and this must be illustrated by convincing the reader that important data have not been overlooked by the researcher. Lastly, a case study will not be seen as complete if the researcher faced time constraints. Instead it is best if the researcher plans the design at the start of the study to ensure that the research is completed in the specific timeframe given (Yin, 2009:186).
- ❖ **The case study must consider alternative perspectives** – The case study researcher should carefully scrutinize the data from the perspectives of more than one stakeholder to avoid a "one-sided" case. To ensure an adequate representation of various perspectives of stakeholders the researcher must find evidence in the data that strongly questions the propositions of the case study.
- ❖ **The case study must display sufficient evidence** – To present evidence that is

neutral to the reader the case study must contain data that proves the theory is true and in certain cases questionable. Moreover the researcher needs to convince the reader that an in-depth inquiry was done in the fieldwork and was immersed in the cases to be studied (Yin, 2009:189).

- ❖ **The case study must be composed in an engaging manner** – To produce an engaging case study, the researcher must be passionate about the research and be willing to convey the findings of the study to a broad audience (Yin, 2009:190).

Case study research is perceived as the ultimate method to consider if the case study encompasses the phenomenon and its related context and reveals applicable information pertaining to the case (Yin, 2009:56). This inquiry is based on Yin's notion in that mentoring is the phenomenon that encompasses mentoring Accounting pre-service teachers and understanding how they learn to teach during teaching practice.

#### **4.2.3. Research methods**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a number of relevant research methods to answer the research questions and objectives of the study. A detailed discussion of each method is given in this section.

##### **4.2.3.1. Personal Reflection Journals**

The B Ed:FET fourth year Accounting pre-service teachers were requested to complete a reflection journal of their overall teaching experiences of Accounting on a weekly basis, excluding weeks where full-scale examinations would take place. These journals were sent to the researcher by e-mail on a weekly basis. Pre-service teachers' reflection journals provided insights on their feelings and actions and how they learned to teach Accounting (Mills, 2007:31). Furthermore, reflection journals provided ongoing information of the pre-service teachers' interactions with their Accounting school-based mentors.

A structured questionnaire (see appendix B) was provided to guide the pre-service teachers with their reflections before they embarked on their teaching practice internship. According to Gillham (2000:79) the problem with questionnaires is that people do not complete them properly resulting in data that lacks quality. The main problem encountered with the questionnaire was that, in some cases, the pre-service teachers did not provide in-depth information of their challenges and how their mentors responded to these challenges. When the researcher needed to clarify a response to a question, she followed an issue that was not



explicitly explained. An advantage of using e-mail to access information from your participants is that data is already transcribed (Mills, 2007:67). The advantages of using E-mail gave the researcher an opportunity to stay informed about the events the pre-service teachers were experiencing on a weekly basis related to teaching Accounting.

#### **4.2.3.2. Unstructured Interviews**

An unstructured interview is used as a method to allow participants to respond in ways they feel comfortable (Tuckman, 1994:218). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1994:87), the purpose of unstructured interviews is to create a flow of information gathered from participants that allows for more clarity on particular issues under discussion. Unstructured interviews give the researcher an opportunity to introduce additional questions while conducting the interview (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:86). Unstructured interviews were helpful, as the researcher was able to formulate questions and probe the participants as the interviews progressed.

To prepare an interview, careful consideration should be made regarding the times suitable for the interviewees even if this does not fit into the researcher's plans (Bell, 1987:76). The Accounting pre-service teachers were requested to fax their school timetable in order to arrange a time that was both suitable for them and the researcher. The pre-service teachers were sent messages via a cellular phone at least a week in advance to confirm visits to their respective schools. In certain cases the pre-service teachers were unable to give a fixed time for interviews, for example, the school had restructured their timetables or in some cases the times allocated for teaching periods were not fixed.

Conducting personal interviews enables the interviewee to focus on what the participants say and observe their body language (Mcburney, 1994:199). Observing the participants' body language can give the researcher an indication of any misunderstandings of the context of a question and provide explanations in this regard. Mcburney (1994:199) critiques personal interviews by stating that they could prompt the interviewee to convey information that the interviewer wants to hear. To avoid this, the researcher used multiple research methods to validate interviews. A quiet place was requested to conduct interviews. A tape recorder was purchased to ensure that it was always on hand for interviews. Recording the interviews was useful to check if the verbatim quotations of the participants were accurate (Bell, 1987:75).

Conducting an interview requires the listener to have qualities such as empathy, understanding, sympathy and patience (Altricher, Feldman, Posch and Somekh; 2008:104).

In this study the researcher adhered to Yin's (2009:69) advice for the required skills of a case study researcher. During fieldwork the researcher focused on asking relevant questions to the pre-service teachers and their school-based mentors to ensure that she interpreted correctly what they were saying at the time. It was difficult for the researcher to be a good listener at times during the interviews as she did have preconceived ideas of what the skills of an Accounting pre-service teacher should be due to her position as a subject lecturer in Accounting. To overcome this the researcher gave the participants an opportunity to express how they felt about their situation at the school. Furthermore, when the researcher was unable to interview the school-based mentor or the pre-service teacher was unable to accommodate her pending visit, she would calmly request for a time that was more suitable for the participant, even though this might disrupt her plans.

Due to timetabling constraints, the researcher, at certain times, was unable to interview the Accounting mentors after interviewing the pre-service Accounting teachers. Arrangements were therefore made with the mentors to interview them by telephone at a time that suited them best. According to Gillham (2000:77), telephone interviews are suitable if the sample is small and you are familiar with participants. The aims of the interviews were to establish the progress and overall performance of the Accounting pre-service teachers. Keeping the conversation going over the telephone was particularly difficult because the researcher was unable to observe the school-based mentor's body language and the impersonal approach was not always desirable.

#### **4.2.3.3. Focus Group Interview**

A focus group interview is a useful method when the interaction of a group of people can develop a mutual understanding of the questions posed by the researcher (Mills, 2007:66). For the purpose of this study two focus group interviews were conducted with the pre-service teachers. The first focus group interview was conducted midway through the Accounting pre-service teachers' teaching practice internship and the second focus group interview was held at the end. The aims of conducting two focus group interviews were twofold. Firstly, what were the pre-service teachers' overall challenges while learning to teach Accounting and secondly to ascertain how the school-based mentors were responding to their challenges.

To prepare for the focus group interviews procedures advised by Bell (1987:75) were followed. Electronic mail and cellular phone messaging were used to invite the pre-service teachers to participate in a focus group interview. A structured interview schedule (see

appendix C) was used to maintain focus on the important issues as recommended by Mills (2006:66). All the focus group interviews were conducted at the University.

During the focus group interviews probes were used to clarify answers (Mcburney, 1994:199). Verbal responses were audio recorded and field notes were written (Mcburney, 1994:199). Each participant in the group was given an opportunity to answer the questions to avoid dominance by individual participants as suggested by Mills (2007:66).

### **4.3. Site Selection**

A site is selected according to the place where the participants of a research study are located (Macmillan and Schumacher, 1993:13). The fourth year pre-service teachers of the B Ed:FET programme are given permission by the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences to find a school that offers their major subjects (Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, Mathematics and Computer Technology) and to provide the name of that particular school to the Teaching Practice Co-ordinator. A letter is sent to that particular school to request permission from the Principal of the school for the pre-service teacher to do their six months teaching practice internship (April – September). When the school gives the pre-service teacher permission, the subject lecturers are informed where the student will be doing his/her internship. The researcher therefore had no control over where the fourth year Accounting pre-service teachers would be located, but informed them during lectures, to choose a school where the mentors would be willing to assist them as well as a school that was functional to ensure that these pre-service teachers would learn effectively while teaching.

### **4.4. Gaining Access**

The objective of doing fieldwork is to encourage participants to communicate about their everyday life in an environment where they feel comfortable and, in this way, the researcher is able to learn how participants think and act in a particular situation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:73). The first step in conducting fieldwork is to get the authority to conduct the study. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:11) advise the researcher to communicate openly to the people involved in a study regarding your interest and request their cooperation to willingly participate in the study. Permission from Western Cape Education Department and the University to conduct the study at public schools did not ensure the co-operation of the potential participants. During Accounting lectures with the fourth year pre-service teachers, the researcher had lengthy discussions about the purpose of the study and how the study might benefit them. The pre-service teachers raised a number of concerns, for example, if

they would be required to do more assignments as opposed to their other subject majors and what might happen if their Accounting mentors were not willing to participate in the study. Their concerns were relevant and the researcher addressed these as follows. The reflection journal was integrated as part of the Accounting subject didactics programme assessment. To address the other concern regarding the willingness of the mentors, a letter was provided for the pre-service teachers to inform the mentors of the purpose of the study. For the mentors who were sceptical, a personal visit by the researcher was arranged to address their concerns.

Simons (2009:40) suggests that the researcher explains to the participants the purposes of the study and how the study can benefit their own personal development, but warns not to promise unrealistic expectations that cannot be achieved by the participants. In light of this suggestion, an Accounting mentoring orientation workshop was arranged to ensure that all the participants were informed of their role expectations as mentor and mentee during the six months teaching practice internship. The data of the pilot study assisted the researcher to plan the workshop. An invitation via fax was extended to all the mentors two weeks prior to the mentorship workshop. The invitation was addressed to the mentors and their respective principals to ensure that school management was informed of the workshop.

The pre-service teachers' teaching practice placement was only finalised two weeks prior to teaching practice, hence the reason for giving the school-based mentors an invitation two weeks before the pre-service teachers embarked on teaching practice. The schools were contacted telephonically to confirm that the mentors received the invitation. To finalise the workshop attendance, the researcher phoned the schools and requested to speak to the mentors. This proved to be challenging as the mentors were busy with their teaching duties. Two of the six mentors responded positively, two mentors stated they had already made plans for their vacation, one mentor stated that she would respond at a later stage and another mentor was on maternity leave. The mentors who were unable to attend the workshop were provided orientation of their role expectation as mentor at their respective schools. All the mentors who could not attend the workshop agreed to this. One mentor who indicated that he would attend the workshop conveyed to the researcher two days before the mentoring orientation workshop that he was unable to attend. Utilizing the vacation to host a mentorship workshop was the only option the researcher had due to a policy of the Western Cape Education Department that no workshops should be held during school hours and the first week of the school holidays. Due to the nature of the workshop, hosting it after school would not prove to be effective as the minimum time required for the workshop was four hours. Therefore hosting a workshop from 15h00-19h00 would frustrate the teachers as they

already started their work day at 08h00. Consequently all the pre-service teachers and only one mentor were present at this workshop.

#### **4.5. Sampling Design**

Tuckman (1994:238) refers to the population of a research study as a group of individuals from whom information is obtained to consider the facts and draw conclusions regarding the study under investigation. The sample of this study consisted of six Accounting pre-service teachers and six Accounting mentors. Qualitative researchers perceive the sampling process as an ongoing development executed for a specific purpose as opposed to an unchanging process (Mcmillan and Schumacher, 1993:382). Hence exploring how Accounting pre-service teachers learn to teach in a mentoring context is an ongoing process consisting of a sample of B Ed:FET Accounting pre-service teachers that will extend beyond this study.

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study. Mcburney (1994:203) postulates that a problem researchers could face with purposive sampling is that the incorrect choice of participants can influence the data negatively. The researcher therefore focused on Accounting as a 'vehicle' to guide the choice of sampling to explore how pre-service teachers learn to teach Accounting. All the participants were directly involved in learning and teaching Accounting.

Tuckman (1994:131) believes restricting the number of individuals in a population could limit the information obtained from the participants thus limiting the conclusions only to a specific group, so that the researcher is unable to generalize the conclusions to other groups. Mcmillan and Schumacher (1993:382), alternatively, argue that a purposeful sample size appears to be small in comparison to a sample size necessary for representativeness to generalize to a bigger population. Moreover, a qualitative inquiry is dependent on the 'information-richness of the case' and the ability of the researcher to analyze and scientifically present the data as to the size of the sample. The researcher concurs with Mcmillan and Schumacher (1993:382) as the focus of this study was to delve deep into the lived experiences of pre-service teachers learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring and to develop an understanding of the challenges they faced.

##### **4.5.1. Background of the participants**

In this study, six pre-service teachers and their respective Accounting school-based mentors participated. A brief background of each pre-service teacher and their respective school-

based mentor is provided. Background information of the pre-service teachers was obtained using an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix D). Background information of the school-based mentors was obtained during unstructured interviews. Pseudonyms were used for both pre-service teachers and school-based mentor teachers.

#### **4.5.1.1. Neo and Mr Niemandt**

Neo was born in the Eastern Cape. He described himself as coming from a poor family background and, despite his parents' low educational level, Neo explained that they encouraged him to study. With regard to his secondary schooling, he admitted struggling with Accounting in grade 10 and attributed his difficulty with the subject to his Accounting teacher's poor content knowledge. However, things changed in Grade 11 because his Accounting teacher was knowledgeable and could provide detailed answers to his questions. He iterated that his experience with Accounting at tertiary level was good as a result of attending classes regularly, completing homework assignments and realising where his mistakes lay.

Neo registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2007 as a first year student. He commented that his relationship with his previous Accounting mentors during his prior teaching practice sessions was not fruitful because the mentors were reluctant to allow him to teach their classes independently. In response to the Accounting mentorship workshop introduced before the internship, Neo felt that he was now better equipped to work with his school-based mentor and university based mentor. Mr Niemandt, Neo's mentor, who attended the mentoring workshop, was of the opinion that the workshop informed him of his role as mentor and the details of the B Ed:FET Accounting programme. In addition he expressed that he would make a concerted effort by having regular meetings with Neo to ensure that Neo was comfortable learning to teach at the school.

Neo did his teaching practice at a school in Khayelitsha, which is located on the outskirts of Cape Town. English was the medium of instruction even though most of the learners were first language Isi-Xhosa speakers. The majority of the learners come from poor backgrounds and according to Mr Niemandt the school has a major problem with in-school violence. Mr Niemandt said he was threatened numerous times by learners wishing to physically harm him when he reprimanded them. The school had security guards at the gates and visitors had to sign a register before they were allowed access into the school. Lastly, Mr Niemandt had thirteen years' experience teaching Accounting.

#### **4.5.1.2. Lara and Mr Lucas**

Lara was born in the Eastern Cape. She chose Accounting at school because she disliked the other subjects that were offered. Lara discovered that she enjoyed Accounting when she achieved above average marks in her assessment tasks at school. She matriculated in 2005. Lara registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2007 as a first year student. According to Lara studying Accounting at tertiary level was a challenge. She was of the opinion that she knew Accounting well, but studying it at university proved otherwise.

Lara attended the Accounting workshop which was hosted prior to the six months teaching practice internship. After the workshop she related that she was aware of her role as mentee and her mentor's role. She also particularly enjoyed the discussion and suggestions that were made in the workshop regarding mentoring. Her mentor, Mr Lucas, indicated that he would attend the Accounting mentorship workshop but unfortunately he did not. I therefore arranged to visit him at the start of Lara's internship to provide him with on-site training of his role as mentor which was discussed in the Accounting mentorship workshop.

Lara did her teaching practice internship at a previously advantaged school located in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. The school is well resourced and managed. Her mentor, Mr Lucas, had been in the teaching profession for fourteen years.

#### **4.5.1.3. Zara and Mrs Barnes**

Zara was born in the Western Cape Province. According to Zara she developed a passion for Accounting at school because her Grade 8 teacher encouraged the learners to familiarise themselves with the terminology related to Accounting. In addition, the Accounting teachers at that particular school exchanged classes to teach a topic in Accounting that they "were good at" as stated by Zara. She was of the opinion that the teachers taught the subject to the best of their ability, and that is why she developed a passion for Accounting. Zara matriculated in 2005.

Zara registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2006 as a first year student. She was positive regarding the Accounting mentorship programme and stated that she learnt to have a positive attitude towards her mentors and to learn from them. At the time of the workshop, Zara had not met with her Accounting school-based mentor. During the workshop Zara enquired if she was compelled to have an Accounting school-based mentor during teaching practice.

Zara did her teaching practice internship at a previously disadvantaged school located in Du Noon, Milnerton. Several attempts by the researcher to meet her mentor during the first term of her internship, was unsuccessful. The researcher finally met Zara's mentor, Mrs Barnes during the second term of her internship. Mrs Barnes was however not the mentor who assisted Zara during the first term of her internship. Mrs Barnes had four years' experience as a high school teacher. She received on-site training for her role expectations as mentor.

#### **4.5.1.4. Ally and Mrs Ashton**

Ally was born in the Western Cape Province. According to Ally studying Accounting in Grade 10 was difficult due to the lack of Accounting taught and learnt in Grade 9. Fortunately her mother motivated her to do Accounting and, as a result, she persevered to study the subject up to matriculation level. Ally matriculated in 2006. She registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2007 as a first year student. She related that she enjoyed doing Accounting at first year level but that at second year level she had struggled in Accounting due to her absenteeism because of personal reasons. Nonetheless, she said she would like to be a teacher who was "successful in her career".

Ally stated that attending the Accounting mentorship workshop informed her of her responsibilities as mentee. Added to this she indicated that she was willing to learn from her mentor. Ally's mentor, Mrs Ashton, was unable to attend the Accounting mentorship workshop due to prior engagements. The researcher arranged an appointment to provide on-site orientation to the role expectations of the mentor and provided her with a manual which she could refer to at a later stage.

Ally did her teaching practice internship at a previously disadvantaged school located in a township. The school is classified as a Focus School, meaning that the school specializes mainly in commercial subjects such as Accounting, Economics and Business Studies. Her mentor, Mrs Ashton, had twenty years of teaching experience.

#### **4.5.1.5. Tanya and Mrs Teale**

Tanya was born in the Western Cape Province. She started Accounting at Grade 11 and described her experiences studying Accounting at school level as complex due to the fact that she did not do Accounting in Grade 10. Tanya expressed that she tried her best to pass Accounting at school level and her hard work paid off. She matriculated in 2004. Tanya



registered for the B Ed:FET programme in 2005 as a first year student. According to Tanya her encounter with Accounting during her first year at tertiary level was fairly manageable and she passed the subject. However, when she did second and third year, Accounting became more difficult to grasp. Her goal is to be the best Accounting teacher and to go and teach in her own community to, *“change the minds of learners who think that Accounting is only for clever people”*.

Tanya attended the Accounting workshop which was hosted before the six months teaching practice internship and she gave feedback at the end of the workshop. She expressed that she was now aware of her role expectation as mentee and the role of the mentor. Tanya indicated that she was now aware that, on the one hand she should ask for assistance when necessary and, on the other hand, be willing to provide assistance to the school. At the time of the workshop, Tanya’s Accounting mentor, Mrs Teale, was not allocated as her mentor. The name of another Accounting mentor was provided by the school and she conveyed that she was unavailable to attend the workshop. Subsequently, when Tanya started her internship at that particular school, this mentor resigned. The researcher met with Mrs Teale at the start of Tanya’s internship to provide her with the Accounting mentorship manual and gave her on-site training for her role as an Accounting mentor.

Tanya did her teaching practice internship at a previously disadvantaged school. She obtained a contract at the school as an Accounting teacher at the beginning of January 2010, before the start of her teaching practice internship in April, and received remuneration. Her Accounting mentor, Mrs Teale, had six years experience as a high school teacher.

#### **4.5.1.6. Siya, Mr Sauls and Mrs Adams**

Siya was born in the Eastern Cape Province. He attended secondary school in the Eastern Cape and said that he was keen to do Accounting. Unfortunately, he did not achieve a desirable mark in the subject at matriculation level. He attributed his low marks to the fact that Accounting teachers were scarce in the Eastern Cape. Siya registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2006 as a first year student. Siya expressed that the Accounting mentorship workshop informed him of issues related to the experiences of pre-service teachers during teaching practice and the role expectations of a mentor.

Siya did his teaching practice internship at two different previously disadvantaged schools. He stayed at his first school for approximately one month and left the school due to unforeseen circumstances. Siya missed three weeks of his teaching practice internship

before he began his internship at the second school located in Khayelitsha. His mentor at the first school will be referred to as Mr Sauls and the mentor at the second school as Mrs Adams.

The researcher met Mr Sauls during the initial stages of Siya's internship to provide him with the information pertaining to the Accounting mentorship workshop. He was briefed of his role expectations as mentor and was given a copy of the manual which was utilized in the Accounting mentorship workshop. He appeared to be excited to assist Siya. After explaining to him what the manual entailed he was of the opinion that he would also be learning. Mr Sauls had eleven years of teaching experience.

The researcher met Mrs Adams during the second term of the internship and provided her with the Accounting mentorship workshop manual and briefed her on her role expectation as mentor. She was willing to assist Siya. The researcher was unable to establish the qualifications and years of experience of Mrs Adams.

#### **4.6. Ethical considerations**

There are ethical considerations to which researchers doing fieldwork should adhere. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:44/45) recommend that informed consent be obtained where necessary and that participants' identities be protected to avoid embarrassment from data that will be revealed in the study. They also advise researchers to treat the participants with respect, to arrange times of interviews that are suitable and, more importantly, ensure that the findings are reported in a truthful manner. Informed consent from the participants will ensure that they are participating willingly and that the researcher will not exploit them in the study (Mills, 2007:104). Particularly in case study research, protecting the individuals in the cases is vital due to the fact that the research relates to current events in the lives of the participants (Yin, 2009:73). To protect the participants, Yin (2009:73) suggests that the researcher conducts the research with special effort and sensitivity, paying attention to the following aspects:

- ❖ To create an awareness of the purpose of the study amongst the potential participants and to formally request their participation in the study.
- ❖ Providing an explicit overview of what is expected of the participants and to be honest about what will be done with the data.
- ❖ Protecting the participants' right to "privacy and confidentiality".

Aligning this study with the foregoing recommendations, written permission was obtained (see appendix E) from the Western Cape Education Department to gain access to the schools between the periods April to September 2010 for research purposes. The researcher also applied for ethical clearance from the Institutional Ethics Review Board (see appendix F) of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology to obtain permission to conduct research with their pre-service teachers.

To avoid a situation of using the researcher's authority as teacher educator to compel the pre-service teachers to participate in the study, other options were given to complete assignments for assessment purposes that did not align with the study. After lengthy discussions to address their concerns all the pre-service teachers opted to participate in the study and written consent was obtained (see appendix G). As previously mentioned, for the Accounting school-based mentors that were unable to attend the Accounting mentorship workshop, a personal visit was arranged to explain the purpose of the study and, after the mentors felt comfortable to participate in the study, they provided written consent (see appendix H).

Tuckman (1994:13) maintains that the rights of people to remain anonymous and to privacy must be adhered to. The participants were assured that this ethical consideration would be adhered to. After the data collection phase, the researcher adhered to the advice by Fraenkel and Wallen (1990:29) to remove the names of the participants and to provide each participant with a pseudonym.

#### **4.7. Data Collection**

Data provides the researcher with the necessary evidence to provide the findings of the study as opposed to speculating what the findings are regarding the research problem (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:106). According to Altricher, Posch and Somekh (2008:70) data is unchangeable, thus the researcher can only interpret what has been transcribed on paper. Data collection involves three processes in qualitative research; observing participants in their own setting, communicating with the individuals under study to find meaning into why they implement a particular action and thereafter interpreting the meanings from the transcribed data (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:43). In contrast to experimental methods where data is collected in a laboratory, in qualitative research the researcher has no control over the settings where data is collected (Yin, 2009:83). It is therefore imperative for the researcher to connect the study of individuals' everyday lives with the needs of the overall data collection plan.

As a case study researcher I had little or no control over behaviour and actions of the pre-service teachers and the school-based mentors. For example, if the pre-service teachers did not adhere to the requirements of submitting the reflection journal on a weekly basis, the researcher could not compel them to do so, and likewise for the school-based mentors who did not adhere to their role expectations.

#### **4.8. Data Analysis**

Analysis is an attempt to make sense of data collected. Hitchcock and Hughes (1994:73) describe data analysis as an attempt to organize data systematically and to provide explicit details of what the case is and to explain why the case evolved in a specific way. The major aim of analysing data utilizing a qualitative approach is to establish emerging themes from the data (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:73). Hence the aim of data analysis is to understand the different parts of data by carefully examining the connections between the concepts, constructs and to establish themes in the data (Mouton, 2005:108). The researcher analysed the data parallel to analysing the conceptual framework and the literature review to establish emerging themes in the data.

Interpreting the data is a process that involves synthesising the data results in a coherent document and relating the findings to theoretical frameworks to reveal supporting evidence to substantiate the findings (Mouton, 2005:109). Simons (2009:117) provides a detailed description of what interpretation means and how it can assist the researcher with analysing data:

Interpretations mean the understanding and insight you derive from a more holistic, intuitive grasp of the data and the insights they reveal. This may take into account understandings gained from formal analysis but more emphasis is placed on retaining the holistic nature of the data through intuitive and hermeneutic processes than deductive or inductive analyses. Insights may be evoked through metaphors, imagining, reflective thinking, puzzling over incidents and observations, exploring alternative interpretations, angles of perception, seeing through different lenses and lateral thinking.

Analysis of data is to look for major themes situated in the data to develop explanations so that reasons and causes of social behaviour can be established (Hitchcock and Hughes; 1994:43). Data does not “speak for itself, the researcher does” as stated by Simons (2009:118). The data was presented using a thematic structure to relate the meaningfulness of the case.

There are several constructive stages of data analysis as proposed by Altricher, Feldman, Posch and Somekh (2008:122): (a) the first stage is to read through the data and to remember the events that surrounded the data, for example the interviews that were conducted; (b) sorting and grouping the facts; (c) presenting data that makes sense to the reader and (d) drawing appropriate conclusions to make a meaningful contribution to literature. Research questions, conceptual frameworks and methods used in a study can facilitate the process of reducing data (Simons, 2009:120). To execute the process of reducing data, the researcher chose data that is vital in the study and coded, categorized and established themes from the data (Simons, 2009:120).

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2005:104) advise that the researcher reads through all the transcripts before embarking on open coding to provide an overall overview of the data. The researcher adhered to this advice and read through the transcripts of the reflection journals, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews to assist her with developing possible coding concepts. The data was coded to develop a classification system by using a strategy called open coding, recommended by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:486). Open coding is a process whereby the researcher codes the data according to what the data means to the researcher (Henning, van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:104). It was therefore important that the researcher read through the transcript several times before she attached a code to a single unit.

According to Simons (2009:121) the danger of open coding is that it remains at a descriptive level and codes could stay fixed and not open to change as additional data is examined. The researcher therefore used “precoding” and “subsequent coding” to avoid the foregoing notion of Simons. Prior research conducted was used to guide the researcher’s understanding and making meaning of the data. The researcher also generated codes from within the data. The data was carefully read and codes were developed to attach meaning to each part, whether it was a sentence or a part of a sentence in the data.

To facilitate the analysis of the data a software programme called Atlas.ti was used. Yin (2009:128) emphasises that using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software does not analyse the data but merely acts as a tool to assist the researcher with data analysis. Atlas.ti is a qualitative computer software programme that provides support to code, retrieve and build theory by connecting codes to develop categories (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:133).

Using Atlas.ti the researcher needs to understand that the software programme does not have the ability to comprehend the meaning of words. The strength of the software programme however is to structure, retrieve and display the activities conducted by the researcher (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2005:137). To develop a structure for each case, a file called a 'hermeneutic unit' in Atlas.ti was created for each case. For example, Ally was assigned an individual hermeneutic unit and all the research documents pertaining to her case in the unit were uploaded. To develop an understanding of the pre-service teachers' progress of learning how to teach Accounting over a period of time, the data was uploaded according to a cycle. A time period was attached to each cycle for example, the reflection journal from April up to the date the researcher interviewed Ally would be uploaded as a cycle. By implementing the foregoing strategy, the researcher was able to connect the data of the reflection journal, unstructured interview and field-notes for that specific period.

Simons (2009:135) provides a three stage process to develop a case study story through analysing data from several transcripts; Firstly, to identify and confirm categories; secondly, to evaluate the links between the categories and, lastly, to generate themes that connect to communicate the story of the case. The data analysis was started by using the procedures recommended by (Gillham, 2000:71). The researcher read through each transcript, starting with the interview script and the applicable reflection journals dated before the interview. 'Open coding' was used to code the sentences or phrases that linked to the research questions. Atlas.ti provides the user with a 'code list' if multiple codes are identified. A 'memo' was attached where applicable to provide more details of a particular code. For example, a pre-service teacher could provide more clarity in the unstructured interview of information than given in their reflection journal and this could be highlighted in a 'memo'. Statements that did not appear relevant to the study were avoided.

The function 'code manager' was accessed to group the codes, phrases and memos in one document (see appendix I) to write an individual case report. While writing the report and if the meaning of a code or phrase was unclear, the 'hermeneutic unit' was retrieved for clarification.

The advantage of using Atlas.ti was that retrieving information was fairly easy as the software attached a number to a document or quote. For example a reflection journal will be labelled, 'primary document one' and the phrase 'number 3'. The researcher could therefore 'click' on the given numbers and the software would give a direct link to the code and phrase. When the coding was completed, the function 'code manager' and 'output' was used to view the codes and quotations. Thereafter hard copies of the codes, quotations and memos were

printed to write an individual case report of each pre-service teacher and the school-based mentor. Lastly, the researcher drew cross-case conclusions to establish emerging themes in the data.

Gillham (2000:96) stresses that a descriptive report is not sufficient but that the ability of analysing and explaining what the researcher found, could provide structure to the report. For the purpose of this study an interpretative form of reporting was used to report the cases in the study as proposed by Simons (2009:150). The aforementioned type of reporting is conveyed through themes, images and issues that surround the story.

Writing a case study report is a task that requires time and effort for numerous reasons as stipulated by Gillham (2000:94). These include different kinds of data obtained, utilizing various methods, the skill of the researcher to interconnect the evidence into a coherent report, to sustain the focus which is determined by the aims and the research questions and the need to link the findings and literature reviewed to revise the 'theories'.

Although the structure of a case study report has generic similarities to a traditional research report, the quality of the report may differ (Gillham, 2000:96). The integral components of a case study report, as noted by Gillham (2000:96), are "chronology, logical coherence, aim of the research, research questions and emerging explanations of the issues the researcher is dealing with". The report was written scrutinizing the evidence in the data several times and sometimes found earlier explanations of statements which were only revealed in data that was collected at a later stage. When the data was analysed, the researcher continuously kept in mind the research questions to achieve the aim of the research.

To facilitate the process of analysing case studies, this study aligns itself with the recommendation made by Yin (2009:56), which is a replication approach to establish a fair amount of certainty regarding the feasibility of the study as illustrated in the figure below:

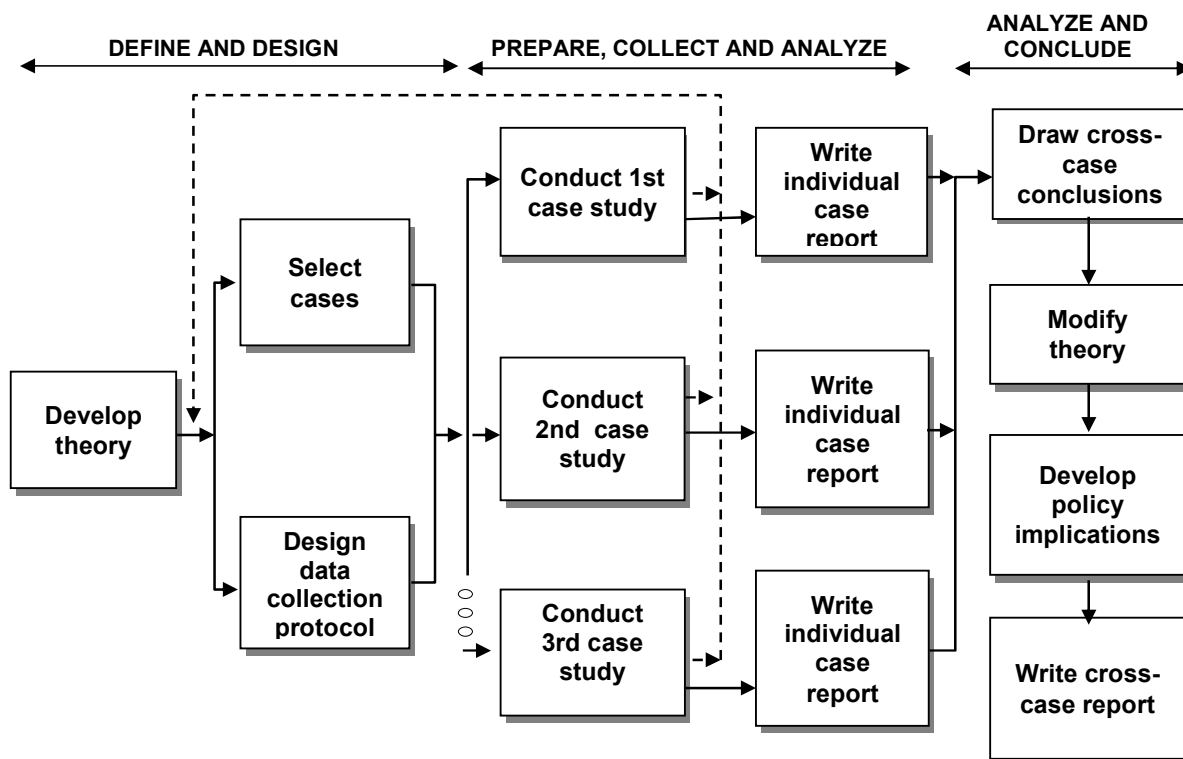


Figure 4.1: Yin's case study method

At the initial phases of developing theory related to this study, relevant literature was reviewed regarding mentoring pre-service teachers and overall mentoring of novice teachers in schools. Before the researcher embarked on the actual study, a pilot study was conducted, as stated previously, to inform the researcher of pre-service Accounting teachers' and their mentors' experiences during the six months teaching practice internship. The pilot study gave the researcher insight into the literature to be reviewed and to structure the research design and data collection.

The cases were selected based on the final year Accounting pre-service teachers in the B Ed:FET programme. An electronic and hard copy file was created to store all the data collected per case. For example, Ally's reflection journals, unstructured interviews and field-notes were stored in the same file. The purpose of doing this was to create a case for each pre-service teacher's learning to teach Accounting. Utilizing case profiles allows the researcher to give an in-depth description of interviews and reflections concerning the individuals under study (Simons, 2009:73). Furthermore, case profiles provide the researcher clarity of the experiences a participant encountered in a particular case.

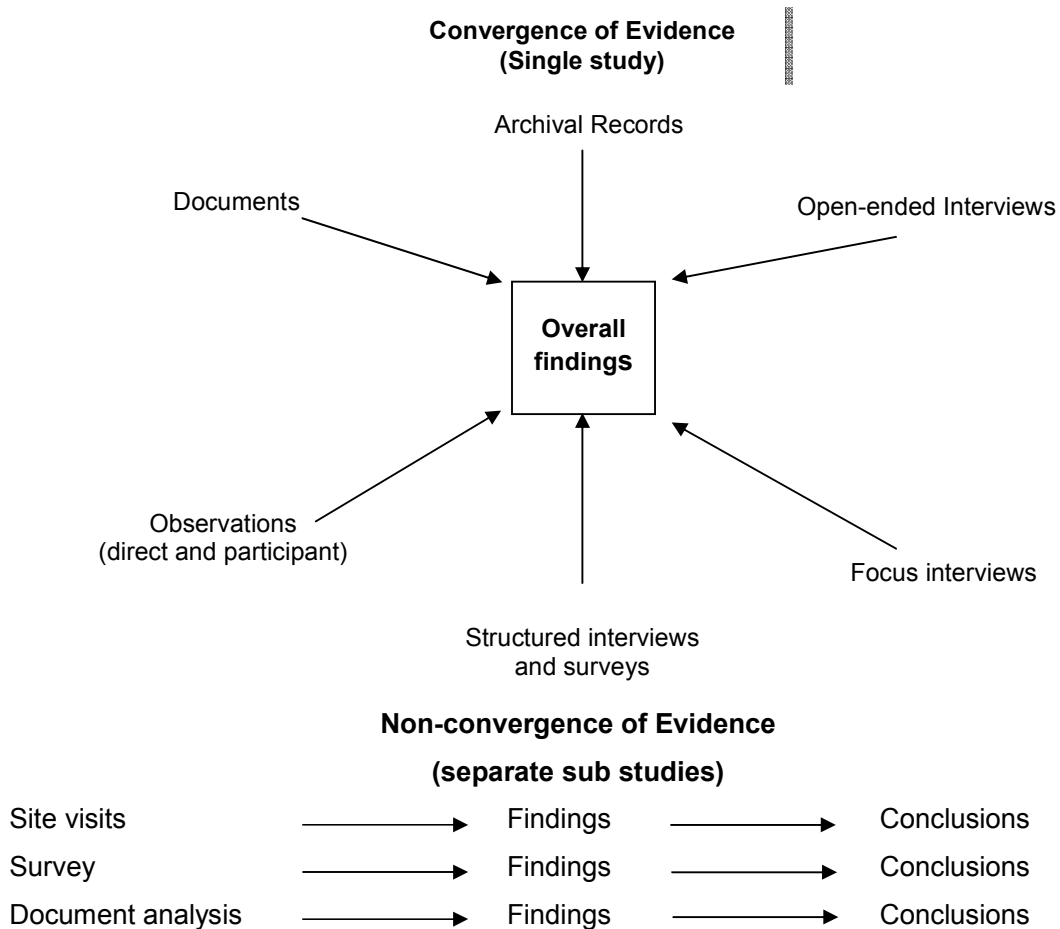


The data was collected over a six month period, which was the duration of teaching practice. An individual report was written for each case to develop an understanding of the challenges and successes each pre-service teacher faced while learning to teach Accounting. An example of how an individual report was structured is attached in (Appendix J). After writing individual reports, cross-case conclusions were drawn to ascertain common themes across the cases.

Cross case analysis is used in multiple cases to identify common issues in each case and to link themes between the cases (Simons, 2009:164). The researcher re-examined the themes case by case to see which part of the cases were similar or different. This type of analysis enabled the researcher to draw conclusions across the cases that were examined. Simons (2009:164) notes that even though this type of analysis is used to draw conclusions, it is not a “formal propositional generalization” but is instead “grounded in the meaning of these particular cases”. After the cross case analysis was complete, a cross-case report was written.

#### **4.9. Triangulation**

Triangulation is a process that refers to the findings of a study being corroborated by more than one source of evidence (Yin, 2009:116). The figure below differentiates between two conditions to establish if the researchers have triangulated the data as opposed to using multiple sources of evidence that address different findings. This study adhered to the “convergence of evidence” to establish triangulation.



**Figure 4.2:** Convergence and Non-convergence of multiple sources of evidence

Validity of a research study refers to the degree of accuracy by which the data collected is presented (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:45). Yin (2009:41) recommends several case study tactics for four design tests to prove the quality of an empirical study, and that is; construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. To meet the criterion for construct validity firstly, reflection journals were collected and unstructured interviews and focus group interviews were conducted. Secondly, a “chain of evidence” was established. Lastly, a colleague who is actively involved in research, two Accounting pre-service teachers and an Accounting mentor who participated in the study were requested to review the first draft of the case study report.

Reliability involves the process of whether the data collected is a result of the research methods used in the study (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1994:45). The use of several research methods enabled the researcher to corroborate the information given by the participants. The researcher verified and concluded the data through a process of checking the validity of statements made by the participants through follow-up interviews and by proving noticeable trends and explanations (Simons, 2009:120).

#### **4.10. Summary**

This chapter presented the research design and methodology followed in this study. The discussion showed how data were collected and analysed. Sampling procedure was clarified and information on how the researcher proceeded to gain access was given. Background of the pre-service teacher and their school-based mentors was provided. Lastly, the issues of validity and triangulation were also dealt with. In the next chapter, Chapter 5, the findings of the study are presented.

## CHAPTER 5.

### FINDINGS

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, findings are presented according to the data collected from the pre-service teachers' reflection journals and unstructured interviews. The reflection journals are intended to highlight the challenges and successes the pre-service teachers experienced and how their school-based Accounting mentors interacted with them while learning to teach Accounting. In addition, findings of the school-based Accounting mentors' interviews, and interviews conducted with the pre-service teachers are presented to provide perceptions of the pre-service teachers' challenges while learning to teach Accounting. Themes, categories and subcategories were identified through analysis of the data.

The reflection journals and unstructured interviews gave the researcher rich enough data to be able to answer the research questions. When the researcher analysed the focus group interviews, no new outcomes or insights emerged from this data.

Three main themes emerged in the data namely (a) Challenges the pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting; (b) The role of the school-based mentor in response to the challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting and (c) The challenges the pre-service teachers faced with the school-based mentor while learning to teach Accounting. Within the first theme, the researcher examined the challenges the pre-service teachers faced and coping strategies they employed while learning to teach Accounting. For the other two remaining themes, the researcher examined the nature of the school-based mentors' support for the pre-service teachers' learning to teach Accounting.

All pre-service teachers who participated in this study are second language English speakers. Some of the transcripts may have grammatical errors and disconnections within sentences, associated with their spoken use of English. The researcher only made grammatical corrections where meaning was adversely affected. Verbatim quotations from the data are used to support the findings. Written consent was obtained from all the participants before any data were collected and confidentiality was guaranteed. For this reason pseudonyms were used in the study. Table 5.1 shows the names of the respondents and where they taught.

**Table 5.1: Pseudonyms of respondents**

Participant		School
Mentee	Mentor	
Ally	Mrs Ashton	Township (Previously disadvantaged school - Focus school)
Lara	Mr Lucas	Urban (Ex-Model C)
Neo	Mr Niemandt	Township (Previously disadvantaged school)
Siya	Mr Sauls Mrs Adams	Township (Previously disadvantaged school)
Tanya	Mrs Teale	Township (Previously disadvantaged school)
Zara	Mrs Zack Mrs Barnes	Township (Previously disadvantaged school)

## 5.2. Theme 1: Challenges the pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting

The pre-service teachers expressed several challenges and in some instances coping strategies they employed while learning to teach Accounting during their internship. The major challenges that were identified are:

- ❖ Managing gaps in learners' knowledge
- ❖ Anxiety about strength of content knowledge
- ❖ Anxiety about strength of pedagogical content knowledge
- ❖ Anxiety about strength of pedagogical knowledge

### 5.2.1. Managing gaps in learners' knowledge

An issue that all the participants commented on was the gap in the Accounting knowledge of the learners they were teaching. It was evident that the pre-service teachers grappled to manage the following challenges:

- ❖ Dealing with learners' inadequate calculation skills
- ❖ Dealing with learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles
- ❖ Dealing with the learners' limited ability to synthesize Accounting content knowledge.
- ❖ Learners having insufficient knowledge of previously taught Accounting concepts
- ❖ Dealing with the learners' language barrier

### 5.2.1.1. Dealing with learners' inadequate calculation skills

Several pre-service teachers reflected that the learners had inadequate calculation skills. Inadequacy affects the learners' ability to complete the application of accounts in the books of Accounting. Several pre-service teachers reported in their reflection journal on how they dealt with this particular challenge.

Ally related that learners struggled to calculate the depreciation of assets bought and sold during a particular financial period. She did not anticipate that the learners would find the applicable calculations difficult because they appeared to understand the concepts related to the topic 'asset disposal'. Learners' inability to do the necessary calculations negatively influenced her plans to complete that specific aspect of the topic 'asset disposal'. She narrated:

I had to teach the Fixed Asset note whereby I had to do the calculations of Accumulated Depreciation on vehicles and equipment that was bought or sold...as well as calculating depreciation for the year on vehicles and equipment. When I started with this topic the learners seem to understand the work... when I got to activities where I entered transactions where the business sold and bought equipment or vehicles most of the learners were struggling to do the calculations of depreciation [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]

Ally realised that her objectives for a particular lesson will not always be achieved due to certain learners' difficulty with calculations. She therefore gave individuals an opportunity to complete the calculations on the board and remarked:

My lesson outcomes for the week was not achieved because I gave each learner a chance to do the calculations on the board...they then became more confident when calculating depreciation and accumulated depreciation on vehicles or equipment that was purchased or sold. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]

Siya had a similar experience as Ally when he taught the topic 'cash budgets'. He found that the learners were unable to grasp the calculation of the receipt of debtors' monies over a particular collection period. A concern raised by Siya was that his lesson objectives were not achieved. It appeared that he felt obliged to focus his lesson on the calculations as opposed to completing all the entries applicable in the cash budget. He mentioned that:

The challenges I faced is in the calculations of collecting money from debtors for one month, 30, 60 and 90 days after sales.I did not achieve my lesson outcomes...that forced me to stick to one place. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 05 SEPTEMBER 2010]

It was evident that Siya made an effort to teach the learners how to calculate the debtors' collection period of sales. He repeatedly illustrated the calculations of the example on the chalk board until the learners showed an understanding. He reported: "Things went well when I repeated the calculations up until they got to understand it".

In another lesson Ally described how the learners found the calculation of interest on capital difficult. The focus of the lesson was on two accounts namely the 'Capital' and 'Drawings' account of the topic 'partnership'. The learners had difficulty with calculating interest due to the partners when there was a withdrawal of capital or additional capital contributed by the partners during the financial period. Ally felt compelled to give individual attention to those learners who were struggling and could therefore not pursue what she had planned to achieve for that particular lesson. She reported:

There were learners struggling to calculate the interest on capital especially where partners increased or decreased their capital contribution...I had to show the learners who was struggling to calculate the interest on capital individually how to calculate the interest on capital...that took a bit long...I could not continue with what I wanted to do with them. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Even though Zara had experienced a similar situation as Ally and Siya, she blamed the learners for having inadequate calculation skills. In her opinion most of the learners did not complete their homework assignment and in her view this influenced their ability to grasp how to do the calculations required for a particular transaction. Her comment:

They [learners] were just struggling with calculation of insurance, rent, interest on loans and other accounts. They just got the calculation wrong and I had to develop ways to assist them...some still didn't get it and I realise that some of them didn't even do their homework...here was no way they can understand it. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]*

Zara found that learners who did not complete their homework had a negative influence on the outcomes of her lesson and thus affected her time management. Zara decided to resort to punitive measures by giving those learners who had not done homework additional activities. She appeared to be satisfied with this method of dealing with the learners. She stated:

Those learners that are not doing their homework... they are the ones who are giving me a hard time to finish my lesson on time. What I decided to do is that if you didn't finish my homework you get one extra activity..... if you didn't start at all you get 2 activities to do. It is helping a lot because no one wants more work that they are suppose to. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]*

Later during the teaching practice, Zara made a decision to keep track of those learners who did not complete their homework and she collected the Grade 10 Accounting learners' homework in the first period each day. She wanted to identify the learners who were experiencing difficulty doing the work independently and even those learners who did not complete their homework to establish how to proceed with her lesson. She said:

I take the homework first period everyday...it is also assisting me knowing who is suffering on what and how I can help to identify those who did not even do the work. That makes me know what I am dealing with. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 20 AUGUST 2010]

From the above transcripts, the pre-service teachers revealed how they dealt with the learners' inadequate calculation skills. It was evident that the pre-service teachers' primary focus was to achieve their lesson objectives as opposed to ensuring that the learners understood the content and could master the work. Ally's and Siya's intervention strategy to assist the learners appeared to be favourable but Zara's strategy could have alienated the learners' willingness to learn. As seen in the foregoing extracts, the pre-service teachers blamed the learners for not achieving their lesson objectives and in fact did not refer to their own teaching inadequacies in light of their planning and how they explained the work to the learners.

#### **5.2.1.2. Dealing with learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles**

Pre-service teachers also reported on difficulties dealing with the learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles. Lara repeatedly mentioned in her reflection journals how she experienced difficulty with the learners' lack of understanding of basic Accounting principles. In another instance, she indicated that the "learners do not understand the basic principles of Accounting and it takes more time to explain the simple stuff". Lara was of the opinion that teaching the learners the basic Accounting principles should not be difficult but yet she found it time consuming to explain these principles to the learners.

Lara was concerned for some learners who had difficulty understanding the basic Accounting principles. She decided to offer additional Accounting classes after school. It was evident that Lara knew that she had to implement extra measures to facilitate the learners' understanding of Accounting, yet the learners did not view her concerns seriously. She appeared frustrated when a group of learners disregarded the time of the classes. She remarked:

A few of the boys don't listen and they do not come in on agreed times for extra lessons...I am a bit worried about their academic studies...where it is going to lead if they continue like this...Accounting needs understanding and interaction. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 31 JULY 2010]



Siya found it challenging to facilitate the learners' understanding of the topic 'Bank Reconciliation'. He found that the learners could not classify the accounts when he explained the 'bank' account in the general ledger linked to the topic bank reconciliation and in this light stated:

When I taught bank in the General ledger of the Bank Reconciliation I found that the learners did not know the types of accounts like assets, owner's equity and liabilities. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 23 APRIL 2010]*

Siya's anxiety to manage the gaps in the learners' knowledge appeared to negatively influence his self-esteem and he expressed that, "I felt very depressed because most learners did not understand the work and I didn't achieve the lesson outcomes". Siya strategized to access other resources and even planned to use the internet to search for additional information on how to teach Accounting. Added to this he felt that giving more activities and additional notes is a possible solution to facilitate the learners' understanding. He stated that:

I will do exercises from other textbooks and search the internet to revise the ledger of manufacturing. I had to give more exercises and give them some notes. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Zara faced a similar dilemma. She reported that teaching the posting of accounts to the general ledger to a Grade 10 class posed numerous challenges. Firstly, the learners had difficulty in identifying the correct Accounting book to complete the entries in, the General ledger. Secondly the learners were unable to distinguish between the nominal and balance sheet account section. Lastly, the learners applied the basic Accounting principles incorrectly. For example an account that was supposed to be debited was incorrectly credited. The following excerpt illustrates Zara's dilemma:

The challenges that I had was in terms of the general ledger. Firstly some learners were not even able to use the correct book or write the accounts correctly in the books. They were also having problems understanding the nominal account section...they were having a hard time drawing the correct accounts...for example, they were crediting the insurance account instead of debiting it. They didn't even know how to apply the accounting principles. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Ally explained the entries in the Analysis Cash book of Sports Clubs and repeated that certain learners could not distinguish between expenses and assets. Thus the learners' inability to correctly identify accounts could pose a problem when they are required to apply the entries in the books of Accounting. She said:

I completed the Analysis Cash Books of the Sports Clubs and explained the accounts of a sport club. Some learners got confused by some expenses accounts...for example a tennis ball account...they see it as stock that the business buys for the club's use. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]

Reflecting on the transcripts it was clear that the pre-service teachers lacked the ability to examine their own inadequacies. The pre-service teachers highlighted what the learners were unable to grasp and provided explicit reason for the latter. However, none of them provided evidence of how they explained the topics to the learners, which could be a possible reason why the learners grappled with the application of basic Accounting principles.

### **5.2.1.3. Dealing with learners' limited ability to synthesise Accounting content knowledge**

Lara commented that the learners expected her not to challenge them by asking questions related to a particular entry. She was of the opinion that the learners were capable of providing the correct answer but were unable to provide reasons why a particular procedure is followed in Accounting. Furthermore, she alluded to the fact that the learners' inability to synthesize could be blamed on her mentor's method of instruction. She observed that:

They do not know how to answer the WHY on their own. They only know it because the mentor said so. They think in a box and that is how they are. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]

To enhance the learners' ability to synthesise, Lara stipulated that she planned to provide explicit information of the basic principles of Accounting in her lessons. She also planned to offer additional classes to show the learners that learning Accounting required a strong work ethic. To express her quest to promote synthesizing she highlighted the word 'why' in her reflection journal. She indicated that:

What I am going to do in the new week is that I am going to start from scratch with them. So that I can establish that understanding of **why**? because I need to explain to them why certain things are happening and why others are not...not because I say so but because this is the principles of accounting. I also want to take them for extra classes so that they can get used to my style of teaching and so that they can know that accounting is hard work and a lot of effort they need to put in to make it. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]

Evident in this category was Lara's frustration when dealing with how the learners approached the application of entries in the books of Accounting. She noted that she wanted the learners to not merely accept procedures followed in Accounting but to challenge the teacher to provide detailed explanations for a particular procedure.

**5.2.1.4. Dealing with learners who have insufficient knowledge of previously taught Accounting concepts**

According to Zara, the learners felt demotivated due to their lack of Accounting knowledge. The learners did not attend classes regularly or, if they did attend classes, they would not participate in the lesson. Zara mentioned that she would search the school for the learners who did not attend class and ask them to come to class. In this regard she said:

The challenges was with their [learners] attitude...they were aware that they didn't know much in Accounting. Some of them didn't even want to come to class...saying it will not make a difference whether they come or not. Sometimes I had to go and collect them...they lost hope...the hard part at first was that they were not trying at all... they just sit there and listen without saying or asking anything. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010]

Experiencing difficulty with the Grade 12's attitude towards Accounting, Zara attempted to motivate the learners and did not simply give up on them. She encouraged the learners to view their mistakes in Accounting as an opportunity to learn and to express how they felt about the subject. Added to this she offered additional classes after school and motivated the learners to perceive Accounting as an opportunity to create a better future for themselves. She wrote:

By making sure that they learn from their mistakes...they take their work very seriously during my extra classes. I wanted them to know how serious and fun Accounting is. I gave them a challenge that they speak about their fears...I told them they must not see this in a negative way rather they must see it as a second chance to a better future. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010]

Unlike Zara, Lara appeared frustrated with the learners when she taught a new topic to the Grade 11's and they did not respond favourably to her questioning of previous knowledge. She wrote:

It seems to me like these learners do not remember or even keep their grade 10 work in their heads...the moment you mention grade 10 work they look at you funny...it is really disturbing to me. They only remember the little they are taking in now...then they don't worry after that. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]

Lara was of the opinion that the learners' attitudes towards Accounting could be attributed to the subject choices offered at the school in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The learners at that particular school are compelled to choose between Accounting and Physics. She therefore felt that the learners choose Accounting for the wrong reasons because they would rather study Accounting than Physics. She stated:

It's really not easy especially where the learners choose a subject that they don't really like or want to be there...they don't want to choose physics. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]

It is interesting to note that Zara wanted to provide support to the learners who felt demotivated to learn Accounting. She revealed a characteristic of caring for the learners which is an illustration of an expectation of a good teacher. Lara viewed the learners' attitudes toward Accounting as negative. She expressed feelings of dissatisfaction about how the learners responded to her teaching and thought that the learners wilfully forgot what they had been taught previously. Hence Zara perceived this challenge as an opportunity to motivate the learners to study Accounting while Lara blamed the learners' attitudes and the school policy.

Certain mentors were in agreement about some of the challenges the pre-service teachers faced. The major challenge the FET band faced was that Accounting became an aspect of a broader subject called Economics Management and Science, thus most of the topics taught in Accounting Grade 8 and 9 were omitted to accommodate Economics and Business Studies, which also forms part of EMS. In light of the aforementioned Mr Niemandt mentioned that, "the one problem I have with the learners in Accounting Grade 10 is that they don't have a background". Moreover accounting teachers have a syllabus to complete for a particular grade and then it is difficult to accommodate the gaps in content knowledge due to the Grade 8 and 9 OBE curriculum. Mr Niemandt appeared frustrated regarding this matter and observed that:

As much as you know there are things that you need to do with the learners...you are always pushing to complete the syllabus before the exams...there's certain things you have to cover and often for me I find it a bit difficult. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW - 21 MAY 2010]

Mrs Teale indicated that the learners in Grade 10 had a major problem with the application of the theory in the books of Accounting. She believed that OBE was the reason for this challenge and reported that, "they [learners] might know the theory part well but they do not know how to apply it because of OBE". [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW - 17 MAY 2010]

#### **5.2.1.5. Dealing with the learners' language barrier**

In most previously disadvantaged schools where the learners are predominantly non-white, the Department of Education requires the medium of instruction to be English, even though it is their second additional language. From the data in this study, it was evident that being taught in English posed a barrier when learners were exposed to concepts in Accounting that

would not necessarily be used in their daily vocabulary of, for example, Isi-Xhosa. There were a number of examples in the data.

Siya expressed that the learners were unable to distinguish concepts applicable to the topic 'asset disposal' and said, "the learners could not differentiate between the disposing of an asset and buying an asset". Siya appeared to have an ongoing battle. When he taught the topic 'manufacturing', he felt tremendous strain when the learners did not understand the concepts, even though he gave them notes to read prior to his lesson. He said:

I had a tough time because the learners found it difficult to understand the new terms of 'manufacturing'. I gave them notes so that they can understand when I explain to them the application. They did not read the notes thoroughly. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 27 AUGUST 2010]*

Another strategy he tried was to adjust the pace of his lesson to accommodate the learners' language barrier. In addition he prepared additional notes of the basic principles of Accounting. He explained that, "I tried to go a bit slowly and gave them notes of the Accounting equation".

Mrs Adams was of the opinion that Siya found it difficult to clarify concepts to the learners in his lesson. For example, when he explained concepts linked to the topic manufacturing, he was unable to provide explicit details of the meaning of the concepts. It was apparent that Siya was aware of his inability to explain concepts and expressed his concern to Mrs Adams. In this regard Mrs Adams stated:

I discovered there were some of the concepts he didn't explain thorough...he spoke to me and told me that there were challenges in terms of explaining concepts. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 28 JULY 2010]*

Neo, on the other hand, experienced difficulty explaining the concepts 'discount allowed' and 'discount cancelled'. To distinguish between these two concepts, Neo explained to the learners that a discount will be cancelled when a debtor's cheque is dishonoured and still the learners appeared confused with his explanation. He embarked on providing the learners with numerous examples even though he was of the view that the concepts are not difficult to understand. He stated that:

The lesson was a bit difficult for them...they were confused about the discount allowed and cancelled. I had make a lot of examples in explaining that scenario even though to me it was not difficult. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Neo knew that he needed to address this issue. After careful consideration he decided to be more explicit in providing details of particular concepts. He recorded that:

What I need to do is to break down every word or phrase in accounting into pieces so that it can be meaningful to everyone especially the learners...that is what I learnt can help me to overcome challenges teaching Accounting. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Nyameko's mentor, Mr Niemandt, related that learners' English vocabulary is limited because they are second language English speakers. The teachers are therefore required to carefully explain a concept to them. In some instances the learners are also unable to follow instructions provided by the teacher. To manage the learners' language barrier, he advised Neo to devise innovative methods of teaching as he found that the learners responded favourably to methods such as simulation. In his words:

Because of the language barrier you can't give the learners too many words...sometimes you ask them to do something but then they don't even understand what the instruction is that you are telling them...You need to come in with interactive ways of teaching...for example simulation and the learners will respond to it. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 MAY 2010]*

Zara referred to problems arising from concepts such as 'accrued income' and 'income received in advance' when she introduced the topic 'clubs'. She made a decision to repeat the concepts continuously in her lesson presentations until the learners were able to understand the terms. She also decided to use the learners who appeared to understand 'year-end adjustment' to assist learners who did not. Zara commented:

It is difficult for the learners because they just don't know how to handle the terms. I decided to use them [learners who understood] all the time...I will ask them the meaning of accrued income, income received in advance until they [learners] are mastering the terms. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]*

Teaching in English also appeared to be difficult for certain pre-service teachers whose first language is isi-Xhosa. According to Tanya, her mentor, Mrs Teale observed that she taught predominantly in isi-Xhosa while the learners are required to do their assessments in English by the Western Cape Education Department. Therefore communicating in isi-Xhosa could pose a problem for the learners. In this regard, Tanya said "my mentor wants me to speak 60% English and 40% Xhosa". *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

At a later stage of Tanya's internship, Mrs Teale was still concerned about Tanya communicating predominantly in isi-Xhosa as opposed to English. She expressed that: "we supposed to talk and explain in English but she [Tanya] switches to isi-Xhosa a lot" . *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

It became clear that teaching second language English learners, is not an easy task. In fact all the pre-service teachers who participated in this study are English second language speakers which could be the reason why they found it challenging to identify the learners' language barrier. It was interesting to note that Zara became aware that her strategy to repeat the concepts was insufficient to assist the learners who were struggling to understand them. She therefore made use of learners that understood the Accounting concepts to explain them to their peers in their first language which was Isi-Xhosa. She knew that by using these learners to assist their peers, her teaching task would be lighter.

### **5.2.2. Anxiety about strength of content knowledge**

Most of the pre-service teachers experienced situations where their content knowledge was challenged. In certain cases the pre-service teachers felt that their content knowledge was inadequate to address the learners' confusion and in other cases they confessed to making content errors.

Ally encountered an awkward situation while teaching the 'membership fees' account. A learner posed a question referring to a calculation made at the beginning of the financial period which involved 'accrued income'. Despite the learner's question catching Ally off guard she attempted to explain but her explanation appeared to dissatisfy and confuse the learner even further. She reported the following:

A boy asked why should the money received for the previous year be deducted from the accrued income balance at the beginning of the financial year. I did not understand what he was asking. I tried to give him an answer...I said money received for the previous financial year should be deducted from the accrued income balance at the beginning of the financial year and the difference should be entered in the membership fees account. I made him confused. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]*

Lara made a content error while teaching 'clubs'. According to her the learners were unaware of the mistakes she made. Lara explained that she omitted information applicable to the 'membership fees' account. Apart from blaming herself for the errors that occurred, she also placed blame on using only the prescribed textbook. She felt that she should have consulted her university notes. She mentioned that:

I didn't complete the membership account the correct way...I firstly made a mistake by only going through the prescribed textbook...the one text book showed me not like different but it omitted some of the work that was vital to finish the account or do it correctly...me like a fool only went according to this one text book...I didn't even check my other notes from university. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Lara displayed feelings of despair and realised that being knowledgeable in Accounting can lead to an assumption that you are able to teach the subject without adequately preparing a lesson. She felt embarrassed that she allowed herself to be in such a situation and remarked that she felt incompetent to teach Accounting. She feared that she disappointed the learners because they trusted her to teach them accurate information. Moreover, she indicated that on the one hand she learnt from her mistakes but, on the other hand, the experience made her rethink her choice of becoming an Accounting teacher. In this regard she stated:

I must admit that I made a lot of mistakes this week...I can't help feeling that I am a failure...I have let the learners down and that they have lost trust in my abilities. I learned a valuable lesson this week...it is like when you do accounting for a while you take some things as if it comes naturally. I came to the point where I felt that I was going to give up on teaching Accounting because I couldn't do it...I have no one else to blame but myself for it...I didn't do my homework or preparation properly. I thought I did and I thought I covered all the angles...I found out very quickly that what I actually did was nothing because there was so much more I could have done that I didn't so this week...just a very bad week for me and Accounting. I can't help but feeling that I really failed in a big way. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Planning to rectify the mistakes Lara stated, “I am going to do research and get the correct information so that I can correct my mistakes that I made”. To avoid further confusion amongst the learners, she decided to only focus on rectifying the mistakes in that particular lesson. Lara appeared determined to redeem herself. She said:

Firstly, I am going to explain to the learners what I did. Not to confuse them I will only correct the mistakes I made on the exercise so that they understand. I will work out and go into detail with the why and how...so that they can understand why it is not suppose to be like that way. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Acknowledging her mistakes was not an easy task for Lara. However, she bravely went into the class and executed her plan of action. She revealed positive feelings after her encounter and said “I tried to be confident about it and go in there and correct my mistakes with pride”.

Unlike Lara who was of the opinion that she omitted vital information in her lesson presentation, Tanya felt ill-equipped to teach the ‘general journal’. Tanya indicated that she could not provide sufficient information to explain the ‘double entry system’ effectively to the learners. According to Tanya, she found it difficult to teach the entries applicable to the general journal and therefore was unsure if she adequately explained to the learners why particular entries in the general journal are debited and credited. She stated:

I didn't feel so great because I really struggle with the general journal...I don't think I explained clearly to them why we have a debit side and have a credit side...which accounts are credited or debited and why”. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*



Tanya also revealed that she found it challenging to provide the purpose and the meaning for the calculation of each formula related to a company's financial statement. Added to this, she also struggled to explain certain notes related to the financial statement to the learners. She said:

I could not comment about the outcomes and explaining to them the formula...how to substitute the values into the formula. I was also not sure how to explain note 3 (tangible assets) and note 7 (why are we subtracting the additional capital contribution from the capital in the trial balance). *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

To ensure that she provided accurate information to the learners, Tanya indicated that she will study the applicable content to give explicit details of the formulas required to analyse financial statements. She said:

I will go through the formulas in advance and comments based on the answers that I calculated. Study the result thoroughly... I must look at the result of the previous year and the current year...comment about the different amounts or percentages and explain it to the learners. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Teaching Accounting to Grade 12 learners is a daunting task for any pre-service teacher. In this regard Zara expressed fear when she taught 'companies' to the Grade 12's because she knew it would be a challenge. Encountering several challenges while teaching the topic 'companies' compelled Zara to revisit her strategy on how she prepared for her lesson presentations. She expressed the need to allocate more time to lesson preparation and to access numerous textbooks. She stated:

Well at first I was feeling scared since I knew that the lesson is difficult even myself was struggling while I was doing it. I must spend more time with my lessons and make sure I use many textbooks as much as I can. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

Zara found suitable examples and activities to assist her in this endeavour. She set out to explain her lesson to the learners in small groups and was convinced that they understood her lesson. In her own words she said:

I got hold of good examples and exercises. I even grouped them [the learners] into groups so that I can explain it in few numbers. I realise that they work even much better if I divide them into groups...so that they can understand more. If I explain it in few numbers. They loved the lesson...I am sure they understood it. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

Interestingly, Zara made reference to her secondary schooling experiences when she was required to teach the topic 'manufacturing'. In her view she did not have sufficient content knowledge of the topic because she did not study it at secondary school level. Regarding this she said:

I taught them [the learners] the terms such as 'manufacturing', 'raw material', 'work in progress', 'finished goods', 'indirect material, 'overhead accounts'...that are involved in the manufacturing such as consumable goods. At first it was not easy since I didn't even do this when I was in high school...I did not have a history I did not know how to cope with it. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 03 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

It became evident that the pre-service teachers found teaching Accounting at Grade 11 and 12 most challenging. Of significance though is that the pre-service teachers could identify which aspects of Accounting they felt anxious to teach. What is of further interest is that they embarked on various strategies to overcome their challenges.

### **5.2.3. Anxiety about strength of pedagogical content knowledge**

There were several examples of pre-service teachers' difficulty explaining particular topics in Accounting. In most cases the pre-service teachers were unable to scaffold information to facilitate the learners' understanding. For example, omitting to provide adequate information when a new topic is introduced or when a homework activity is given, linking previous knowledge to new knowledge and the inability to pitch a lesson at the learners' level of understanding.

Ally experienced problems because she failed to provide sufficient information to facilitate their understanding. In a particular instance, Ally indicated that she showed the learners transactions when a partner of a business takes goods for their own use. However, she omitted to illustrate transactions which include monetary drawings in lieu of salaries. Hence, confusion arose amongst the learners when money taken during the financial period was entered into the 'drawings account'. She mentioned that:

What I have encountered is that the learners questioned me on why the partners take a salary during the year then it is entered in the drawings account. I explained to them but they didn't understand. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 23 APRIL 2010]*

Ally began to realise that to facilitate the learners' understanding she needed to illustrate her explanation visually on the chalkboard to demonstrate the procedures in the books of 'partnerships'. She decided to provide the learners with an example to illustrate why the salary account of a 'partnership' is opened in the general ledger at the end of the financial period and why monetary withdrawals by the partners are entered in the 'drawings' account during a particular financial period. She stated:

By doing a practical example with them [learners] so that they can understand why the salary that the partner takes during the year would only be entered in the drawings account of the

partner...because the salary account is only opened at the end of the financial year. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 23 APRIL 2010]

Like Ally, Neo also omitted information which resulted in the learners' confusion. He related that he gave the learners a homework activity and the learners made numerous errors in the activity. Neo indicated that the learners applied procedures which were not aligned with the basic Accounting principles. He observed that:

When I gave them the homework, they balance even the nominal accounts section...I had to explain why we don't balance instead we close off the accounts. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 20 AUGUST 2010]

Neo also realised that assuming that the learners would be knowledgeable about the difference between two stock systems could prove to be detrimental when presenting a lesson. He felt that he should have enquired about the learners' previous knowledge before he embarked on his lesson regarding stock systems. He expressed that:

The learners did not know the difference between the perpetual stock system and periodic system. I assume that they know the difference between the two...if I knew that they knew nothing I should have been doing the research or do more examples of physical stock taking. I must be prepared. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]

Neo learned that linking the learners' knowledge of previous lessons to a new lesson could assist in achieving lesson outcomes. He provided an example of referring to the debtors control account when he explained the creditors control account to the learners. Neo could therefore link the principles applied in both of the aforementioned accounts. Hence linking prior knowledge to a new lesson was helpful to achieve his lesson outcomes. He had this to say on this issue:

The previous knowledge of the general ledger that learners did was the best link. I link the debtors' account with the creditors' account...everything went smoothly. I achieve the outcomes of the lesson. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]

Siya wanted to complete an activity according to a time frame that was not suitable for the learners' pace of learning. Siya related that his mentor provided him with a resource package of activities on the topic 'manufacturing'. According to Siya he was unable to complete an activity in a period of forty-five minutes. He discovered that the learners were unable to grasp his explanation because they found the information he provided overwhelming. He said:

I noted that the information in the booklet were too much for them. The exercises were too long for them...some of them couldn't understand. It was not easy to complete in one period, even if you do correction it takes a time to complete. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]

Interestingly, Siya repeatedly referred to other factors, such as the learners' inability to understand his explanation or activities that were inappropriate for his lesson outcomes as opposed to highlighting his own weaknesses in learning to teach. In one particular example Siya observed that:

The learners found it difficult to understand the ledger accounts because the exercises were too long...it included balance sheet and nominal account section. I need to find a short exercise that will start with the balance sheet section and then I will go through that section, then I will find an activity for the nominal account section. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]*

Lara expressed that she had difficulty teaching the learners the topic 'clubs' which led to doubts about her ability to teach Accounting. She was uncertain if the learners were to blame or whether she was incapable of facilitating their understanding. Lara was of the opinion that her lesson outcomes were not achieved. She reported that:

We started with non-profit organisations for this week and we first did the introduction by doing what non- profit organisations is...what the purpose of non-profit organisations is..also the accounts unique to clubs...using clubs as examples of non profit organisations. I felt very negative about this week lessons because I felt that I am not getting through to the learners. I was pulling ropes with myself asking is it me or is it them. So I felt like I didn't reach my lesson outcomes all the time so I needed some help. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 JULY 2010]*

In this category the pre-service teachers highlighted their difficulties in teaching certain topics in Accounting. The pre-service teachers, however, addressed this particular challenge in different ways. Neo encountered several incidents where some of the learners experienced difficulty, for example, completing an activity correctly and grasping certain concepts in Accounting. It appeared that Neo was struggling to pitch his lesson at the learners' level of learning. He assumed that the learners had prior knowledge of Accounting as opposed to assessing beforehand what the learners' prior knowledge was. It was evident that he later started to take cognisance of the learners' level of knowledge in Accounting before he embarked on a new lesson.

Siya, on the other hand, was struggling to identify his own shortcomings in teaching Accounting. He grappled to identify what the learners found to be difficult to understand in Accounting. He was of the view that finding external resources such as shorter exercises would be a solution for his challenge. He was unaware that a possible solution could be to explore a different approach to teaching Accounting to facilitate the learners' understanding. Lara, on the other hand, was despondent and felt that she was at a crossroads because she

was incapable of identifying the source of the challenge she is facing. She had the notion that if she did not achieve her lesson outcomes then she was not teaching effectively.

#### **5.2.4. Anxiety about strength of pedagogical knowledge**

Certain pre-service teachers found it difficult to manage a classroom. Lara desperately wanted to improve her classroom management skills and realised quite early in the term that she needed to be more assertive with the learners. She was adamant to draw up a set of rules and allowed the learners to negotiate the type of punishment that will be given to deal with those who transgress. She mentioned that:

I need to be more firm with the learners so that they can focus more on the work. I will let them draw up the rules and choose their own punishment. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

A grave concern was raised by Mr Lucas regarding Lara's relationship with the learners. He perceived Lara's relationship with the learners as being inappropriate for teaching and iterated that it was not aligned with the teachers' professional relationship with the learners at the school. He reported:

I spoke to her about being stricter with the learners...she is not like us [the teachers] where we have a distance you know. The learners are actually taking advantage of some of the student teachers. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

Mr Lucas wanted Lara to have a professional relationship with the learners. He felt that her behaviour toward the learners could be a stumbling block in her quest to become a teacher and advised Lara to become more assertive in the classroom. Regarding this he said:

She must avoid becoming too friendly with the learners. I told her the last time she must actually first get the attention of the learners, first get the class to sit down...let them keep quiet and then you carry on with what you have to do. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

Tanya related that a group of learners displayed behaviour that was not conducive for learning and for her teaching. She became frustrated with their behaviour and dismissed a learner from her classroom. Her aim was to show the learners that she was in charge of the class and that ill discipline was unacceptable. She said:

There was a group of 6 learners sitting at the back who were disturbing the class. I ended up sending one of them outside...I called him inside after 10 minutes. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

Tanya realised that classroom management skills are vital. Having problems with discipline in the classroom can have a negative influence on your lesson objectives. It was evident that she partly blamed herself for the learners' disruptive behaviour because she revealed that her interactions with learners were insufficient to maintain their attention. She wanted to change this scenario and thus embarked on a plan of action. She reported:

I did not have enough time to finish everything that I wanted to do this week due to learner disruption. I will make sure that those learners who disrupt the class sit in front....also ask the whole class questions so that they will not get bored. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

Mrs Teale was of the opinion that Tanya could improve on her classroom management skills but was unable to provide explicit details why she thought Tanya lacked this skill and remarked: "In terms of classroom management, I think in that area she is lacking". *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

Even though Siya did not report in his reflection journal that he experienced any challenges with classroom management, his mentor, Mrs Adams was of the view that a major factor that contributed to Siya's lack of classroom management skills could be attributed to the school culture. She related that the learners at the school have serious disciplinary issues and this is a reason why Siya was unable to discipline the learners. Referring to this Mrs Adams said, "In terms of classroom management he needs to improve but this is due to the type of learners we have". *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 28 JULY 2010]*

Ally's mentor, Mrs Ashton, in contrast, commended her ability to manage a classroom. Mrs Ashton related that at the initial stages of Ally's internship she appeared anxious. However, as time progressed, Ally started to gain confidence in her teaching ability and was able to manage the learners without Mrs Ashton's intervention. Mrs Ashton stated that:

Ally was nervous at the beginning...she's more confident now...she takes charge of her class completely. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

It was interesting to note that only two pre-service teachers reflected on their difficulty with classroom management skills. Moreover, it was evident that the approach of the two pre-service teachers to deal with classroom management differed. Lara indicated her frustration with the learners' behaviour and wanted to solve the problem. Lara knew the manner in which the learners responded to her was not conducive for teaching and used a democratic approach to deal with the problem.

Tanya on the other hand portrayed an image to the learners that she was in charge and that the punitive measures applied were not negotiable. She had an autocratic approach dealing with learners' disruptive behaviour. It was important for her to show the learners that she had the authority to enforce the rules in the classroom. Interestingly, she wanted the learners to be enthusiastic when she taught them and therefore devised a strategy to create a pleasant atmosphere of learning in the classroom.

### **5.3. Theme 2: School-based mentors' response to challenges the pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach.**

In this theme data is presented on how the school-based mentors responded to the challenges the pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting. Mentor assistance was provided mainly with lesson preparation and feedback after lesson observations. Other types of mentor support that were not prominent in the data were co-teaching and demonstration lessons.

#### **5.3.1. Lesson preparation**

In certain cases, the mentors' assistance with lesson preparation was minimal while in other cases ongoing assistance was provided by the mentors. Ally, for example, had an agreement with Mrs Ashton to discuss all her lessons before she taught them. The purpose of this agreement was to moderate Ally's activities and to ensure that she provided the learners with activities that would challenge them. Ally stated that:

All my work and activities that I have prepared for them [learners] I first show it to her [Mrs Ashton]. She would then go through the activities and make changes or she'll tell me no it's fine the way it is, or she'll say, okay, we have done enough easy activities, let's do something more difficult. [*UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 20 JULY 2010*]

An example of Mrs Ashton's mentor assistance with Ally's lesson preparation was how to introduce and explain the 'membership fees' account. According to Ally she met with Mrs Ashton to discuss her activities. Her mentor moderated and rectified the errors in her activities. Mrs Ashton then gave her guidance on how to teach the entries of the membership fees account. Ally commented:

My mentor explained the activities to me by making changes by going through my memorandums of the activities...she gave me some tips on how to complete the membership fee account. [*REFLECTION JOURNAL – 6 AUGUST 2010*]

In preparation of her lesson to teach 'Statement of Receipts and Payments', Ally structured transactions for a particular month as opposed to a particular financial year which would be unsuitable to teach the 'Statement of Receipts and Payments' which is prepared and finalized at the end of a particular financial period in Accounting. To ensure that Ally was able to explain the entries to learners correctly, Mrs Ashton assisted Ally to compile transactions that were applicable for the 'Statement of Receipts and Payments'. In this regard Ally said:

I was setting up activities for only a one month basis. My mentor then assisted me with setting up transactions for the year so that it would be easier for me to post to the Statement of receipts and payments. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Like Ally, Lara's mentor, Mr Lucas, also provided ongoing assistance with Lara's lesson preparations. To illustrate how Mr Lucas assisted her, she provided explicit details of how she was planning to teach 'membership fees' in collaboration with her mentor. She explained what she was planning to do in every period of a particular week and the lesson outcomes she and Mr Lucas planned to achieve. She said:

This week I had to do the membership fees account starting off with it step by step. For the first two days I was going to only do membership fees received for the next year. Then for the next two days we will continue and do membership fees carried over from the previous year that would be membership fees paid in advance in the previous year for this year and accrued membership fees of last year paid in this year. We will then do exercises on this two together to consolidate...that is what me and Mr Lucas is planning to do. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 6 AUGUST 2010]*

Another illustration of Mr Lucas's assistance with her lesson preparation was when she planned to teach the topic 'manufacturing'. Mr Lucas provided her with advice on the process of teaching 'manufacturing'. Lara and Mr Lucas also planned to discuss other alternatives in the event of Lara not achieving her lesson outcomes. Lara contended that:

My mentor is guiding me very well on how to go about teaching manufacturing. He helped me work out my lesson plans for next week. We are still going to discuss what we are going to do next week if our plans don't work out. It is a continuing process, work in progress. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 27 AUGUST 2010]*

To minimize possible content errors in her lesson, Lara and Mr Lucas arranged to go through all the answers of an activity before she presented it to the learners. This plan of action gave Lara a sense of direction for future lesson planning. In this regard she stated:

We planned the lessons of every day of the week and set up memoranda and work out memoranda to make sure that we didn't make any mistakes or we didn't leave room for any mistakes to creep in anywhere. I feel that this is the way forward. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 27 AUGUST 2010]*



The importance of Mr Lucas's assistance with Lara's lesson preparation became evident when she encountered an error in the prescribed textbook used for the Grade 11 Accounting class. Lara decided to present the lesson on 'clubs' to the learners without rectifying the mistake. Afterwards she realised that she should have consulted her mentor when she had doubts regarding the information in the textbook. On this issue she noted that:

I did have a challenge with the textbook...it is prescribed that you only use one text book with the learners of this school. I took the exercise just out of the textbook but I knew that something was wrong...it didn't comply with my understanding of the work. I did however made a mistake because I did not ask Mr Lucas's opinion of what he thinks...so I made a mistake regarding that. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 03 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

According to Neo his mentor, Mr Niemandt, enquired on a daily basis what he was planning to do on a specific day. It appeared that Mr Niemandt was not only concerned about what Neo planned to teach, but also his overall well-being at the school. Mr Niemandt provided assistance by moderating Neo's lesson and rectifying the mistakes he found. He remarked:

My mentor always asks me what I am going to do today. My mentor assists me before the lesson by asking questions and asking are you alright? I show him what I'm going to do and help me by looking what I planned and then edit it for me. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]*

In the case of Siya, Mr Sauls, who was his mentor during the first term of his internship, assisted him with his lesson preparation by providing him with textbooks in Accounting and advice on how to present a lesson. On other occasions Mr Sauls would see him briefly and give him question papers to revise with the learners. Siya commented that:

In the lesson he assists me in terms of planning, checking the different textbooks that are good for the lesson and briefs the key points that needs to be covered in bank reconciliation. Sometimes he just tell me that I must repeat the question paper and do it as an exercise. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

Mrs Adams was his mentor during the second term of his internship. She provided Siya with a booklet with exercises on 'manufacturing' which she obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. In addition she assisted Siya with his lesson preparation to teach the topic 'manufacturing'. Siya related that Mrs Adams advised him to visually illustrate all the ledger accounts of 'manufacturing' on the chalkboard. He mentioned that:

My mentor gave me a booklet that she got from WCED. I gave her my lesson plan to assess and my mentor advised me to make some changes. She said the best way to complete the exercise was to open every ledger account on the chalkboard. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 23 JULY 2010]*

Siya did not agree with his mentor's advice and reasoned that the chalkboard does not have sufficient space to illustrate the accounts. As he observed, "the space is too small on the chalkboard". In another example it appeared that Mrs Adams did not agree with the manner in which Siya planned to execute his lesson presentation while teaching 'manufacturing', and she provided him with an alternative method. He explained the following:

I spoke to her and told her what I did in class since I was doing general ledger of manufacturing...I firstly open only the accounts that are involved in the balance sheet accounts section...she said no, I should open all the accounts for them [learners] as it could be easier to understand. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Mrs Adams related that Siya felt uncomfortable when she observed his lesson. She would normally communicate to Siya beforehand that she would observe him but, to avoid tension, she decided to give Siya unexpected classroom visits. She found that this strategy was not helpful because Siya still appeared uncomfortable with her presence in the classroom. Her comment regarding this was:

I discovered that sometimes when you want to go with the student [Siya] then he is not comfortable with it...I decided not to tell him I was going with him...but I went to his class I could see that he is not comfortable when I am there. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 28 JULY 2010]*

Mrs Adams was of the opinion that her mentor assistance could facilitate Siya's development as an Accounting teacher, provided that he was comfortable with her advise, and she said, "if he is comfortable with me, he will learn to teach properly". Her goal was to ensure that Siya encountered minimal challenges whilst teaching. She was pleased that Siya accepted her advice. Mrs Adams reported that:

I try to show him what to do so he shouldn't have any problem with what to do. He does not have a problem when I talk to him. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 28 JULY 2010]*

Zara had two Accounting mentors during her internship. Mrs Zack was the first mentor Zara was assigned to during the first term of her internship. Zara reported that she felt comfortable with Mrs Zack who always treated her fairly when she approached her mentor for assistance with her lesson preparation. She regarded Mrs Zack as an approachable person who gave her sound advice on how to teach Accounting. She stated:

She was there for me because if she wanted me to do a lesson, she will tell me on time so that I can prepare...look at my work and she had the way of telling me what I did wrong without making me feel bad. I could ask her questions if I didn't understand something...she will guide me what I need to explain to the learners what is important...how I should question them. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

During the second term of Zara's internship, Mrs Barnes, who came back from maternity leave, was assigned as her Accounting mentor. According to Zara, Mrs Barnes expected her to discuss all her lessons with her before she embarked on teaching to ensure that accurate information was provided to the learners. Zara wrote in her journal:

My mentor makes sure that every lesson I am going to teach I present it to her or I show her the strategies I am going to use so that she can see if I am giving the right information to the learners. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]*

Unlike the other pre-service teachers, whose mentors were Accounting teachers, Tanya's mentor, Mrs Teale, taught Business Studies, but was allocated as her Accounting mentor. According to Tanya, due to the fact that her mentor did not teach Accounting at the school, her assistance with lesson preparation was minimal. Tanya commented that:

My mentor showed me how to do a lesson plan because they have a different lesson plan from the one that we are using at the campus. She also gave me an extra exercise to give to the class when I taught adjustments. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

In the above category, pre-service teachers were able to describe how their respective mentors provided support with their lesson preparations. It became clear that pre-service teachers received support in varying degrees. While it was evident in the data that Ally, Lara and Neo had their mentors' continuous support, a similar type of support was not offered to Siya, Zara and Tanya.

### **5.3.2. School-based mentors' feedback after the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation**

After the lesson observation, the school-based mentors provided the pre-service teachers with feedback and advice on how to improve their teaching. In the data, feedback related to pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), pedagogical knowledge (PK) and content knowledge (CK). In the case of Ally, Lara and Neo most of the feedback related to PCK, while Zara and Siya received minimal feedback on PCK from their mentors. Tanya's mentor feedback related predominantly to PK, while, feedback related to CK was evident only in Ally, Neo and Lara's cases.

#### **5.3.2.1. Pedagogical content knowledge**

Feedback in this sub-category by the school-based mentors mainly related to the pre-service teachers providing too much information in a particular lesson period, pressure to achieve the lesson outcomes and the lack of innovative teaching methods. Ally related that Mrs

Ashton wanted her to refrain from providing all the answers on the chalkboard to the learners. Mrs Ashton expected Ally to challenge the learners and allow them to work independently. Regarding this Ally wrote:

She [Mrs Ashton] told me that I should not explain the work so much. I must give the learners a chance to do the work on their own...they are taking advantage of the fact that I always do the answers of the activities on the board. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

In another instance, Mrs Ashton observed that Ally found difficulty teaching 'clubs'. Ally indicated that she felt anxious when she taught the 'statement of receipts and payments'. Mrs Ashton met with Ally and gave her guidelines on how to teach those aspects in Accounting which Ally found difficult to teach. Ally indicated that her mentor's assistance boosted her confidence to teach Accounting. She said:

She saw that I was struggling to teach the statement of receipt and payments to the learners and went through my activities showing me what to do I felt was difficult to teach. I had more confidence teaching in front of the class after my mentor helped me. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Even though Mrs Ashton observed every lesson Ally taught, she was unable to elaborate on Ally's pedagogical content knowledge. Mrs Ashton communicated that she was unsure if her comment regarding Ally's weakness in her pedagogical content was valid. She then referred to the higher education lecturers as she perceived them to be more equipped to identify such aspects. Mrs Ashton remarked:

I don't know if it's a weakness actually that she has...where she uses this one word 'right' all the time...I honestly can't from my point say anything...you [lecturers] are more advanced into picking up weaknesses...you [lecturers] know what to look for. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW - 30 JULY 2010]*

According to Lara, Mr Lucas felt that she (Lara) gave the learners too much information in a particular period which consists of forty five minutes. In light of this, Mr Lucas reflected on his own experience to illustrate to her why giving too much information could pose a problem to the learners studying Accounting. He advised her to teach in small chunks to facilitate the learners' understanding. Lara said:

He explained to me that he made a mistake last year as he bombarded the learners with too much information at once...they took a bit longer to understand the work. He told me to do things step by step and work in portions. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Lara found Mr Lucas's feedback on her lesson presentations beneficial and was of the view that his advice could help her to improve her teaching. Lara summarised Mr Lucas's mentor assistance as supportive and expressed gratitude for his assistance. She commented:

When I do get feedback then I really appreciate it like what to do...how to improve...it helps a lot to know what you should go back to for the next lesson. He is very helpful and supportive. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]*

From Mr Lucas's perspective, Lara needed to adjust her teaching according to the learners' pace of learning. According to Mr Lucas he advised Lara to teach small chunks of information in a particular period to ensure that she facilitated the learners' understanding of Accounting. He also noted that there was an attempt by Lara to improve her teaching. He explained that:

Sometimes she has done too much in one period...you know the learners are very slow...she must try to do short pieces at a time...everyday she is improving bit by bit. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 01 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Mr Lucas iterated that he observed that Lara rushed through her lessons and therefore neglected to assess if the learners understood what she taught them. Mr Lucas felt that Lara would learn through experience. He commented:

She needs to speak slowly because when she is going too fast they won't understand...she needs to work on that. She will overcome her shortcomings with experience as we go along...this is also a learning curve for her. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 01 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

The data revealed an element of care in Lara's and Mr Lucas's mentoring relationship. When Lara felt disheartened regarding the content errors in her lesson presentation, Mr Lucas sat down with her and assured her that to commit errors is part of being human and that she should perceive her errors as part of a learning curve. Lara stated that her mentor's advice changed her attitude towards her learning to teach and that she felt enthusiastic about teaching. She contended that:

My mentor gave me a 'pep' talk saying that we all human...we all make mistakes...we must just learn from our mistakes and not do it again...that was the attitude I went into this week's lessons...I felt positive about it. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Neo indicated that his mentor, Mr Niemandt, observed that he focused on too many books of Accounting in a particular lesson. For example, Mr Niemandt observed his lesson on 'year-end adjustments' and advised Neo to focus exclusively on the 'general ledger'. Neo remarked:

My mentor told me to stick to the general ledger and I must not do many things at one time that will confuse the learners...if I am doing the double entry system I must stick to it and not talk about the balance sheet or income statement. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 20 AUGUST 2010]*

According to Neo, Mr Niemandt wanted him to prioritise the learners' understanding of Accounting as opposed to only focusing on achieving his lesson objectives. In this regard, Mr Niemandt observed that Neo did not encourage learner participation during his lesson presentations. Mr Niemandt therefore advised him to interact with the learners through ongoing questioning. Regarding this Neo expressed that:

I must get more involved with the learners, ask different questions and force them to answer the questions. In that way I am drilling them. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 23 APRIL 2010]*

According to Mr Niemandt, Neo found sustaining the learner's attention challenging. He advised Neo to use visual aids to illustrate the Accounts on the chalkboard. This would compel the learners to pay attention to his lesson and copy his illustrations from the chalkboard. Mr Niemandt said:

His lesson will face down hill if the learners' attention is not fully with him...when he illustrates work on the chalkboard he is forcing them [the learners] to look at him...they will see what he writes on the board...they will thus listen to what he is saying. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 JULY 2010]*

Mr Niemandt also mentioned that Neo did not vary his method of teaching to create an exciting environment to encourage all the learners to learn Accounting. Further, he observed that Neo's tone of voice was monotonous and that Neo's interaction with the learners was minimal. Mr Niemandt felt that Neo needed to improve on making his lessons more interesting to the learners. He said in this regard:

In the lessons I observed, he is very static in class and I feel sometimes it is very important to move around. You know actually he need to be more expressive and make the lesson more interesting and vibrant for the learners. There seems to be no variations in his tone as well. I think that is things he needs to work on, be a bit more vibrant. Learners are looking for some excitement. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Neo perceived his mentor's advice as a positive influence on his learning to teach Accounting. His mentor always allowed time for discussing the challenges Neo encountered. After every lesson presentation, Mr Niemandt would provide Neo with advice on how to improve his lessons and Neo felt that his mentor boosted his confidence in teaching Accounting each time he gave him advice. In light of how Neo felt regarding his mentor's advice and learning to teach he said:

My mentor is very helpful to me before and after the lesson...his influence is always positive. I asked my mentor about the challenges of my lesson presentation and he helped me by explaining those issues. After my mentor's assistance I always gain confidence and I can't wait for another new topic in order to learn more new things. Each and every time I am doing a new topic I am learning new things. I grow in confidence every week. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

There was limited evidence in the data of Mrs Teale observing Tanya. Only in one particular instance did she write in her reflection journal that Mrs Teale gave her advice on how to teach the learners. According to Tanya, Mrs Teale advised her to allow the learners to participate in her lesson presentation and to challenge the learners. It appeared that Tanya misunderstood Mrs Teale's advice because she planned to challenge the learners by giving them an activity to complete before she provided them with an example of a new topic. She explained that:

She [Mrs Teale] told me not to explain everything to the learners. I must give them opportunities to think...let them try and to do the exercise on their own...so that I can see if they really understand the work...next week I will give activities before doing the example. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 07 MAY 2010]*

When the first interview was conducted with Mrs Barnes, she was Zara's mentor for approximately two weeks during the second term of Zara's internship and could therefore provide limited information about Zara's teaching abilities. Mrs Barnes hesitantly remarked that Zara's interaction with the learners was minimal. She was of the opinion that Zara could improve in this particular area by encouraging learner participation continuously during her lesson. In the same breath Mrs Barnes expressed satisfaction that Zara was willing to make an effort. She stated:

Maybe she should try and engage the class...there were only a few learners answering her questions. I think the lesson was fine...she's trying at least. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW - 03 AUGUST 2010]*

In this sub-category it became clear that most of the school-based mentors were primarily concerned that the learners understood the work that was taught by the pre-service teachers. In this regard certain pre-service teachers benefited because the mentors would highlight their challenges while learning to teach. It also became clear that some of the pre-service teachers were unable to identify some of their own challenges and needed mentor assistance. The data in this subcategory also revealed that if mentors do not communicate their advice clearly to the pre-service teacher, the result could be detrimental for the learners.

### 5.3.2.2. Pedagogical knowledge

Two pre-service teachers reported that they experienced difficulty with general pedagogical knowledge and how their school-based mentors responded to the challenges of classroom management and time management.

Tanya related that her mentor, Mrs Teale, observed that some of the learners were too rowdy while Tanya presented her lesson. She wanted Tanya to exercise more control over the learners to illustrate her authority. Tanya mentioned that:

When she [Mrs Teale] came to observe me...she told me the only thing that I need to improve on is how to manage a noisy class...I must show the learners that I'm one who is in charge. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

Lara repeatedly expressed concern in her reflection journal regarding her inability to deal with the learners' behaviour. The learners' unruly behaviour in the classroom, and their lack of co-operation, prompted her to request Mr Lucas's intervention. She felt incapable of dealing with the learners' behaviour. According to Lara Mr Lucas adhered to her request and clarified to the learners the importance of co-operating with her and provided her with guidelines on classroom management. She asserted:

This is a very hyperactive group...it takes a lot of energy to get them to settle and interested in the lesson for the whole period. I asked my mentor to speak to the class. He spoke to the class and told them that they are only disadvantaging themselves if they don't work with me. He also gave me some tips on how to handle the class. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

Time management became problematic when Lara found that planning lessons with her mentor for a particular week did not necessarily yield the desired lesson outcomes according to the pacesetter provided by the Western Cape Education Department. She blamed the disruptions in the school programme for not achieving her lesson objectives. For example, Lara became frustrated when the school changed their timetable without informing the teachers in advance. She was of the view that the school management put pressure on the teachers when they neglected to inform them about changes in the timetable because this had a negative impact on their lesson planning. In light of this Lara said:

The school's timetable changes day by day which is not mentioned in the planning and it frustrates me cause you have to work according to what their timetable allow you to. Your planning then go out of the window and it is really a challenging situation to be in. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 27 AUGUST 2010]*



Another factor that disrupted teaching time was the test week which allocated time during school hours for the learners to study for their tests and she expressed that, “we had to give time off for the learners to study as this is their test series week”. These aspects raised serious concerns for Lara and Mr Lucas because they were under pressure to complete the syllabus for the academic year. Lara remarked that:

We [Lara and Mr Lucas] are worried we will not get done with the syllabus for the year as we are behind...time is pressing and we need to finish our work. We have proposed to the learners that they come in on Saturdays and also during the holidays to finish unfinished work because we are behind one module still. The learners did agree to do this...we will be able to catch up on some of the work we lost out on. That is our plan of action to finish the syllabus for the year. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Reflecting on the data on this subcategory it became clear that the pre-service teachers had experiences in varying degrees with regard to pedagogical knowledge. Some pre-service teachers reported no significant data in this regard and this could be attributed to various factors such as the fact that pre-service teachers did not perceive this category as being an important factor to report in their reflection journal, or that the mentors were always present in the class to assist them with classroom management.

### **5.3.2.3. Content knowledge**

The data showed evidence of mentors assisting pre-service teachers with content knowledge in the cases of Ally and Neo. The data, however, revealed no evidence of school-based mentors giving advice on the pre-service teachers' content knowledge in the cases of Lara, Zara, Siya and Tanya.

Ally wrote in her reflection journal that her mentor observed every lesson she presented to the Grade 11's. Mrs Ashton pointed out to Ally an error that she made in the 'general ledger'. She taught the topic 'clubs' and focussed on the refreshments account and was not consistent with the terminology she used in this account. Mrs Ashton highlighted this inconsistency and advised Ally to utilize the same terminology when she balanced accounts. She asserted:

I was busy completing a refreshment account...I started with the balance of refreshments and wrote on the board 'balance b/d' and the amount...at the end of the account I put in the closing balance as 'stock of refreshments' and the amount. My mentor then told me to put stock of refreshments at the beginning of the account as my opening balance. . *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

In another example of her mentor's assistance, Ally did not know why monetary withdrawals by the partner during the financial period should be entered into the drawings account. Mrs

Ashton noticed Ally's difficulty and advised her on how to proceed with the explanation of monetary withdrawals by the partner. Ally remarked that:

I have encountered that the learners questioned me why the partners take a salary during the year then it is entered in the drawings account. I explained to them but they didn't understand. My mentor then assisted me to explain to the learners why salary that the partner takes during the year should be entered in the drawings account. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

In one particular example, Neo explained to the learners the entries in the general journal and forgot to insert the debtors and creditors column. He also neglected to provide narrations of each transaction to give a brief explanation why the transaction occurred. His mentor, Mr Niemandt, observed that Neo omitted vital information in his lesson and warned him not to assume that the learners would understand his explanation of the 'general journal' if he omitted information that was vital for their understanding. In this regard Neo indicated that he would try his best to do what was expected of an Accounting teacher. He remarked that:

When I was doing the general journal I did not include the debtors and creditors column section...the narrations or reasons in my general journal. My mentor told me not to assume that the learners understood the lesson if I leave out information. I learned that I must always work perfectly...do the things as it is supposed to be. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

There was no apparent concern by Mr Niemandt about Neo's content knowledge in Accounting. He stipulated that he was satisfied in this regard and referred to the basic principles of Accounting as an example of the strength of Neo's content knowledge. His comment was that:

I think generally I am happy with his content knowledge..... I don't think there is a lot lacking in terms of knowing the basics of accounting. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

It was evident that feedback is a key component in a mentoring relationship. It was interesting to note that where the pre-service teachers experienced minimal feedback such as in the case of Tanya, Siya and Zara there was limited evidence in their reflection journals on how to improve their teaching skills. It became clear in the data that the mentors who observed their mentees on a continuous basis were able to highlight the content errors they made in their lesson presentations.

#### 5.3.2.4. Co-teaching

Co-teaching was only evident in Lara's case. Lara struggled to facilitate the learners' understanding and was unable to manage the learners' unruly behaviour in the classroom. She felt compelled to discuss the problem with her mentor and expressed that, "I really needed a solution for the problem so me and Mr Lucas talked about it". Their solution to the problem was co-teaching and in her opinion the proposed solution alleviated the problem. In this regard she said:

We decided to co-teach for this week so that we could get the learners to understand better because I thought that they made up their minds and decided that they are only going to listen to Mr Lucas so that caused a problem so I thought that I should not entirely eliminate Mr Lucas from them and I need to let Mr Lucas also have a few lessons with them so that is what we decided to do this week and I must say it worked very well. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 JULY 2010]*

Deciding to co-teach, Lara and Mr Lucas met to prepare the lessons required for the Grade 11 Accounting class. They decided who would be responsible for which lessons. With reference to this she said:

We prepared together and decided on which days he is going to take them [learners] and which day I am going to take them so we needed to know what the other person is going to do. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 JULY 2010]*

Co-teaching gave Lara and Mr Lucas an opportunity to observe each others' lesson presentations. They discussed how Lara could improve her teaching skills. She in turn observed Mr Lucas's lessons and gave him feedback on how to improve his teaching. Lara commented:

My mentor and I co-taught this weeks' lessons as he was helping me to correct the mistakes ... we combined our brains to come up with solutions to the problem I caused...it was very good actually...it was great and it helped me a lot. I observed him and he observed me...we combined notes afterwards and we told each other how to improve and what the next step will be. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Despite the advantages of co-teaching, Lara also related that she found co-teaching challenging. When it was her opportunity to teach the learners, she omitted to establish whether the learners understood what had been taught by Mr Lucas. She explained that:

I really shot myself in the foot by just continuing where my mentor left off without first checking whether they [learners] understood what he [Mr Lucas] was saying. I realised that they didn't understand the work he [Mr Lucas] explained to them 100%... now I have to redo everything with them the coming week...so my outcome of the lesson was not reached at all. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 6 AUGUST 2010]*

It is interesting to note that co-teaching was not a common mentoring tool used by the mentors. However, the usefulness of co-teaching was evident in the case of Lara and Mr Lucas. Co-teaching enabled Lara to overcome the challenges she experienced. Co-teaching motivated Lara to teach Accounting working alongside her mentor and provided insight into the challenges that even experienced teachers face.

#### **5.3.2.4.1. Observing the mentor teacher**

Learning to teach through observing the Accounting mentor teaching can be instrumental in developing pre-service teachers' teaching skills. The data revealed two such cases namely, Neo and Lara.

Observing the mentor was most evident in the case of Neo. At the initial stages of his internship Neo explained that he observed his mentor on a regular basis. Neo found Mr Niemandt's method of teaching to be similar to his own and gave Mr Niemandt credit for being an experienced teacher. He stated:

I observe my mentor most of the time. I learn his style of doing things even though I find that it is not more different from the one I use but he knows the learners understanding better than me. I learn a lot of methods on how to present a lesson. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

At the school where Neo did his internship there were two Grade 10 Accounting classes. Mr Niemandt assigned one class to Neo and was in charge of the other class. Neo therefore had an opportunity to observe how Mr Niemandt presented lessons. Neo stated that there was one particular lesson his mentor presented where he used a teaching method called 'simulation' which he found interesting and wanted to emulate this method in his classes. Regarding this he noted that:

I observed my mentor on other class of Grade 10. He did the simulation...I learnt a lot from that. One learner was a debtor, second was a business, third one was the bank of the business and the fourth one was the bank of the other business. The business issued receipt to the debtor and sent to their bank, the bank of the business contacted the debtor's bank and there was no funds and then everything turned backwards. It was nice...I learnt a lot from it. I must learn to do simulations in my class. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 16 APRIL 2010]*

Neo also related that he observed his mentor teaching the Grade 11 Accounting class. Neo was able to duplicate Mr Niemandt' style of teaching in the Grade 11 class in his assigned Grade 10 class. In this regard he remarked:

I even observed my mentor teaching Grade 11...I noticed the method he uses in that class. I learned a lot how he teaches the different grades...now I am able to apply it in my Grade10 class. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 AUGUST 2010]*

According to Lara her mentor, Mr Lucas, suggested to her that she should observe him teaching an aspect of the topic 'clubs' when he noticed that she found it difficult to teach this topic. When Lara observed Mr Lucas, she indicated that she found that the learners grasped his method of teaching. She remarked that:

He [Mr Lucas] took the class on Tuesday to explain to them something when I struggled with clubs. I learned from him how to explain the difference between the receipts and income, payments and expenditure...he made it so simple...I could see that the learners understood it instantly. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 03 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

It became clear that learning to teach through observing the mentor can be a vital component in mentoring pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers are provided with an opportunity to visualize how a topic is taught in Accounting. Added to this the pre-service teachers can decide if the method of teaching they are observing is an applicable method to use, and whether they are able to improve their own practice.

#### **5.4. Theme 3: Challenges the pre-service teachers face with the school-based mentors while learning to teach Accounting**

The data revealed several challenges the pre-service teachers faced with their respective school-based mentors while learning to teach Accounting. Challenges such as mentor absenteeism, conflicts with mentors' teaching style and pre-service teachers being assigned a full teaching load were reported.

##### **5.4.1. Mentors' absenteeism**

Absenteeism due to illness or other personal reasons appeared to have negatively influenced the pre-service teachers' learning to teach during teaching practice. In certain cases the absenteeism of mentors made pre-service teachers feel despondent and in other cases it had little or no effect.

In Siya's case, chronic absenteeism by both his mentors was reported. At the first school his mentor, Mr Sauls, was unable to provide adequate mentor assistance. One of the reasons Siya provided for this was that the mentor left school early on a particular day with the classroom keys and it affected Siya's teaching for an entire week. At this particular school, the learners rotate classes to meet a teacher for a specific subject and he did not have a

classroom in which to teach the learners, since Mr Sauls had taken the classroom keys home and was subsequently absent for the whole week. Siya commented on this issue by saying:

My mentor went to his home with the keys...he did not come back to school for the week, because of the learners rotating classes I hadn't manage to teach for the whole week. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

At the second school where Siya did his internship, an unfortunate incident involving his mentor, Mrs Adams, occurred at the school. Siya related that she was physically attacked by one of the learners at the school. The learner was suspended from school but the incident left Mrs Adams severely traumatised. There was an indication that she might not return to that school. He related the following story:

My mentor was slapped by one of the learners...the school decided to suspend that one learner until further notice ...The school informed the governing body and then took it to the department. She [Mrs Adams] decided to take leave...I heard rumours that she was about to leave the school. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 11 AUGUST 2010]*

Mrs Adams's absenteeism appeared to negatively affect Siya because he was compelled to teach all her Accounting classes. He therefore was unable to achieve his lesson outcomes and felt despondent about teaching. About this he had this to say:

It was not a good week for me, it was a busy week....my mentor was on leave...I didn't manage to achieve the lesson outcomes this week...we are used to alternate classes. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 06 AUGUST 2010]*

Siya stated that the school management supported Mrs Adams' request for him to continue with her classes. Having no mentor assistance, Siya decided to collaborate with other Accounting teachers. Consequently Mrs Adams never returned to the school. Siya reported that:

My mentor phoned me and told me she is sick and I should finish the work. The principal told me to carry on with the learners. My mentor could not advise me...I congregate some other teachers around for help. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 13 AUGUST 2010]*

Mrs Adams was unable to provide sufficient information regarding Siya's teaching abilities because at the time of the interview she had been his mentor for only two weeks. In this regard she said, "no I can't say it now, I need to observe him more". She however committed to observe Siya three times a week and explained that, "I have decided to go with him to class three times a week". Due to the incident that occurred later at the school this commitment was unfortunately not fulfilled.

Tanya reported that her mentor, Mrs Teale's, absenteeism caused her to be despondent. At the start of the second term of Tanya's internship, her mentor did not return to work after the holiday period due to a loss in her family, and Mrs Teale was absent for more than two weeks. She therefore had no mentor assistance for this period. She asserted that she grappled to teach the 'wages and salaries' journal to the learners. Tanya expressed a cry for help and felt that if she was able to observe her mentor, or any Accounting teacher, teaching a similar topic it could help her to overcome this challenge. She expressed her frustration by saying:

At first I also didn't know how to calculate the hours. I used to struggle with that one. I think what I really need now is to observe someone teaching 'wages and salaries journal' so that I can go and see their way of teaching. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 20 JULY 2010]*

Ally, in contrast, did not appear to have a similar sentiment as Tanya and Siya when her mentor was absent. One month prior to the end of her internship, Ally wrote in her reflection journal that her mentor would be on sick leave until the end of September. This meant that Ally would have no mentor assistance while teaching Accounting for a period of one month. There was no indication in the data that Ally felt despondent or disheartened due to her mentor's absenteeism and this can be attributed to the fact that it was the last month of Ally's internship and it was an assessment period for the learners. She responded as follows:

My mentor is very sick and she will be back in one month's time. I will therefore have no mentor for the rest of the term. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 27 AUGUST 2010]*

Reflecting on the above transcripts it is interesting to note that the mentors' absenteeism affected the pre-service teachers to varying degrees. It appeared that the mentors who did not communicate their absenteeism to the pre-service teachers resulted in them feeling despondent about teaching. Evident in the case of Siya and Tanya is the fact that their respective mentors seemed to lack an understanding of their role as mentors. It would have been appropriate for these mentors to communicate to their pre-service teachers what was expected of them during their absence.

#### **5.4.2. Conflicts with mentors' teaching style**

In Lara and Neo's case it was evident that they did not always agree with their mentors' teaching styles. Lara felt that her mentor's teaching style sometimes confused the learners, for example, when she struggled to explain the entries of 'asset disposal' in the general ledger, Lara feared that she might be unable to complete this topic due to the limited time available before the June examination period. She requested Mr Lucas to explain the work to

the learners. Lara experienced feelings of dissatisfaction with her mentor's explanation because in her opinion he caused more confusion amongst the learners. She expressed the following sentiments:

I didn't know how to go about it to make them [learners] understand because there wasn't a lot of time. So that's why I actually asked Mr. Lucas to explain to them first...maybe he can explain to them better in the short time period before the June exam...Mr Lucas confused them even more...I didn't know how to get them out of their confused mode.  
*[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 18 MAY 2010]*

During the second term of teaching practice, Lara felt that Mr Lucas's style of teaching inhibited her style of teaching. The learners were not accepting of her teaching style because they had grown accustomed to her mentor's way of teaching. She therefore felt that her approach to teaching confused the learners. She remarked as follows:

Mr Lucas does things so differently...they [learners] understand but I don't want to do something different then I confuse them like totally...he explain it this way and now I come and explain it that way. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 26 JULY 2010]*

Lara held the view that Mr Lucas's teaching method did not entirely facilitate the learners' understanding of Accounting. Even though the learners appeared to understand the work presented, Lara was of the opinion that Mr Lucas took 'short cuts' in his teaching and therefore omitted information that was vital in Accounting. Hence she was not prepared to emulate his style of teaching, as she stated that:

Mr Lucas used a different method of teaching...it kind of didn't work at first because Mr Lucas would do the cash book differently...In his opinion, the learners would understand better, I got that but I would not agree with the method...I thought that it included a lot of short cuts and the learners understood...it was not the correct way but it worked for him and the learners. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Lara strongly believed that taking "shortcuts" is an inappropriate method of teaching. She emphasized in her reflection journal that she was determined to apply what she was taught at university in her teaching. She was adamant that she wanted to provide explicit details of Accounting to the learners, even if it required more time to teach. She had this to say:

I will do things the correct way like I was taught how it should be done appropriately at university...even if it takes extra time and longer...I will leave all the shortcuts behind.  
*[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Determined to apply her new found belief of teaching, Lara was enthusiastic when she had to teach a new topic. She wanted to prepare her lesson adequately. Exuding passion for teaching Accounting had a positive influence on Lara's lesson presentation and the learners



showed enthusiasm for the subject. Lara came to a realisation that a teacher's mood affects the learners' attitude toward a subject. She reflected that:

I taught a completely new topic...I went into it with enthusiasm and preparedness. I felt so much passion and enthusiasm that the learners could actually also feed from it...I realised that what I have they feed from and that made me realise that if I do it they will do it...it went very well this week. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Mr Lucas admitted that he sometimes neglected to reinforce the basic principles of Accounting when he presents a lesson. He felt that it is vital to refer to these principles to facilitate the learners' understanding when they apply the entries in the books of Accounting. He planned to create a poster to visualise to the learners a list of accounts for each classification linked to the basic principles of Accounting. He remarked:

I am also guilty on that Asset = Owner's equity + Liability... what I will do is make a poster and list all the accounts so that they [learners] can see. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 18 MAY 2010]*

Mr Lucas was adamant to utilize the Accounting prescribed textbook exclusively in the classroom, even though Lara wanted to use other textbooks. According to Mr Lucas the learners sometimes forgot their notebooks at home which negatively influenced his planning. It appeared that Mr Lucas had the notion that the learners' irresponsible behaviour compelled him to use only the prescribed textbook. He said:

If you give the learners lose pages then they tend to bring their books the one day.....then leave it at home the rest of the days. I told Lara to stick to the textbook. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

Similarly, Neo found emulating his mentor's style of teaching to be a challenge. He regarded his mentor's approach to teaching as complex and difficult to follow. Moreover, trying to convince his mentor to change his teaching style would be impossible as this was his approach in all his Accounting classes. Yet, Neo admitted that his mentor's style of teaching was effective because the learners appeared to understand Accounting when Mr Niemandt taught them. He attempted to integrate it with his own method of teaching, and stated that:

The strategy he [Mr Niemandt] is using for his entire learners and it is not easy to change. I find it is easier for the learners to understand the lesson. At first it was not easy for me to adapt that style...now I'm growing a little bit to this style combining with mine. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]*

Before he embarked on a lesson presentation it was a standard rule for Neo to discuss the lesson with Mr Niemandt. According to Neo, Mr Niemandt did not agree with his strategy to teach the general journal. Mr Niemandt advised Neo to follow an approach that he normally

used to teach the aforementioned topic. The extract below illustrates how Neo's mentor wanted him to teach a particular topic which Neo found challenging:

Before I begin my lesson I show my mentor that I'm going to begin to explain the adjustment that is taking place...I will do the T- accounts and the general journal...he [Mr Niemandt] said I must first show them the types of the accounts, identify and classify before I do those things. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 JULY 2010]

When Neo followed Mr Niemandt's advice, he found the method to be problematic when he taught the learners the concept 'stock on hand'. He provided the following extract of the transaction he had difficulty explaining to the learners:

The physical stock-taking on 28 February 2006 shows that the following is unused:

Stationery R122

Packing material R387

So let's take stationery and identify the accounts:

Stationery R122 Credit

Consumables stores on hand R122 Debit

According to Neo, confusion arose amongst the learners when he explained to them why the stationery is credited. The learners' understanding was that stationery is an expense and therefore should be debited but the transaction proved otherwise. Neo's preferred method was to illustrate the accounts in the 'general ledger' to justify to the learners why stationery, in this particular transaction, was credited rather than debited. However, Mr Niemandt did not agree with Neo's preferred method of teaching and wanted him only to identify the accounts. As Neo observed:

The learners were confused why the stationery has to be credited if it is an expense...I tried to explain...It is not easy for me to copy the style of the mentor because it is confusing me a little bit but I want to use it...he [Mr Niemandt] says he wants the children to be taught like that. I think it is better if I use T-accounts to illustrate the double entry system to the learners...it is easy to do it like that. [REFLECTION JOURNAL – 6 AUGUST 2010]

Mr Niemandt felt that Neo's method of teaching was applicable but he had the notion that he could illustrate to Neo how to teach Accounting more effectively and to convince Neo that his method was more appropriate. He coached Neo to apply his teaching method because he wanted to maintain consistency in teaching Accounting to his learners. He commented that:

I do agree with the layout in terms of how Neo presents the accounts, amount as an increase or decrease...debits or credits...but there is a better way to do it. I know he finds my method confusing...I have been showing him exactly how I do it with my learners...I encouraged him

to actually do it the same way and make sure he does it consistently the same way so that the learners get to see and learn the logic. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Mr Niemandt also related that Neo confronted him regarding his teaching style. Neo communicated to Mr Niemandt that he was unable to apply the latter's method of teaching, for example, explaining to the learners that in a particular transaction an account increases and the contra-account decreases. Neo could therefore not illustrate how the double entry system connected with Mr Niemandt's method of teaching. In this regard Mr Niemandt said:

The problem Neo encountered and came to me about was my way of teaching which he is not familiar with...he is making that link between the rules which are accounts increase and decrease. He has the accounting knowledge...he knows the rules but for some reasons making the link between the two accounts of the transactions and applying the rules. For example, knowing which accounts will increase or decrease and are they assets... there were one or two instances where he seemed a bit unsure about that. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Due to Mr Niemandt's responsibility as deputy principal of the school, he felt sometimes unable to give Neo ongoing mentor assistance. He conveyed that he was aware of his responsibility as mentor but at certain times his managerial duties took precedence over his other teaching duties. Mr Niemandt committed to avail himself after school hours and indicated that he could assist Neo mainly with his lesson preparation, stating that:

I think of Neo...but I'm too busy with other things...I don't actually get the time to really focus on him...I am always available after school sometimes until 16h00...Especially in terms of lesson preparation I can assist him a lot. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

In terms of how many times he observed Neo, Mr Niemandt said "I could observe him probably only once a week due to my administrative duties". At the initial stages of Neo's internship, Mr Niemandt related that he gave Neo an opportunity to observe him, and thereafter he allowed Neo to present lessons independently. Mr Niemandt expressed that ideally he wanted to give Neo sufficient mentor support but his managerial commitments were a barrier. He explained the situation as follows:

He was in my class for a while...then eventually he took over from me...I told him the first term that there wasn't enough time for me to give him support that I really wanted to give. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

There is clear indication in this subcategory that pre-service teachers and their school-based mentors did not always see 'eye to eye' about the approaches to teaching. It was, however, interesting to note how the pre-service teachers dealt with how they felt about their mentors' teaching style. Lara on the one hand did not verbally communicate her disapproval to her

mentor but instead was motivated to become, in her opinion, “a better Accounting teacher”. Neo, on the other hand, expressed his disapproval but felt compelled to emulate his mentor’s style of teaching to maintain a professional relationship with his mentor.

#### **5.4.3. Pre-service teachers assigned a full teaching load**

In two cases pre-service teachers were assigned full teaching loads and therefore did not ‘shadow’ an Accounting mentor teacher. In the B Ed:FET programme, the teaching practice policy stipulates that pre-service teachers should teach alongside a mentor for support. Despite this policy, it was not the case with Zara and Tanya. Zara was requested to substitute an Accounting teacher who was on maternity leave. The aforementioned information was verified in an interview with Zara when she said:

There was no teacher for the subject and the period clashes with the one who is assisting me so she couldn’t be with me everytime. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 JULY 2010]*

Assuming the role of a substitute teacher made it impossible for Zara’s mentor, Mrs Zack, to observe all her lessons and to provide ongoing feedback. Zara therefore had insufficient mentor assistance during the first term and thus had to rely on her own abilities to learn to teach Accounting. She was unable to provide explicit details of how her mentor assisted her with the challenges she faced. Instead she would give details of her mentor’s character traits related to teaching and provided scant details of her assistance in learning to teach. She said:

Well she [the mentor] is a woman who seem to love her work, she had so much to show me and how I should start the lesson what questions I had to ask. She took all her lessons as if there was someone moderating her work that is how she even boosted me...she was always prepared. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Even though Zara referred to Mrs Zack as her mentor, she claimed that Mrs Zack was not available to assist her. She therefore incorporated the assistance of an Accounting teacher, Mr Wright, located at another school, who gave her information related to teaching Accounting. In this regard she stated:

She [Mrs Zack] was not around... I got assistance from a teacher at another school, Mr Wright, he gave me extra notes to go through and borrowed [lend] me textbooks. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 24 APRIL 2010]*

To gain more clarity of the nature of Mrs Zack’s mentor assistance, Zara made a revelation that she did not have a good relationship with Mrs Zack. Hence, she was compelled to seek assistance at another school and said, “remember I once told you [lecturer] I must go to

another school to ask for some help because Mrs Zack did not want me". According to Zara the school has two Accounting teachers. Added to this, Zara related that the school was unable to replace the Accounting teacher who went on maternity leave. She was requested by school management to teach Accounting to Grade 11 and 12 because Mrs Zack did not have the necessary content knowledge to teach these grades. She told the following story to explain why she taught the Grades 11 and 12 Accounting at the school and why she had no mentor support.

When I came here they [the school] had a problem because the Accounting teacher went on maternity leave. The teacher that they had didn't know the Accounting. They only have two teachers for Accounting....the one is only till Grade 10 and the other one is till Grade 12. The one for Grade 12, she had a problem with some stuff...I don't know what...I had to assist with the Grade 12's. I teach the Grade 12's and some of the Grade 11 classes. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 JULY 2010]

Mrs Barnes, who was appointed as Zara's mentor during the second term of her internship, provided conflicting information regarding Zara's position at the school. First she stated that Mrs Zack substituted her while she was on maternity leave. Then in the same breath mentioned that Zara replaced Mrs Zack who left the school at the end of the second term. She also appeared unsure what grade the other teacher, Mrs Zack taught in her absence, even though she substituted her, but then stated that she only taught Grade 10 Accounting. In this regard she commented:

I was actually on maternity leave and the lady that was substituting me unfortunately could not come back this term. I think she was mostly in Grade 12...she was mostly in Grade 12 Accounting. Then this term when we re-opened Zara took over from that lady. I only teach that class Grade 10. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 03 AUGUST 2010]

On the one hand Mrs Barnes stated that Mrs Zack substituted for her while she was on maternity leave and, on the other hand, she expressed that Zara replaced Mrs Zack when she left. Zara wrote in her reflections that Mrs Barnes taught the Grade 12 but Mrs Barnes revealed that she only taught Accounting in Grade 10. The information provided by Mrs Barnes and Zara in light of the above information was conflicting.

The data revealed that Zara wrote inaccurate information regarding Mrs Barnes's mentor assistance during the second term of her internship. The evidence of the inaccurate information was verified when Mrs Barnes was interviewed. Zara wrote in her reflection journal that Mrs Barnes assisted her teaching the Grade 12's the topic 'companies' but, according to Mrs Barnes, she was only responsible for teaching the Grade 10's Accounting. The following excerpt illustrates the inaccurate information Zara wrote in her reflection journal with regards to Mrs Barnes assisting her with a Grade 12 lesson:

She [Mrs Barnes] gave me some of the lesson activities that she usually used when dealing with 'companies'....she also explained to me how to handle such lessons...what are the best way to make sure that the lesson goes smooth. She also gave me some tips to use for the learners when they are not grasping the lesson. She also redo my lesson plan in certain aspects where she felt they were not really correct...I love the way she handles things...she understand I am still on the learning curve. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Mrs Barnes was unable to provide sufficient information regarding Zara's 'learning to teach' experience because of her absenteeism due to maternity leave. She was unable to assist Zara as expected from a mentor because Zara had a contract post with the school. Unfortunately also due to strike action during teaching practice, Mrs Barnes could not comment on any additional information about Zara's internship.

Tanya was in a similar situation as Zara but did not attempt to hide information. She was forthcoming about the lack of mentor assistance in her reflection journal and interview. In the reflection journal she stated that she had minimal mentor assistance. In an interview with Tanya she stated that she obtained a contract at the school to teach Grade 10 Accounting and the school therefore did not perceive her as a pre-service teacher. Tanya realized the importance of mentor support and indicated to the principal that she wished to find another school but was persuaded by the principal to honour her contract. Regarding this issue she said:

They treat me as staff, because I have a contract until September. I wanted to change schools, but the principal said no I must stay. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 20 JULY 2010]*

As previously stated, Mrs Teale was the Business Studies teacher at the school where Tanya did her internship and thus was not always available to assist Tanya with lesson planning for Accounting. Tanya remarked that:

She was busy with Grade 11 Business Studies because the learners were doing the action plan...we couldn't sit down and talk about this week's lesson. I still have to discuss this week and next week's lesson plan after the Grade 11's finished with the action plan which will be next week. *[REFLECTION JOURNAL – 30 APRIL 2010]*

Because of full teaching loads, Mrs Teale only observed Tanya four times during the first term and twice during the second term. She was of the opinion that Mrs Teale observed her to obtain credit according to the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for mentoring a pre-service teacher. She uttered:

She observed me four times during the first term and twice after the strike when she is free because she had to fill in forms, that IQMS thing. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 30 AUGUST 2010]*

Mrs Teale was hesitant to mention that she was the Business Studies teacher as the reason why she was only able to observe Tanya four times during the second term. Instead she referred to the adjustment of the timetable prohibiting her to observe Tanya more often. In light of this she commented:

I observed her four times during the previous term....at the moment they adjusted the timetable so I can't observe a lot. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 02 AUGUST 2010]*

In the above extracts it became apparent that Zara and Tanya experienced insufficient mentoring due to their contractual situation which was not aligned with the expectations of the university teaching practice policy. There could be various factors that influenced these pre-service teachers' choice of not heeding the requirements of this policy. For example, financial constraints could compel them to take on teaching positions for remuneration as they receive no financial compensation over the six month teaching practice period.

## **5.5. Factors that enhanced the mentoring relationship**

Several factors in the data related to the enhancement of the mentoring relationship were also highlighted. These included pre-service teachers' and mentors' level of commitment to the mentoring relationship and the fact that mentoring was reciprocal.

### **5.5.1. Mentors commitment to pre-service teachers' learning to teach**

In the case of Ally and Neo their mentors assigned Accounting classes to them to ensure that their teaching skills were continuously sharpened. Ally was assigned a Grade 11 class. Mrs Ashton described the Grade 11 class as academic achievers who were "entertaining where knowledge is concerned, they are very challenging...they don't just accept" *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Mrs Ashton had a high regard for Ally's quest to become a teacher. This became evident when she communicated to her learners that they should regard Ally as their Accounting teacher and that they needed to co-operate with Ally. She stated:

I told the learners they must bear in mind that Ally is a teacher...she's doing the work that I'm supposed to do...I don't have time to do it again. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Having a similar sentiment as Mrs Ashton, Mr Niemandt stated that he gave Neo a Grade 10 class which was academically strong. He described the learners in the class as inquisitive and eager to participate in a lesson. In addition the learners were ambitious and expected the teacher to maintain the standard that they were accustomed to. Mr Niemandt further stated that the learners were not intimidated by educators who came to their class to observe them and would remain enthusiastic. He said:

They [learners] are the top Grade 10 class at the school...they are enquiring and they are responsive. He [Neo] has a very challenging class...they have high expectations of themselves...the challenge is the teacher going in there must make sure that their standard doesn't drop...another class will sit quietly especially when there is a stranger in the room but this class will always respond. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 MAY 2010]*

According to Mr Niemandt, being assigned this particular class provided Neo with an opportunity to reflect on his ability in teaching Accounting. Mr Niemandt was of the opinion that if the learners did not illustrate an understanding of the work Neo taught them, he should be aware that he was doing something wrong. He said:

He [Neo] is able to reflect whether or not he is doing the right thing...if these kids are not going to understand what he is doing...it means that somewhere he is doing something wrong...it's important to have this class because they will be able to be a reflection back to him in terms of if they don't understand...they suppose to be the top learners at the school...it means that somewhere there are shortcomings in the way that he teaches them. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 21 MAY 2010]*

Mr Lucas demonstrated his commitment to mentoring when the learners were apprehensive about Lara teaching them Accounting. According to Mr Lucas the learners complained to him and requested that he teaches them instead of Lara. Mr Lucas refused to adhere to their request. He reasoned with the learners and requested that they give Lara an opportunity to teach them and to co-operate with her. He however warned the learners that they would be assessed on the work Lara taught them, and that he would not repeat what she had taught them. Mr Lucas felt that if he adhered to the learners' request to teach them exclusively they would never get used to having a pre-service teacher teaching them Accounting. He remarked that:

What I noticed in the first week the kids moaned sir must come back. They must get used to having her around because they are going to be tested on what they are doing now...if I take over then their whole mindset will change. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 04 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Mrs Ashton, on the other hand, mentioned that she observed all Ally's lessons and refrained from intervening while Ally was teaching. She gave Ally autonomy when she prepared her



lessons and only provided her with mentor assistance if she needed it. She wanted Ally to develop her own style of teaching. She described their mentoring relationship as follows:

I allowed her to do what she needed to do in her own space...I just assisted where she needed some guidance...I didn't enforce anything on her...she has to learn to be her own individual where teaching is concerned. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Despite Mr Niemandt's managerial tasks, he made it his duty to mentor Neo on a regular basis. There were two Accounting Grade 10 classes at the school, and Neo was given the opportunity to teach one of these classes independently. Mr Niemandt stressed that he checked that Neo did what was required of him to ensure that both classes stayed abreast with the requirements of the syllabus. He remarked:

I also had another accounting class...those two classes had to be on par...both are Grade 10...we [Mr Niemandt and Neo] had to make sure that we are correlating our work. Whenever he is teaching, I make sure that he does what I expect of him...it wasn't that he was left alone to do whatever he wants...here are two Grade 10 Accounting classes one I'm teaching and one he is teaching...I must make sure those two classes are having the same amount of work. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Significant in this sub-category was that Mrs Ashton and Mr Niemandt had similar ideas on how to enhance the learning of their mentees. These mentors regarded the pre-service teachers as colleagues by allowing them autonomy to find their own unique style, yet offering a supporting role in their quest to become teachers.

#### **5.5.2. Pre-service teachers commitment to their learning to teach**

Three mentors described how pre-service teachers illustrated their commitment to their learning to teach. In the case of Ally, Neo and Tanya, numerous illustrations were provided.

Mrs Ashton praised Ally's willingness to assist with teaching additional classes to the Grade 11's on a Saturday. She commented that the learners expressed their gratitude toward Ally's preparedness to go the extra mile for them. Mrs Ashton believed that teaching entails going beyond the call of duty, and Ally displayed this attribute in her teaching. Mrs Ashton said:

Learners are very appreciative...we [teachers] don't always have all the time to give them. I work with my Grade 12's on a Saturday...she's helping a lot. She takes the Grade 11 class. I'm grateful for that...that is what teaching is all about. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Mrs Ashton praised Ally for taking initiative in planning her lessons and then consulting her before she embarked on a lesson presentation. Mrs Ashton felt that Ally could have taken

advantage by merely using the activities that she (Mrs Ashton) compiled for her Grade 11's. In Mrs Ashton's opinion Ally illustrated that she could work independently and that she was equipped to teach Accounting. She remarked:

I'm happy with her progress and the interaction we actually have...she will first come and ask before just doing things on her own. Where activities are concerned, she will setup activities on her own...come and see if it is on par instead of just expecting me to give...I teach three Grade 11 classes...I do set up activities...she will not just use my activities which is a good thing. She's well prepared for next year. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Similarly, Mr Niemandt described Neo as an individual who persevered despite the challenges he faced. He was of the opinion that Neo was always adequately prepared for his lessons and displayed a strong work ethic which was indicative of being an effective teacher. He remarked that Neo was continuously busy with work related to his teaching and thus never found him to be idle. He described these qualities as follows:

He is a very hard worker...diligent when it comes to preparing for lessons...he takes his work very seriously. He is constantly busy with school work...that is a very good sign. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Mr Niemandt appreciated that Neo continuously sought his advice when he experienced any challenges with his lesson preparation or presentation and said, "any problems or concerns he has, he will come to me to clarify it and that is the one thing I liked about him". According to Mr Niemandt, Neo was enthusiastic about learning to teach. Evident in Neo's commitment to teaching was his awareness of his challenges as a pre-service Accounting teacher. In this regard he wanted Mr Niemandt to highlight areas where he could improve his teaching skills. In addition he showed an interest in learning how to be an innovative teacher in wanting to learn new methods of teaching. Mr Niemandt stated that Neo was keen to apply other methods of teaching to improve his own practice. He remarked that:

Neo is keen to learn about where his shortcomings are...he has shown interest in finding out how to do things differently. He is trying to learn more about the subject and trying to find more ways to teach the subject. He knows that at the end of the day there are going to be mistakes...He is willing trying to find ways to overcome the shortcomings he has. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]*

Mrs Teale based her comments of Tanya's commitment on improvement of the learners' assessment. She said:

In the subject [Accounting] there is progress...when she took over there was another teacher which she had taken over from. In Grade 10 Accounting there are problems coming from Grade 9...she might have come up with something that their marks can improve. There's a difference in class with someone in charge. Learners' pass mark has improved from 61% to 67%. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 03 AUGUST 2010]*

Mrs Teale believed that Tanya devised a strategy to improve the overall pass rate in Accounting. She mentioned that Tanya utilized various text books in her lesson preparation and posed challenging questions to the learners whilst teaching them Accounting. She observed that Tanya displayed a sound work ethic. She remarked:

She's really working hard...she doesn't only use one textbook...she asks different types of questions to the learners...she is well prepared...always 99% or 100% prepared. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 03 AUGUST 2010]

It was evident that the role of the pre-service teacher (mentee) is a vital component in mentoring. However, even though Tanya displayed a level of commitment to her role as mentee, it was not sufficient to ensure effective mentoring in her case, while Ally's and Neo's respective mentors illustrated their commitment to their role as mentors, which complemented the mentoring relationship.

### **5.5.3. Mentoring relationship is reciprocal**

Learning to teach occurred for both mentor and mentee as revealed in the case of Ally and Lara. Mrs Ashton referred to a particular lesson that Ally presented using a teaching strategy called the 'quiz bowl'. Ally grouped the learners and posed multiple choice questions to them using a power-point presentation. The learners are provided with a time frame to insert their answers in a column drawn on a chart. The group who answers the most questions correctly wins a prize. Mrs Ashton expressed that she found the quiz bowl to be an innovative way to encourage learning. She said:

We [teachers] can see the fun side of teaching which the learners are looking for...we can implement it as well...we tend to think the work must be done...we don't have time for fun and games but the fun and games are helping the learners to learn. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 29 JULY 2010]

Mr Lucas expressed his delight at learning from Lara. He indicated that he was impressed with how Lara set out to plan her lessons. According to Mr Lucas Lara would ensure that she was equipped with the necessary tools before she presented a lesson, and was aware of the lesson objectives she would like to achieve. He felt that the learners needed visual aids to stimulate their learning, and stated that:

What is so nice about her is that she has all her planning and lesson outcomes in place...when she comes into class she has the material ready for the lesson...having it on paper is what the kids want. For us teachers we learn from them [pre-service teachers] as well. [UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 04 SEPTEMBER 2010]

Mr Lucas indicated that he would request Lara to share her lesson plans with him. He was sure that Lara's lesson plans would assist to keep him abreast with the expectations of Accounting teachers according to the NCS (National Curriculum Statement) in Accounting. It appeared that Lara's utilization of other textbooks prompted Mr Lucas to consider utilizing activities from other textbooks as well. He commented that he would like to prepare activities with their memorandums for the following academic year that were not in the prescribed textbook. On this he said:

I actually want to get some lesson plans from her to keep me informed as well. What I also want to do next year with my accounting, is to work out all my exercises that are not in the textbook. *[UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW – 04 SEPTEMBER 2010]*

Significant in this sub-category is that mentoring can be beneficial for both mentor and mentee. According to Mr Lucas and Mrs Ashton they learnt new teaching strategies from their mentees and were willing to apply it in their practice.

#### **5.6. Summary**

In this chapter three themes were presented. The first theme explored the challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting, while the second theme examined how the school-based mentors responded to these challenges. The final theme focused on the challenges pre-service teachers faced with their respective mentors and the factors that enhanced the mentoring relationship. A detailed discussion of the three themes will be presented in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6.**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The study aims to highlight the challenges faced by pre-service teachers while learning to teach Accounting and how their respective mentors responded to these challenges. This study adhered to the notion of Martinez (2004:104) who emphasises that mentoring should be structured according to the needs of the mentee. Furthermore, the study inquired into the reasons why mentors responded to the pre-service teachers' challenges in a particular way. The following themes emerged to construct the researcher's interpretation of the data and each of these themes will be discussed in this chapter:

- ❖ Challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach
- ❖ The role of the school-based mentors in response to the challenges pre-services teachers faced while learning to teach
- ❖ Challenges pre-service teachers faced with the school-based mentors while learning to teach
- ❖ The role of the pre-service teachers in the mentoring relationship
- ❖ Implications for the mentoring relationship
- ❖ Implications for structuring a mentorship programme

#### **6.2. Challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach**

During the teaching practice internship all the pre-service teachers revealed numerous challenges, as mentioned in the data presentation, whilst learning to teach. However, several other factors not necessarily revealed in the data, influenced the challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach. Firstly, the researcher will discuss the challenges encountered while learning to teach Accounting, namely; managing gaps in the learners' knowledge, dealing with the learners' language barriers and classroom management. Secondly, factors that influenced the mentoring of pre-service teachers namely; allowing pre-service teachers to choose their own schools for placement, dysfunctional schools and problems that arose because pre-service teachers were assigned a full teaching load.

### **6.2.1. Managing gaps in the learners' knowledge**

The South African school curriculum has moved towards a more learner-centred approach since the introduction and implementation of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in 1997 (Joubert, 2010:1). Several pre-service teachers complained about learners' lack of previous knowledge taught in Accounting. For example, when Ally explained the entries in the analysis cash book of sports clubs, certain learners could not distinguish between expenses and assets. Lara, alternatively, found that the learners did not have adequate knowledge of the basic principles of Accounting and was therefore compelled to do revision with the learners, whilst Neo's mentor, Mr Niemandt, was of the opinion that the learners were not adequately prepared in Grade 9 to do Accounting in Grade 10. Backing for this lack of knowledge comes from a report released to review the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2009). It stated that there is an enormous gap in the knowledge required for Grade 10 as a result of what was currently provided in Grade 9, specifically for the subject Accounting. Findings in Schreuder (2009:99) point out that Grade 10 Accounting teachers need to dedicate a term to teach the learners the basics of Accounting before the Grade 10 syllabus can commence. According to the findings in this study, Mr Niemandt had a similar sentiment to the aforementioned findings and related that change of the Accounting curriculum to accommodate the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) system posed many challenges for the Accounting teachers in the Further Education and Training Band.

According to Martinez (2004:100), teaching has become highly complex and Martinez stresses that mentoring new and pre-service teachers must be seen as a priority to equip them appropriately for the demands placed on them. While curriculum changes took place post-1994, this study found that the pre-service teachers lacked the pedagogical content knowledge required to teach Accounting to a similar extent as the pre-service teachers in the study by Botha and Reddy (2011:266). In most cases the pre-service teachers were unable to scaffold information to facilitate the learners' understanding. Pre-service teachers often do not provide adequate information when a new topic is introduced or when a homework activity is given, they are unable to link previous knowledge to new knowledge and lack the inability to pitch a lesson at the learners' level of understanding. Shulman (1987:14) argues that teachers should understand what they teach in order to comprehend the importance of what they teach to critically engage learners.

Even though all the pre-service teachers were exposed to the same content knowledge taught at university, not all were able to teach the content according to how the learners

acquire knowledge (Adler and Reed, 2002:25). The data revealed that there was a clear disparity with regard to the development of pedagogical content knowledge of pre-service teachers who received ongoing mentoring as opposed to pre-service teachers who had a lack of mentoring.

The data has shown that pre-service teachers benefit from mentoring as opposed to struggling on their own (Kardos and Johnson, 2008:18). It was evident in the data that the pre-service teachers lacked the ability to examine their own inadequacies while teaching. They highlighted the learners' shortcomings and provided explicit reasons for this. However none of them provided evidence in the data as to how they introduced and explained the topics to the learners, which could possibly be a reason why the learners struggled with the application of basic Accounting principles. While the data provided evidence that the pre-service teachers can learn through their own attempts as echoed by (Tomlinson, 1995:47), it became evident that they need mentor assistance due to their inability to highlight their own weaknesses while learning to teach. Winberg (1999:3) emphasises that mentoring plays an important role during teaching practice as it entails giving advice and guidance to the mentee.

### **6.2.2. Dealing with learners' language barriers**

South Africa has eleven national languages, however, the languages of instruction at schools and universities are exclusively Afrikaans and English (Joubert, 2010:39). It became clear from the data that pre-service teachers in this study, who are first or second additional language English speakers, found it difficult to teach learners whose first language is not English. The Language Policy and Plan for South Africa (Joubert, 2010:39) strongly advocates for learners to learn in their mother tongue. However the study by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:262) showed that a large number of learners attended schools that exclusively taught in English, even though it is their first or second additional language. The findings in this study were similar. All the pre-service teachers were required to teach in English because the school assessments are conducted through the medium of English. For example, Mrs Teale became frustrated when Tanya mainly taught the learners in their first language isi-Xhosa which is also Tanya's first language. Mrs Teale wanted Tanya to teach the learners through the medium of English for assessment purposes. Teachers lack training to deal with learners who are second language English speakers and often these teachers have limited English proficiency to teach learners (Adams & Sewry, 2010:2).

Another challenge pertains to the fact that concepts used in Accounting are not part of the learners' everyday conversational English vocabulary, hence their difficulty in understanding a new technical vocabulary. Pre-service teachers therefore feel compelled to try and explain the concepts in the learners' mother tongue. It was evident that the pre-service teachers attempted to devise strategies to assist the learners with their language barriers, but had not been formally trained at university to deal with this matter (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009:264).

### **6.2.3. Classroom management**

Nillas (2010:75) argues that challenges linked to classroom management are "generally ranked very high on difficulty for pre-service teachers". According to Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:425), pre-service teachers are often ill-equipped to deal with the realities of classroom practice. Evident in the data were Lara and Tanya's difficulties with classroom management.

Lara expressed her frustration with the learners' behaviour and identified that it could have been the way she dealt with the learners that caused their negative responses to her as a teacher. It was interesting to note that she embarked on a democratic approach by asking the learners which punitive measure she should put in place to deal with ill-disciplined learners in the classroom. A possible reason for Lara's difficulties with classroom management was Mr Lucas's perception that Lara's relationship with the learners was inappropriate and was not aligned with the teachers' formal relationship with the learners at that particular school. Tanya, by contrast, had a problem with disruptive learners and used an autocratic approach to address the situation. Mrs Teale wanted Tanya to exercise more control over the learners to illustrate to them that she had the authority to reprimand them. Similar findings were reported by Kiggundu and Nayimuli, (2009:350). They found that learners were uncooperative and disruptive in class and did not actively engage in classroom activities when taught by pre-service teachers. Nillas (2010:84) is of the opinion that pre-service teachers experience difficulty with classroom management due to a lack of realistic teaching situations provided at university prior to teaching practice.

### **6.2.4. Pre-service teachers allowed to choose their own site for placement**

Allan (2007:19) highlights the importance of pairing a mentee with a mentor with whom they are most likely to have a professional connection. A major contributing factor to the match and mismatch of mentees and mentors illustrated in this study was that pre-service teachers were allowed to choose their own placements. A similar concern was raised in the report of



the South African Higher Education Council (2010:94) and by Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113).

The fact that pre-service teachers were allowed to choose their own schools was not conducive to their learning to teach in certain cases. For example, Siya, Tanya and Zara did not receive mentoring aligned with the expectations of mentoring most commonly identified in the literature (Mawoyo & Robinson, 2005:113). There was no evidence in the data that Siya, Tanya and Zara observed their mentors' teaching and little evidence of them receiving ongoing feedback from their mentors, which is similar to concerns highlighted by Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:305) and Kardos and Johnson (2008:10).

Zanting and Verloop (2001:77) advocate selection of mentors who can perform numerous tasks such as observing pre-service teachers at various stages of the teaching process, giving advice on lesson planning and preparation and evaluating actual lesson execution by the mentee. Certain mentors in this study did not perform all these tasks, and if pre-service teachers are allowed to choose their own schools there are no control mechanisms in place at the university to ensure that mentors could perform the sorts of tasks advocated by Zanting and Verloop. Even though teachers at the schools were informed of the university policy regarding mentoring, these policies were not adhered to in cases such as Tanya, Siya and Zara. For example, Tanya and Zara did not work alongside a mentor due to the nature of their positions as substitute teachers at the schools, while Siya spent insufficient time at a school to establish a meaningful relationship with a mentor.

Some sources blame Higher Education institutions for the poor quality of teachers (Martinez, 2004:102; Campbell and Brummet, 2007:51; Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010:425). This study argues that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should be at the forefront of mentoring programmes for pre-service teachers. The practise of pre-service teachers being allowed to choose their own placements should be stopped. The first priority of HEI's is to ensure that pre-service teachers' challenges are identified in their particular subject areas and, on this basis, identify suitable schools and mentors for pre-service teachers' teaching practice internship.

It became clear in this study that not all pre-service teachers were capable of finding a suitable school to address their needs. Mowayo and Robinson (2005:113) concur that the pre-service teachers' focus is more on logistical aspects, such as "convenient travel routes and cultural-community compatibility", as opposed to the quality of mentoring.

Tanya and Zara had their own personal agendas when they were looking for a placement for teaching practice. Their focus was to obtain a teaching post for financial remuneration purposes. Pre-service teachers who have financial constraints may feel compelled to look for opportunities of financial gain. The issue of financial constraints experienced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice, such as transport costs and the purchase of stationery was highlighted in the report of the Higher Education Quality Council (2010:94). This study showed that if pre-service teachers are allowed to select their own placement, it can result in negative outcomes when learning to teach. Similarly, Quick and Siebörger (2005:4) have shown that, despite mentoring having so much potential to assist pre-service teachers during teaching practice, it does not always yield the desired outcomes. The challenge for HEI's is to rethink their teaching practice programmes to ensure better quality mentoring and hence better quality teachers (Campbell and Brummet, 2007:51).

Ally, Neo and Lara on the other hand adhered to the requirements of the B Ed:FET teaching practice policy and showed that they had the ability to choose their own placement that involved suitable mentors. In this regard Karel and Stead (2011:406) are in favour of students taking responsibility for finding a mentor that is a professional role model and shares similar interests as 'personal chemistry is important for a good mentoring relationship'.

### **6.2.5. Teaching at dysfunctional schools**

Five pre-service teachers, Ally, Neo, Tanya, Siya and Zara did their teaching practice at a previously disadvantaged school. According to Morrow (2007:56) most previously disadvantaged schools experience chronic teacher absenteeism, timetables that are inefficiently run, school violence and teacher-centred learning. These factors were helpful to identify characteristics of dysfunctional schools. The notion of Morrow (ibid) was not evident in the case of Ally.

Siya's learning to teach Accounting experience was negatively affected by his mentors' absenteeism. It was evident from the data that he felt helpless without mentor assistance. Mr Sauls showed a lack of understanding of his role as mentor and was unaware that his absenteeism had a negative effect on Siya. Mrs Adams, who was Siya's mentor during the second term, was assaulted by a learner and was absent for a lengthy period of time. School violence at this school could thus be identified as yet another factor of a dysfunctional school. Siya, who was in dire need of mentoring at the time, suffered as a result of his mentors' absenteeism.

Neo communicated to the researcher that classroom observations by the lecturers at the start of the school day was not possible because teachers and learners often arrived late and therefore the school seldom started on time. In the cases of Tanya, Siya and Zara, the researcher continuously had to change visiting times due to timetable constraints, which is a characteristic of a dysfunctional school (Morrow, 2007:56).

Regardless of Ally and Neo doing their teaching practice at a previously disadvantaged school, it did not appear to have affected the type of mentoring they received. Tanya, Siya and Zara however, received a lack of mentoring that could be attributed to the fact they were placed at dysfunctional schools. A concern raised by Ficke, Meyer and Van Lingen (2008:72) is that some teachers at dysfunctional schools, who participated as mentors, were sometimes unsure what their duties as mentor teachers entailed. This was evident from the data in the cases of Siya, Tanya and Zara. Furthermore, school management at their respective schools did not adhere to the teaching practice policy that the pre-service teacher should work alongside a mentor.

Another factor that contributed to the lack of mentoring for these pre-service teachers is that the school-based mentors often had no exposure to good role models of teaching (Ficke, Meyer and Van Lingen, 2008:72). It became evident from this study, that pre-service teachers who were at functional schools, even though such schools were not well-resourced, were exposed to mentoring that was appropriate for their learning.

Previously disadvantaged schools are not necessarily labelled as dysfunctional. Although Ally was at a previously disadvantaged school, the school did not portray the typical characteristics of a dysfunctional school. The school where Ally was doing teaching practice was well managed and there were no complaints from Ally that she experienced difficulty with timetables or chronic teacher absenteeism.

#### **6.2.6. Pre-service teachers assigned a full teaching load**

Hamilton (2003:29) proposed a learning cycle for mentors to assist mentees to develop the skill of teaching over a period of time. In the cases of Tanya and Zara the proposed “learning cycle” could not materialise due to the lack of ongoing mentoring. These pre-service teachers experienced inefficient mentoring because they had assumed contract positions at their schools. The study concurs with the findings of Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113) that pre-service teachers are not concerned about the quality and the type of mentor assistance that would be provided. However, findings showed that in the cases of Ally, Lara and Neo, the

learning cycle as proposed by Hamilton was experienced due to ongoing mentoring assistance.

### **6.3. The role of the school-based mentors in response to the challenges pre-services teachers faced while learning to teach**

A mentor typically assists the mentee to understand the realities of the workplace and how to utilize their strengths to best influence situations (Hamilton, 2003:3). Several roles of the mentor, evident in the literature, were also seen in this study. The school-based mentors responded to the challenges faced by the pre-service teachers while learning to teach.

The data reveal that not all the mentors assisted the pre-service teachers according to the expectations of their roles. I will now discuss the extent to which mentors responded or did not respond to fulfil expectations of the following roles; coach, expert, guide and reflection practitioner.

#### **6.3.1. Coach**

Coaching is described as a technique utilized to improve the performance of a mentee by identifying and addressing the skills they lack (Hamilton, 2003:62). Several mentors in the study illustrated this role as coach in the mentoring relationship.

The role of a mentor as coach is to assist the mentee to locate resources, to improve their understanding of subject knowledge and to expand their skill of teaching (Portner, 2003:8). Lara, for example, did not work in isolation from her mentor Mr Lucas. She had ongoing discussions with him before and after her lesson presentations. So, Mr Lucas illustrated a role as coach when he provided advice to Lara on learning to teach Accounting on specific areas for improvement of her teaching techniques.

According to Hamilton (2003:65), coaches need to be knowledgeable regarding skills of recognising what the mentee is doing wrong and providing detailed steps for mentees to improve their performance. An illustration of this notion of coaching was Mr Niemandt who moderated and rectified mistakes in Neo's lesson plan before Neo presented it to the learners. Mrs Ashton also portrayed the characteristics of coach and wanted to share her expertise to assist Ally to teach the learners Accounting more efficiently. She was able to rationalize why Ally had to follow a certain procedure for teaching a topic and explained why Ally should challenge the learners.

According to Tomlinson (1995:51), while “assisting interns to learn from others’ teaching” and “learning through their own teaching” are useful strategies on their own, it can be more powerful to combine the two. In this study co-teaching was not a common mentoring tool used by the mentors as coaches. However, the usefulness of co-teaching was evident in the case of Lara. Co-teaching enabled her to overcome the challenges she experienced and motivated her to teach Accounting after initial feelings of frustration and despair. The advantage of co-teaching was that Lara could experience the full teaching cycle as proposed by Tomlinson (1995:52). So, co-teaching between mentor and mentee can contribute to a valuable learning experience for the pre-service teacher during teaching practice (Frick, Arend & Beets, 2010:425).

Co-teaching allowed Mr Lucas to give ongoing feedback and thus enabled Lara to overcome her challenges. According to Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:351) pre-service teachers are motivated when they receive ongoing feedback from their mentors. Co-teaching allowed Lara and Mr Lucas to listen to each other without being dismissive of each other’s opinion of teaching Accounting (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:217).

### **6.3.2. Expert**

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:297) emphasize that mentors should be experts in their specific subject fields to be able to give expert advice on how to teach a subject. The role as expert was displayed by Neo’s mentor, Mr Niemandt. On several occasions he gave Neo expert advice about aspects of his teaching that needed improvement. Mr Niemandt provided him with advice on how to present the content to the learners. Neo revealed that his mentor’s feedback was helpful to avoid unnecessary mistakes that he could have made while presenting his lesson. In light of Mr Niemandt’s expertise, Neo felt that his mentor boosted his confidence in teaching Accounting each time he gave him advice. This finding fits with the view of Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000:528) who believe that the level of expertise of a school-based mentor can determine how they will evaluate the pre-service teachers’ performance and hence influence their professional growth positively or negatively.

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300) advocate the use of experienced teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled in a specific subject area for mentoring pre-service teachers, while Hamilton (2003:34) and Allan (2007:19) argue that this should not be the only criterion for selecting suitable mentors for pre-service teachers. These authors argue that the choice of mentor teachers should be based on their professional status and personal qualities for the purpose of mentoring. The findings of this study reveal that experience in teaching is not

sufficient to fulfil the expectations of a mentor's role. Siya's first mentor, Mr Sauls, had more than a decade of experience in the teaching of Accounting but neglected to fulfil his duties as mentor due to chronic absenteeism and lack of feedback on Siya's teaching ability. In the cases of Ally, Neo and Lara, however, mentor teachers' experiences in teaching Accounting was to the pre-service teachers' advantage.

The findings agree with the suggestion by Dreyer (1998:111) that experienced and qualified school-based teachers are best used to assist pre-service teachers to ensure optimal learning and focus on the repertoire of skills necessary to perform their future daily tasks as teachers. Thus it was mentors who were experienced and qualified to teach Accounting such as Mrs Ashton, Mr Niemandt and Mr Lucas who were best equipped to assist the pre-service teachers in the challenges they faced whilst learning to teach. However, Mrs Teale also had sufficient experience but did not illustrate a similar type of mentoring with Tanya. Two reasons for this were that, firstly, Tanya was not working alongside Mrs Teale in teaching Accounting because Mrs Teale was the Business Studies teacher and, secondly, Tanya received remuneration for her post as an Accounting teacher. Zara was assigned a mentor teacher who was not qualified to teach Accounting and hence could not assist her with her challenges while learning to teach Accounting.

According to Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:44), pre-service teachers learn from their mistakes and mentors should provide them with an opportunity to implement their own strategies to rectify their mistakes. This was evident in the data when Mrs Ashton mentioned that she observed all Ally's lessons and refrained from intervening while Ally was teaching. She gave Ally autonomy when she prepared her lessons and provided her with mentor assistance if she needed it. She refrained from obligating Ally to emulate her style of teaching. Taking risks should be encouraged by the mentors as the mentee will experience unforeseen situations and learn how to deal with them (Van Louw and Waghid, 2008:218). The behaviour illustrated by Mrs Ashton complies with the notion of Hamilton (2003:108) who believes that mentors who display a genuine interest in the learning of the mentee motivate them in learning to teach.

Significant in this study were the mentors who displayed a genuine interest in the professional development of the pre-service teachers. In the case of Ally and Neo, their mentors assigned those Accounting classes to ensure their teaching skills were continuously challenged. Elliot and Calderhead (1993:171) and Rheineck and Roland (2008:91) highlighted the importance of challenging pre-service teachers to develop their orientation to the practice of teaching. In this regard Ally was assigned a Grade 11 class to teach during

her internship, and Mrs Ashton was of the opinion that the learners were exceptional academic achievers and therefore would not hesitate in posing challenging questions to Ally. Mr Niemandt believed that assigning Neo a challenging class would have provided him with an opportunity to reflect on his ability to teach Accounting.

Evidence from the study confirms the notion of Tomlinson (1995:47) that observing the teaching of 'others' is influential in acquiring methods to take action for preparing and presenting a lesson. Lara, Neo and Ally were able to overcome their challenges in teaching Accounting by observing their mentors' teaching.

Mr Lucas offered to teach an aspect of a topic that he observed Lara had found difficulty with. She observed how Mr Lucas taught the topic, 'clubs', and gained clarity on how to overcome her challenge. In this regard Mr Lucas, in his lesson presentation, displayed a level of competence that Lara was able to emulate (Zanting and Verloop, 2001:59). Neo observed his mentor using a learner-centred method of teaching called 'simulation' and wanted to use this method of teaching himself. Hamilton (2003:48) contends that the "wisest" role of the mentor would be to showcase their expertise of teaching to a mentee.

Feedback on an observation can be meaningful if the mentor arranges meetings with the mentee in the following order; a pre-class conference, classroom visit, and a post-class conference (Hamilton, 2003:41/42). This was clearly illustrated in the case of Ally, Neo and Lara. For example, Ally and Mrs Ashton had an agreement to discuss her lessons before she embarked on a lesson presentation, and Mrs Ashton observed every lesson Ally presented. After the completion of a lesson presentation, Mrs Ashton used her expertise to provide feedback on Ally's pitfalls and gave her advice on how to improve her teaching skills. Added to this, Mrs Ashton refrained from intervening when she observed an error during the lesson. Portner (2003:70) stresses the point that mentors should guard against becoming a participant in the mentee's lesson, as it is challenging to participate and observe at the same time. In the cases of Neo and Lara similar procedures were followed by their mentor teachers.

### **6.3.3. Guide**

The level of commitment displayed by the mentors to guide the pre-service teachers while learning to teach varied in each case. It was evident that Mrs Ashton's continuous presence in Ally's classes was an illustration of her commitment to Ally's quest to become a qualified Accounting teacher and to ensure that her learners are taught adequately. Mrs Ashton was

able to provide immediate support and guidance when she observed that Ally found it challenging to explain a certain procedure in Accounting. According to Campbell and Brummet (2007:50), teachers who are willing and committed to their role as mentors can empower pre-service teachers to act and think as learners by utilizing numerous investigative techniques to discover their strengths and weaknesses.

Although Lara and Neo's mentors did not display a similar level of commitment as Ally's mentor, ongoing guidance from their mentors was evident. These findings fit Klasen and Clutterbuck's (2002:3) claims that learning can be enhanced through diligent work and continuous effort linked with support from the mentor. Furthermore, the mentors for Ally, Neo and Lara observed their lessons and offered advice specifically linked to learning how to teach Accounting. This finding contrasted with Frost (1993:132) who expressed the view that mentor teachers are often reluctant to observe pre-service teachers and would instead offer general assistance with lesson preparation.

Listening attentively to the mentee can be an effective tool to guide and to develop problem solving skills (Winberg, 1999:28). In this light Lara felt comfortable expressing her concerns to Mr Lucas regarding her classroom management skills and her anxiety about her lack of pedagogical content knowledge. Under the guidance of Mr Lucas, Lara was able to devise strategies to overcome her challenges such as offering extra Accounting classes to the learners.

Despite Mr Niemandt's managerial duties he felt compelled to guide Neo on a regular basis, as there were two Grade 10 Accounting classes at the school. Neo was given the opportunity to teach one of the Grade 10 classes independently while Mr Niemandt taught the other class. Mr Niemandt stressed that he checked what was required of Neo to ensure that both his classes stayed abreast of the requirements of the syllabus. Mr Niemandt's concern for his learners compelled him to fulfil his role as mentor and therefore he made a concerted effort to guide Neo. This finding opposes claims by Hamel and Fischer (2011:441) who state that, regardless of the mentors' years of experience in teaching, they find it challenging to provide adequate time to guide pre-service teachers with planning and to provide feedback on all their lessons.

It was evident that the mentors of Ally, Neo and Lara contributed their classroom management and subject expertise in the mentoring relationship (Quick and Siebörger, 2005:3). In this regard the mentors guided the pre-service teachers when they had anxieties about their pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Lara was



concerned about her classroom management skills when certain learners did not co-operate in her lesson and Mr Lucas gave her guidance on what a teacher's relationship with the learners should entail. Mr Niemandt, by contrast, made Neo aware of introverted and extroverted learners and stressed the importance of guarding against neglecting the needs of introverts because often the extroverts dominate the classroom situation.

Evidence of “weaning” pre-service teachers from dependency on the mentor (Portner, 2003:67) was shown in the cases of Lara and Neo. At the beginning of the internship Mr Niemandt and Mr Lucas were continuously involved in Lara's and Neo's lesson preparation and observations of their lessons. As time progressed in the internship, Lara and Neo began to develop their own style of teaching, even though this was in conflict with their mentor's style. Lara was given autonomy to implement her own style while Neo was denied such autonomy. Ally was given some autonomy but was continuously being observed by her mentor and thus was not completely abandoned or weaned by her mentor.

#### **6.3.4. Reflexive practitioner**

Reflection is highlighted as an important tool for learning how to teach (Schön, 1987:26; Darling-Hammond and Snyder, 2000:528; Hamilton, 2003:30; Korthagen, 2004:1027; Matoti, Junqueira & Odora, 2011:1142). In this study all the pre-service teachers experienced aspects of teaching such as planning and presenting a lesson, however, mentor assistance to help them reflect on their experiences was not evident in all the cases (Hamilton, 2003:30). Dewey (1938:25) strongly argues that observation alone is insufficient to improve a situation, and recommends that to understand the implications of a particular situation, individuals need to reflect on past experiences to assess how future experiences will be dealt with.

Evident from the data was that Ally, Lara and Neo obtained ongoing feedback before and after a lesson presentation, and hence were able to reflect on aspects of their teaching that they were unable to identify previously due to their lack of experience in teaching. Some of the literature in this regard emphasizes that reflection can enhance the growth of pre-service teachers' competence to teach (Darling-Hammond and Snyder, 2000:528).

The reflective model advocated by Maynard and Furlong (1995:20), which refers to the mentoring relationship, was evident to some extent in the cases of Ally, Neo and Lara. The mentors in these three cases collaborated with the pre-service teachers to address their concerns with learning how to teach Accounting and devised appropriate strategies to help

them improve. For example, the mentors were able to address Ally's and Neo's concerns over their pedagogical content knowledge and Lara's anxiety about her classroom management skills.

Zara, Tanya and Siya were able to reflect but unable to identify their weaknesses in teaching due to a lack of mentoring. The researcher concurs with the view by Matoti, Junqueira and Odora (2011:1142) that sometimes pre-service teachers are unable to reflect on their own experience to develop and understand new experiences. Evidence from this study indicated that, regardless of pre-service teachers' reflection on their practice, not all of them were able to identify challenges in teaching on their own and hence the assistance of a mentor was required.

The mentor's past professional experiences can assist the mentee to 'see the bigger picture' and to better understand the idiosyncrasies of the teaching profession (Hamilton, 2003:31). Hamel and Fischer (2011:438) found that pre-service teachers in their study wanted their school-based mentors to be more explicit about how to teach, based on their actual day to day experiences of teaching and learning, thus 'gaining access to teachers' tacit knowledge'. In this light Mr Lucas reflected on his own teaching experiences to explain to Lara why giving too much information in a lesson period could pose a problem to the learners.

According to Mawoyo and Robinson (2005:113), if mentor training does not take place, mentors will rely on their teaching experience to mentor pre-service teachers. As stated previously, the pre-service teachers and their respective mentors were oriented in their respective roles in a one day mentoring workshop, and on-site information sessions were provided to those mentors who were unable to attend the workshop.

Even though Mrs Ashton was unable to attend the workshop she was able to rely on her more than two decades of experience of teaching Accounting to assist Ally. A typical example was when Mrs Ashton was able to rationalize her explanation to Ally on why she needed to follow a certain procedure for teaching 'clubs' and why Ally should challenge the learners to think critically.

While Mr Niemandt reflected on his own teaching style, which he had been practicing for more than a decade, he could not convince Neo to emulate his style of teaching. Neo was confused by Mr Niemandt's teaching style and consequently conflict arose in the mentoring relationship.

The study thus shows that mentors need ongoing training to equip them with the skills required to be self-reflective and enable student teachers to do likewise. Furthermore, the study revealed that mentoring pre-service teachers is an intuitive process for certain individuals, such as Mrs Ashton. However, HEI's cannot accept mentoring as 'intuitive' for all individuals and therefore clear guidelines are important for mentors to know how to guide student teachers (Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005:113).

The feedback pre-service teachers received on their lesson preparation and classroom lessons served as tools for reflection on learning about teaching. Findings showed how pre-service teachers who received continuous feedback from their mentors were able to reflect on their challenges and devise appropriate strategies. Mr Niemandt pointed out that Neo did not vary his method of teaching to create an exciting environment to encourage the learners to learn Accounting. Neo therefore decided to use a teaching method called 'simulation' in response to his mentor's advice. Maynard and Furlong (1993:76) argue that the purpose of reflection should be to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues of working in certain ways, and therefore the mentor should encourage the mentee to engage in different ways of thinking about learning and teaching.

#### **6.4. Challenges pre-service teachers faced with the school-based mentors while learning to teach**

##### **6.4.1. Conflict with mentors' teaching style**

Oetjen and Oetjen (2009:101) suggest that the most difficult role of a mentor is to guide the student, as opposed to dictating to the student how to teach. In this regard Hamilton (2003:96/97) argues that it is not the mentor's role to 'clone' the mentee into their own image. In this study Neo felt compelled to emulate his mentor's style of teaching in a similar way to pre-service teachers in the study by Zanting and Verloop (2001:77). It was evident that Neo respected his mentor and did not want to be defiant when Mr Niemandt wanted him to use his method of teaching to teach the learners Accounting. Mr Niemandt, by contrast, did not appear to understand why Neo wanted to implement his own teaching style. It was clear that Neo felt defenceless and was unable to argue for his method of teaching. From Mr Niemandt's perspective, Neo struggled to emulate Mr Niemandt's style of teaching. While Mr Niemandt agreed with the method of teaching that Neo applied, Mr Niemandt was of the opinion that he could illustrate a more effective method of teaching to Neo. Mr Niemandt was convinced that Neo would see that his method of teaching was more appropriate to teach Accounting. Furthermore, he wanted to coach Neo to apply his teaching method because he

wanted to maintain consistency in the teaching of Accounting for his learners. Nillas (2010:72) argues that a mentor is required to motivate the rationale behind the feedback provided to the mentee.

Similar findings were revealed by Wang and Odell (2007:482). These researchers found that, when pre-service teachers implemented their own style of teaching as opposed to emulating the mentors, learners in the classroom were confused about which strategy to apply to a task given by their teacher. As indicated by Wang and Odell (2007:484), pre-service teachers often felt a lack of support by the mentors because they had to defend their style of teaching, and Neo displayed a similar sentiment. According to Karel and Stead (2011:406), if the mentee is not in agreement with the mentor's feedback, it is important that a discussion is pursued for clarification.

Frick, Arend and Beets (2010:434) believe that, although dissonance between the school-mentor and pre-service teacher is regarded as a negative aspect of teaching practice, it could compel pre-service teachers to reflect on their overall experience and therefore learn from it. By contrast, Lara did not communicate her discomfort with Mr Lucas's style of teaching, but silently rejected emulating his style of teaching in her reflection journal. She believed that Mr Lucas's methods did not encourage learners' abilities to synthesize the processes applicable in the books of Accounting. There was no evidence in the findings to suggest that Mr Lucas opposed Lara's method of teaching. Corbett and Wright (1993:230) argue that it is essential for the mentor to allow the mentee to create their own unique style of being a practising teacher.

Lara and Neo's discomfort with their mentors' teaching style is synonymous with the view by Oetjen and Oetjen (2009:101) that a mentor's role is not to illustrate the perfection of teaching but in fact create an awareness that teaching is complex. Both mentors illustrated a style of teaching that the student teachers did not necessarily want to emulate. Lara and Neo were given the opportunity to make decisions on how they wanted to embark on teaching and implement strategies that might work for them. They were therefore able to realise that not all strategies are applicable in every context of teaching and that the teacher has to be able to adapt his/her teaching style to ensure learning takes place.

Tomlinson (1995:30) stresses that mentors and pre-service teachers will not start their relationship with "blank slates". Both pre-service teachers and their mentors come into the mentoring relationship with prior knowledge of teaching and learning. The data reveal that pre-service teachers referred to the knowledge they obtained at university when they were in

conflict with their mentor's teaching style. Lara was of the view that Mr Lucas's method of teaching appeared to confuse his learners and as a result she did not want to use his style of teaching. She believed that the method of teaching she was taught at university was what she would apply while learning to teach Accounting. Neo had a similar sentiment as Lara in this regard.

To establish a mentoring relationship, school-based mentors must be aware that pre-service teachers come into the relationship with previous knowledge obtained through formal and informal training in education. According to Campbell and Brummet (2007:51), to cultivate the culture of learning in a mentoring context, teacher educators should reposition their way of thinking in line with 'constructivist perspectives of learning'. This was evident when Mrs Ashton gave Ally autonomy to use a method of teaching called the 'Quiz bowl' which she was formally taught at university.

Evident in the data was that mentors might be fixated on using only the prescribed textbook. In this regard Mr Lucas, on the one hand, was adamant that he wanted to use the prescribed Accounting textbook exclusively in the classroom, even though Lara wanted to use other textbooks. Lara, on the other hand, insisted on using additional sources, and this prompted Mr Lucas to consider using activities from other textbooks in his own teaching. In the same way Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:297) stress that mentors should be competent in assisting pre-service teachers to consult relevant textbooks and other resources to present a particular topic within a subject.

#### **6.4.2. Mentee exploitation**

According to Winberg (1999:7) a mentor is more than just an expert in his/her field, but a person who has the desire to share these skills and knowledge with others. She argues that people who display the opposite attitude of the foregoing sentiment should not be mentors. The findings suggest that not all mentors in this study were suitable to fulfil their role as mentors. Although Mrs Teale was an experienced Accounting teacher, she did not display a desire to assist Tanya. Tanya stated that Mrs Teale observed her four times during the first term, and twice during the second term of her internship. She was of the opinion that Mrs Teale observed her to obtain credit according to the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for mentoring a pre-service teacher. According to Tanya, Mrs Teale therefore observed her for selfish reasons. She felt exploited by her mentor and that her mentor's assistance was not really motivated by a desire to support the mentee's professional development.

Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007:300) found that mentor teachers perceived pre-service teachers as 'relief teachers' to make their workload lighter. Siya's mentor, Mr Sauls, gave him the textbook to indicate where he should start his lesson without observing him. It is evident that Mr Sauls was not aware of the role expectations of a mentor teacher. Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:351) reported similar findings on mentors' unhelpful actions. Pre-service teachers complained that mentors did not attend their classes and only provided them with textbooks to show the pre-service teachers where they should carry on with the lessons. Pre-service teachers felt that, while they were still in a learning capacity, they needed their mentors' ongoing support. Neo had to take over his mentor's teaching responsibility on a particular day without sufficient prior notice. Mr Niemandt did not take cognisance of the fact that Neo was a pre-service teacher who was inexperienced and thus needed sufficient time to prepare for a lesson. Dissatisfaction in the mentoring relationship occurred when the pre-service teachers felt exploited by their mentors (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009:355).

#### **6.5. The role of the pre-service teachers in the mentoring relationship**

Mentees can also hamper the mentoring relationship if they do not comply with the requirements of reflecting and talking with their mentors (Hamilton, 2003:108). Mrs Adams attempted to assist Siya with his lesson preparation but he did not want to take heed of her advice even though her advice was relevant. Instead he thought of an excuse that the chalk board was too small to visualize the content to the learners. Mrs Adams was of the opinion that Siya did not appear comfortable with her advice. Johnson (2007:183) showed that, regardless of appointing the most competent mentor, a mentee can display behavioural traits that could lead to conflict, for example, the mentee could perceive critical feedback from the mentor as punitive. Tanya and Zara hampered the mentoring relationship by accepting contract positions at the schools. This resulted in them not being able to have ongoing discussions of their teaching abilities with their mentors.

It is important that the mentors bear in mind that they are not responsible for the mentees' actions (Hamilton, 2003:34). According to Winberg (1999:7), a mentor can stimulate ideas in the mentee and point them in the right direction, but ultimately the mentee must take full responsibility for their learning while teaching. In light of this Mr Lucas highlighted his concern regarding Lara's relationship with the learners, which he regarded as unprofessional. Even though he communicated his concern to Lara, the situation did not change and he had no control over Lara's actions. This is a clear indication that mentors have limited control over pre-service teachers' willingness to heed and apply their advice.

Karel and Stead (2011:406) point out that it is essential that pre-service teachers acknowledge the mentors' input and concern for their learning by taking initiative to perform a task. The findings revealed that Ally and Lara made a concerted effort to offer additional classes after school for learners who displayed difficulty learning Accounting. In this regard their mentors, Mrs Ashton and Mr Lucas, praised their efforts for taking the initiative.

According to Karel and Stead (2011:403) mentors found it rewarding if their interns did not merely follow instructions but became innovative in their teaching. The mentors did not want to create "a clone" of them. This was evident in the relationship between Ally and Mrs Ashton. Mrs Ashton praised Ally's willingness to assist with teaching additional classes to the Grade 11's on a Saturday. She believed that teaching entailed going beyond the call of duty, and Ally displayed this attribute in her teaching. Mrs Ashton also pointed out that at the initial stages of Ally's internship she appeared anxious while teaching Accounting. As time progressed Ally started to gain confidence in her teaching ability. Later, Mrs Ashton commended Ally's classroom management style.

Mr Niemandt described Neo as an individual who persevered despite the challenges he faced. He was of the opinion that Neo was always adequately prepared for his lessons and displayed a strong work ethic which is indicative of being an effective teacher. Moreover, he observed that Neo was continuously busy with work related to his teaching and never found him to be idle.

## **6.6. Implications of the mentoring relationship**

Aspects of importance that Ali and Panther (2008:37) referred to that warrant attention are that a mentoring relationship is built on mutual respect, trust and professionalism. Mrs Ashton expressed a high regard for Ally's quest to become a teacher. This became evident when she communicated to her learners that they should regard Ally as their Accounting teacher and that they needed to co-operate with Ally. According to Mrs Ashton, she observed all Ally's classes to ensure that the learners were taught adequately. In Lara's case, Mr Lucas regarded her as a colleague and therefore displayed mutual respect. When the learners were apprehensive toward Lara's teaching at the start of teaching practice, Mr Lucas responded by refusing to adhere to their request that he teach them instead of Lara. The fact that Mr Ashton and Mr Lucas perceived Ally and Lara as colleagues confirmed the notion of Hamilton (2003:105) who emphasized that the mentor, from the beginning, handles the mentee as an equal, regardless of the mentee's lack of experience, or of any age difference between mentee and mentor. It was interesting to note that Neo respected Mr

Lucas to the extent that he was willing to emulate his teaching style to accommodate the style of learning that learners were used to. This was an illustration of a power imbalance in the mentoring relationship (Frick, Arend and Beets, 2010:424). It was, however, interesting to note how different pre-service teachers dealt with the power imbalance in the mentoring relationship. Lara did not verbally communicate her disagreement to her mentor but, instead, was motivated to become (in her opinion) a better Accounting teacher. Neo, by contrast, expressed his disapproval but felt compelled to follow his mentor's style of teaching to maintain a respectful relationship with his mentor.

Mentors teach a range of classes in a school, and within the limitation of their own timetable they have to arrange observation and teaching periods for pre-service teachers for a particular time period (McIntyre and Hagger, 1993:99). In the Further Education and Training Band (FET) teachers have a range of classes and subjects to teach from Grade 10 to 12. It is therefore challenging to arrange classes that pre-service teachers can use for practice teaching over the six months period. It became clear in the case of Ally, Neo and Lara that their mentors could find the time and space to assist, guide and coach.

Lastly, the findings concur with the three stages in the mentoring relationship proposed by Hamilton (2003:105/106), namely: early stages, middle stage and the final stage. In the early stages of the mentoring relationship, it became evident that Neo, Ally and Lara got to know their mentors. This afforded them the opportunity to develop a level of trust and collegiality. The pre-service teachers' respective mentors observed their teaching abilities and developed an understanding of their teaching capabilities. In the beginning the pre-service teachers accepted the advice of their mentors and did not challenge their feedback.

During the middle stage, the relationship between the three mentor teachers and their respective mentees became more settled. At this stage it was evident that Neo and Lara became more critical of their mentors' teaching styles, while Ally never challenged her mentor. At the final stages, the pre-service teachers reflected less on the challenges and focussed more on the positive aspects of the mentoring relationship.

Siya was unable to establish a personal relationship with a mentor due to the fact that he changed schools in the middle of his internship and consequently missed three weeks of the teaching practice internship. This fits the notion of Johnson (2007:21) who argues that a mentoring relationship takes time to develop. Tanya and Zara were also unable to establish a personal relationship with mentor teachers as they did not work alongside a mentor.



The study argues that the three models of mentoring provided by Maynard and Furlong (1995:18-20) in certain cases do not adequately address all the needs of the pre-service teachers while learning to teach. The apprenticeship model by Maynard and Furlong (1995:18) assumes that pre-service teachers should emulate and “copy” their mentors’ practices. Lara and Neo did, to a certain extent, favour this approach, yet they questioned mentors’ style of teaching and provided several reasons for their resistance.

Furthermore, this study shows that mentors could be provided with a checklist as proposed in the competency model of mentoring (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:19). This checklist could serve as guide for mentors and mentees. However, this model does not allow for a mentoring relationship to be reciprocal and hence discourages pre-service teachers sharing the knowledge they have about teaching. Added to this, the checklist is prescriptive and does not allow the mentees to be innovative in developing their teaching skills.

The reflective model of teacher education and mentoring promotes a view that mentors facilitate reflection by the pre-service teachers’ on their own teaching. The model however disregards mentors’ reflection on their own teaching experience to provide reasons for their feedback. For example, Mr Lucas reflected on his own teaching experience when he cautioned about providing too much information in a lesson and to pace the presentation according to the learners’ level of learning. In this way, Mr Lucas’s self-reflection gave Lara the opportunity to avoid repeating his mistake.

### **6.7. Implications to structure an Accounting Mentorship Programme**

The literature on mentoring over the last decade provides several arguments on how to develop and implement an effective mentorship programme (see for example: Garvey and Alfred, 2000:221; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002:42; Hamilton, 2003:113; Hamel and Fischer, 2011:441; Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005:113). However, this study concurs with Martinez (2004:106) who believes that the international community is facing the challenge of, “providing the empirical warrant for mentoring pre-service teachers” thus revealing its “real powers within prevailing context”. With respect to Martinez’s belief, this study showed that, regardless of giving a certain degree of guidance in a workshop or on-site orientation and a manual on how a mentorship programme could work, the processes of mentoring encompasses many other aspects that ensure a programme might work. The commitment of the mentor and mentee to mentoring is crucial for an effective mentoring programme. In addition, HEI’s should be the gatekeepers of who should be allowed to mentor pre-service teachers. This study has shown that not all Accountancy pre-service teachers in this context

are capable of choosing mentors who are suitable for their professional development. Added to this, the behaviour of some of the mentors in this study was not conducive to the pre-service teachers' learning to teach.

For mentees to experience optimal benefits from mentoring it is suggested they should be aware of their role expectations through hosted workshops (Karel & Stead, 2011:407; Long, Moran, Harris and Ryan, 2007:171). These suggestions led to hosting a one day workshop to orientate the pre-service teachers and their respective mentors of their role expectations. However, the study indicated that pre-service teachers and mentors did not fulfil their expected roles. The data indicate that Ally, Neo and Lara's mentors did not exactly comply with the expected requirements of their roles as mentor, but assisted the pre-service teachers to grow professionally in a manner that suited both mentor and mentee. For example, Ally's mentor, Mrs Ashton observed all her lessons, which was not a requirement of mentors. Ally's strengths and challenges while learning to teach were continuously highlighted by Mrs Ashton, while Neo and Lara's mentors did not observe them on a weekly basis. The study concludes that in this instance a one day workshop and on-site orientation to mentors who did not attend the workshop had little influence over the actions of individual mentors and mentees.

According to Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:366), Higher Education Institutions play a vital role in the implementation of an effective mentoring programme. It became evident that what mentors and pre-service teachers commit themselves to verbally in meetings with the subject lecturer was not followed up by action. For example, Mr Sauls and Mrs Teale were made aware of their role expectations at the school and made a verbal commitment to their mentoring roles. However, their lack of commitment was clearly illustrated in the reflection journals of Siya and Tanya. Tanya, though, did admit that she herself did not adhere to the institutional teaching practice policy by accepting a contract position at the school. Unstructured interviews with mentors and pre-service teachers confirmed this.

Quick and Siebörger (2005:3) indicate that schools expect HEI's to take a bigger level of responsibility regarding the supervision of pre-service teachers, and also to provide feedback to mentors regarding the development of pre-service teachers, while HEIs wanted schools to take sole responsibility for the professional development of students during teaching practice. The B Ed:FET Institutional Teaching Practice Policy at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology requires subject lecturers to visit the pre-service teachers only twice during their teaching practice internship and mentor teachers are expected to be responsible for pre-service teachers on a daily basis. Added to this, there is no formal training provided to induct

and support mentor teachers by Cape Peninsula University of Technology. This concern was raised at a national level in the report by the Higher Education Council (2010:94) on the review of teacher training programs at HEI's.

Some scholars highlight the importance of collaboration between school-based mentors and lecturers (Mawoyo and Robinson, 2005:113; Quick and Siebörger, 2005:2; Kiggundu and Nayimuli; 2009:357). The data show that collaboration between the school-based mentor and lecturer is complex. Timetable constraints, extra-mural activities and meetings were factors that hindered ongoing collaboration between mentors and the Accounting lecturer in this study. The mentor teachers would, on the one hand, often not be available to discuss the pedagogical needs of the pre-service teacher with the Accounting lecturer after the lesson presentation due to timetable constraints. The lecturer, on the other hand, could not wait for the school-based mentors to avail themselves for a meeting due to other academic obligations. A similar finding was revealed in Wilmore and Bratlien (2005:33) who alluded to the issue of lack of collaboration between school-based mentors and the university. Mentoring programmes may cause less time for other obligations and conflict with the mentor's personal life and other commitments (Winberg, 1999:93). This study therefore argues that before a teacher commits to the role of a mentor they should consider how it may impact on their other school-related activities and their personal lives.

It is essential for HEI's and mentor teachers to work together in developing a mentoring programme conducive for teacher development (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007:305). In this regard it would be a good idea for subject lecturers in the B Ed:FET programme to host regular meetings with mentor teachers and pre-service teachers to ascertain the challenges pre-service teachers face during teaching practice. This will help facilitate the development of a mentoring programme that addresses these challenges. Frost (1993:144) argues that mentees' needs should be a key component when structuring an effective mentoring programme, and that these can be assessed during the mentees' teaching practice. In addition, they suggest mentor teachers should be equipped, in workshops, to assist pre-service teachers to overcome challenges of learning to teach. In this study not all mentors were equipped to assist pre-service teachers with many of their challenges. For example, Tanya reported numerous challenges in her reflection journal, while her mentor teacher only made her aware on two of her challenges, namely; classroom management and the learners' language barriers.

Findings from this study support the notion of Campbell and Brummet (2007:52) who argue for a "social learning structure" where pre-service teachers, mentors and lecturers create a

common set of goals, unpack problem solving methods and are willing to learn from one another. It is clear that such a structure is only possible through serious effort and dedication from all the stakeholders involved in teaching practice. In fact, disregarding the voice of any stakeholder, especially the pre-service teachers, could hinder the successful development of a mentoring programme.

The data reveal that mentoring pre-service teachers does not merely involve attaching them to a mentor but, rather, that HEI's should ensure that meaningful mentoring takes place (Dreyer, 1998:110). In this light all the pre-service teachers were attached to a mentor, however, not all the mentors and pre-service teachers were committed to their respective role expectations. It is evident that the HEI's should take on a more prominent role to ensure that role expectations of both mentor and mentee can be fulfilled.

Wilmore and Bratlien (2005:33) believe that developing an effective mentorship programme will be unattainable due to the lack of incentives for mentors, thus resulting in poor mentoring. The research contends that giving incentives for mentoring would not be plausible if teachers are interested in mentoring solely for personal gain. Giving an incentive might attract a teacher who is not interested or committed to enhance the learning to teach of pre-service teachers as in the case of Tanya. The IQMS process could be regarded as a stimulus for the mentor, Mrs Teale, to take a keener interest in observing the mentee. Universities should guard against individuals who are only motivated to mentor through incentives and should request that the principal and Head of Department give character references of potential mentors to assess if they are suitable for mentoring.

Furthermore it can be argued that the models of mentoring pre-service teachers proposed by Maynard and Furlong (1995:18) and Hudson and Skamp (2002:7), which were created for developed countries, are not suitable for developing countries such as South Africa. The realities of teaching in South Africa, for example teaching at dysfunctional schools, constant and continuing curriculum changes, the unequal education system due to language and cultural differences in schools, should be taken into account when a mentorship programme is structured. In fact, numerous factors revealed in this study influenced the failure and success of mentoring pre-service teachers. Many of these factors are ones that the HEI has no control over due to policy implications and the unequal education system in South Africa. To establish a meaningful mentoring programme more attention should be focused on factors that positively influence mentoring (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba; 2007:305).

It became clear from the data that challenges were encountered by all the pre-service teachers in the mentoring relationship during the teaching practice internship. However, the challenges encountered impacted the learning to teach more severely in the case of Siya, Tanya and Zara as opposed to Lara, Neo and Ally. It can be argued that challenges in a mentoring relationship are inevitable but it is essential that a mentoring programme addresses the professional requirements of all the pre-service teachers (Van Wyk and Daniels, 2004:365). It is also important that all the pre-service teachers receive mentoring that is equal in quality. The danger of pre-service teachers obtaining mentoring that is unequal could result in the failure to attain the mentoring programme objectives.

It can be argued that heeding advice of Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:42) and Hamilton (2003:34) on how to structure an effective mentorship programme is not a solution to the challenges experienced by pre-service teachers and their mentors in a South African context. A different approach to developing a mentorship programme for South African pre-service teachers is required to address challenges that are unique to this country.

This study further argues that an effective mentoring programme can only be developed over a long-term period. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:24) note that the requirements of a mentorship programme are not cast in stone and that it could change over time. HEIs should annually review a mentoring programme by obtaining feedback from all stakeholders to gradually implement changes that can lead to improvement (Quick and Siebörger, 2005:4). Hamel and Fischer (2011:441) advocate the development of a mentoring programme in “relation to the lived experiences of mentors and interns”. In this regard the development and implementation of an Accounting mentoring programme at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology will be in relation to the actual experiences of pre-service teachers during teaching practice.

Literature alludes to the importance of the role of HEI's to implement an effective mentoring programme. However, these role expectations of HEI's are not clearly illustrated in the models of mentoring given in the literature. It became evident in the data that the nature of Accounting is cumulative and therefore pre-service teachers are required to refer to previous knowledge of Accounting to aid the development of new knowledge while learning to teach. The Accounting teacher must therefore be familiar with knowledge of the basic Accounting principles and the Accounting syllabus of previous grades to escalate the learners' knowledge as they proceed to higher grades. Teaching Accounting requires certain unique techniques (PCK) to facilitate the understanding of learners.

Moreover, in a developing country such as South Africa several challenges were revealed in the data with regard to the unequal schooling system due to the apartheid era, which influenced the mentoring of pre-service teachers. For example, dysfunctional schools pose a serious threat to the mentoring of pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers who chose dysfunctional schools to do their teaching practice internship experienced poor mentoring. In this light the study agrees with the notion of Dewey (1938:10) who argues that “a learning experience can distort or improve the growth of an individual”.

The data concurs with Morrow (2007:56) that factors such as chronic teacher absenteeism and low teacher retention due to school violence, poverty and lack of resources are rife in dysfunctional schools. It is therefore the role of the HEI to identify schools that are functional to ensure that pre-service teachers are exposed to schools that are conducive for learning to teach. In addition, HEI's should not only request the permission of school management to utilize their schools for teaching practice, but also request the permission of potential school-based mentors to mentor pre-service teachers. Thereafter it is crucial that HEI's provide training in mentor and mentee role expectations for teaching practice purposes. For HEI's to ensure that the mentoring objectives are achieved, they should provide sufficient ongoing support to the mentor and pre-service teachers by hosting regular meeting and workshops to ascertain what type of support is required to aid the mentoring relationship.

## **6.8. Summary**

In this chapter the researcher discussed several factors that influenced the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring. In Chapter 7, the final chapter, a summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusions will be presented.

## CHAPTER 7.

### RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1. Introduction

The major purpose of the study was to explore and understand the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting, and how they and their respective school-based mentors responded to these challenges. It is anticipated that the study would be beneficial to Accounting teacher educators and could further be used as a tool to develop mentoring models in other subject areas. The summary of the findings is presented according to each pre-service teacher's challenges and how their mentors responded to it. Furthermore, the significance of the study, limitations, recommendations, conclusions and suggestions for future research are presented.

#### 7.2. Summary of the findings

The tables below illustrate a summary of the pre-service teachers' challenges. In each case mentor teachers' assistance and guidance are also indicated. Note that the mentor teacher support is not necessarily directly aligned with pre-service teacher's challenges.

**Table 7.1: Summary of Findings – Ally and Mrs Ashton**

ALLY'S CHALLENGES	MENTOR SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with the learners' inadequate calculation skills</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles</li> <li>• Anxiety about her own strength of content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about her strength of pedagogical content knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation: Content knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation : Pedagogical content knowledge</li> </ul>

**Table 7.2: Summary of Findings – Lara and Mr Lucas**

<b>LARA'S CHALLENGES</b>	<b>MENTOR SUPPORT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with the learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles</li> <li>• Dealing with learners' limited ability to synthesize Accounting knowledge</li> <li>• Dealing with learners who have insufficient knowledge of previously taught accounting concepts</li> <li>• Anxiety about her own strength of content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about of her strength of pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about strength of her own pedagogical knowledge</li> <li>• Conflicted with mentor's teaching style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation : Pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation : Content knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation: Pedagogical knowledge</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Observing the mentor teacher</li> </ul>

**Table 7.3: Summary of Findings – Neo and Mr Niemandt**

<b>NEO'S CHALLENGES</b>	<b>MENTOR SUPPORT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with the learners' language barrier</li> <li>• Anxiety about personal strength of content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about personal strength of pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Conflicted with mentor's teaching style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teacher's lesson presentation : Pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation: Content knowledge</li> <li>• Observing the mentor teacher</li> </ul>

**Table 7.4: Summary of Findings – Tanya and Mrs Teale**

<b>TANYA'S CHALLENGES</b>	<b>MENTOR SUPPORT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety about strength of content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about her own strength of pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Anxiety about her own strength of pedagogical knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor absenteeism</li> <li>• Pre-service teacher assigned a full teaching load</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners' language barrier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> <li>• Mentor feedback on the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation : Pedagogical knowledge</li> </ul>



**Table 7.5: Summary of Findings – Siya, Mr Sauls and Mrs Adams**

SIYA'S CHALLENGES	MENTOR SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with the learners' inadequate calculation skills</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners' language barriers</li> <li>• Anxiety about personal strength of pedagogical content knowledge</li> <li>• Mentor absenteeism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> </ul>

**Table 7.6: Summary of Findings – Zara, Mrs Zack and Mrs Barnes**

ZARA'S CHALLENGES	MENTOR SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with the learners' inadequate calculation skills</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners' limited knowledge of basic Accounting principles</li> <li>• Dealing with the learners' language barriers</li> <li>• Anxiety about her own strength of content knowledge</li> <li>• Pre-service teacher assigned a full teaching load</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor assistance: Lesson preparation</li> </ul>

### 7.3. Significance of the study

This study contributes a variety of perspectives and issues related to challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting. In this respect it is noted that pre-service teachers experienced problems related to learners' inadequate knowledge in Accounting. Yet many of the issues related to pre-service teachers' own inadequacies.

Noticeable is that few of the researchers previously focused on pre-service teachers' anxieties about learning to teach, while no studies were identified which focused on pre-service teachers' challenges while learning to teach Accounting in a context of mentoring.

The study presents an innovative research design of how case study research can be used to highlight the complex nature of mentoring pre-service teachers as a tool for teacher preparation. In this case study, individual cases of pre-service teacher – mentor dynamics

were used to highlight specific issues and controversies. These were then compared and synthesized to present the unique case at the University of Technology.

Accounting teacher educators could improve their practice by actively listening to the voices of the Accounting pre-service teachers and their respective school-based mentors. In this study certain challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting were unique to the specific subject. Accounting, unlike other disciplines, has a peculiar nature. It is highly structured and cumulative. In other words, new knowledge in Accounting is almost always built on prior knowledge. If learners do not acquire firm foundational knowledge then the acquisition of subsequent knowledge is likely to be challenging for them.

A model for the development of an Accounting mentorship programme evolved as a result of this study. This model could serve as a tool to ensure that all stakeholders can identify positively with curriculum demands and role expectations of such a mentorship programme.

#### **7.4. Limitations of the study**

Limitations of this study involve participant selection and subject context. This study focused exclusively on Accounting pre-service teachers and their respective school-based mentors. The findings therefore do not include a full representation of pre-service teachers and mentors across all the subjects in the B Ed:FET programme. The role of mentors and the mentoring relationship of pre-service teachers' other subject could have influenced pre-service teachers experiences in a variety of ways.

The participants in this study were six pre-service teachers and six school-based mentors. The findings are therefore based on a small sample and cannot be generalised to other situations in a mentoring context. This study was conducted with final year pre-service teachers majoring in Accounting in the B Ed:FET programme at a University of Technology. The enquiry was restricted to one particular year group and it is not known what the implications are for other year groups within a similar programme at the university and other Universities of Technology.

#### **7.5. Recommendations**

In the context of South Africa being a developing and diverse country, it is clear that a different approach to mentoring pre-service teachers must be devised to enhance teacher preparation, as opposed to mentoring approaches followed by developed countries. The

unequal education system in South Africa poses a major problem in finding suitable mentors for pre-service teachers. Universities develop a “one size fits all” approach to mentoring of pre-service teachers and have the expectation that pre-service teachers would receive the same type of mentoring regardless of the school where they are located. This needs serious attention. Hence this study proposes the following recommendations:

1. A profile of each pre-service teachers’ teaching competency should be established to ascertain the degree of mentoring support required during teaching practice. This could be done by using a progression map across all years of the degree so that progress on key teaching skills and actions could be monitored, graded, tracked and reported to all the stakeholders involved in teacher education.
2. While principals are requested by HEI’s to give permission for pre-service teachers to do teaching practice at their schools, it is essential that mentor teachers also agree to be partnered with a pre-service teacher for mentoring purposes. It was found that teachers are often compelled by management to mentor pre-service teachers, while their role expectations are vague.
3. Dysfunctional schools should be avoided and schools that are functional should be preferred. Criteria used by the Education Department could be used to benchmark school effectiveness and functionality.
4. Subject lecturers should be required to investigate the challenges of pre-service teachers in their subjects annually and highlight this to the school-based mentors. In addition, school-based mentors should be equipped by the subject lecturer to assist the pre-service teachers in overcoming possible challenges while learning to teach.
5. This study takes cognisance of the fact that subject lecturers are unable to visit all the pre-service teachers due to the student numbers at the university. Therefore other alternatives to become aware of challenges experienced by pre-service teachers during teaching practice can be explored. Alternatives such as obtaining feedback from the school-based mentors, evaluators who are not necessarily the subject lecturer and pre-service teachers regarding the challenges could be helpful. In this light, strategies can be devised by all the stakeholders involved in teaching practice to assist the HEI in their plight to improve teaching and learning.

6. Final year B Ed:FET pre-service teachers should not be allowed to choose their own schools. Instead, a list of schools that are functional could be obtained from the Education Department. HEI's could embark on a public relations exercise and extend an invitation to principals and the Head of Department of a particular subject to attend a meeting at the university. The purpose of this meeting is to brief them about the objectives of the mentoring programme and request their permission to participate in the programme. When permission is obtained, the principal and HOD can brief potential mentors about the mentorship programme. It is crucial that HEI's continuously stay in contact with the schools which are willing to participate, otherwise the schools lose interest. Schools could be enticed to join a CPUT-wide partnership programme by seeing what the advantages to the whole school and its community are. This might include, for example, sharing online resources, establish joint action research programmes and, access to the university library facilities.
7. It is clear that developing a mentoring programme that addresses the needs of all the pre-service teachers can be time consuming and requires hard work and effort. This would require a faculty-wide approach including the funding, recruitment and deployment of partnership managers at a high managerial level, administrators who see to the day-to-day management and allocation of student and subject co-ordinators who do not also have a heavy teaching load for other courses.
8. Some of the literature highlights the importance of collaboration but also the logistical aspects such as timetable constraints, extra-mural responsibilities and meetings that should be taken into account when planning to meet with the school-based mentor. In this regard it is essential that school-based mentors are given time off or other incentives to motivate them to attend meetings with universities.
9. Currently, principals assign teachers as mentors who share a similar subject as the pre-service teachers without the university formally meeting and training these mentors. HEI's should therefore revisit this practice and arrange a formal meeting with potential mentor teachers to assess if they are suitable for mentoring pre-service teachers.
10. Pre-service teachers should be visited more often than twice than what is currently required for teaching practice in the B Ed:FET programme. The problem with minimum requirements is that lecturers could visit pre-service teachers twice in a particular week of a term and have no communication or follow-up with the pre-

service teachers afterwards. The university should therefore consider a timeframe for visits to occur, for example two visits within a space of one month during the first term of the internship, and apply a similar strategy during the second term.

11. The mentoring models provided by Maynard and Furlong (1995); Hudson and Skamp (2002) and Hudson, Skamp and Brookes (2005), as stated previously, do not adequately address the needs of pre-service teachers while learning to teach Accounting. This study therefore recommends the following mentoring model.

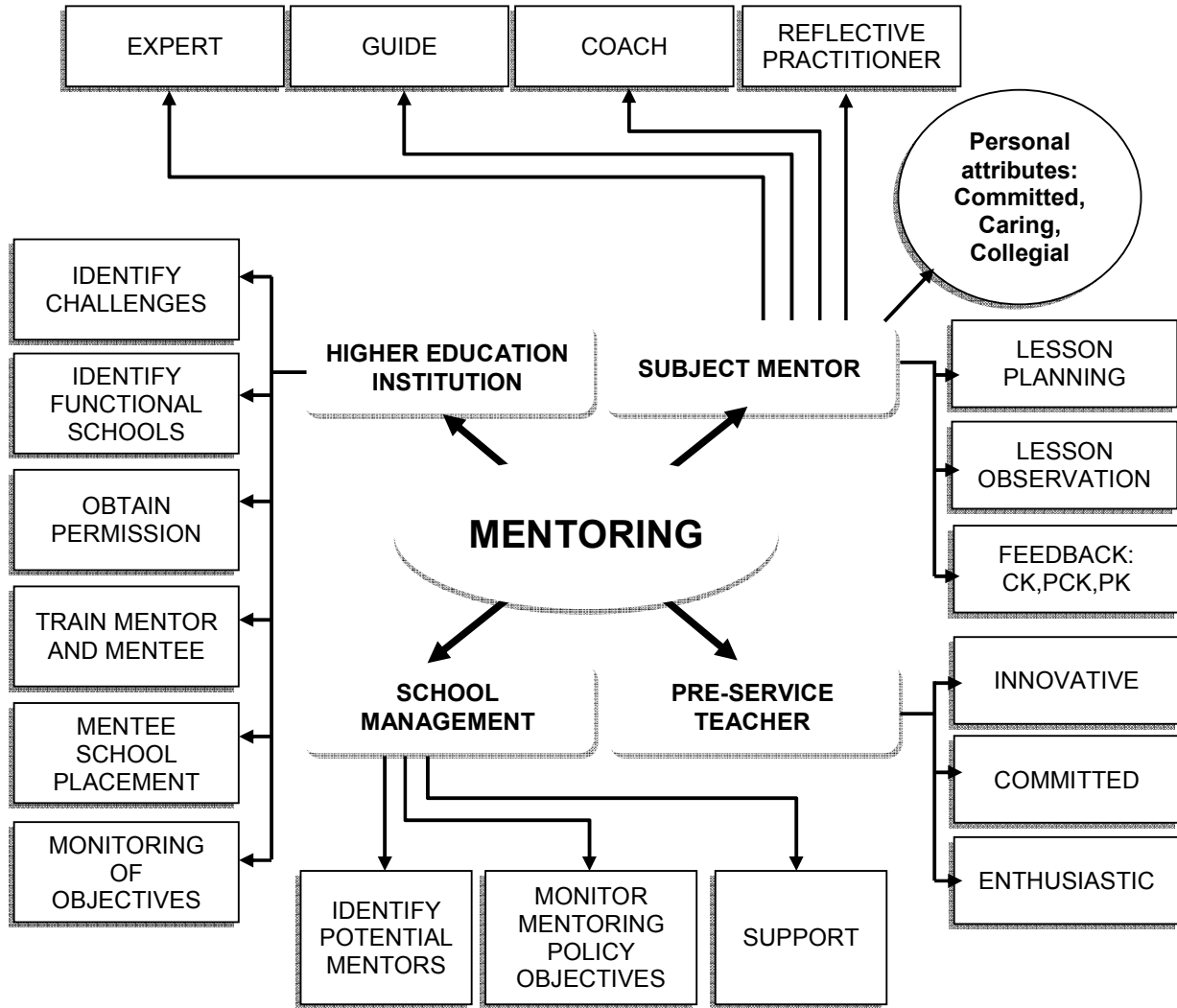


Figure 7.1: A proposed mentoring model for Accounting pre-service teachers

Even though the mentoring models provided in the literature gave detailed role expectations of the mentor, this study argues that the role of other stakeholders in a mentoring relationship are equally important and should be included in an expanded model of mentoring. The stakeholders directly involved in mentoring of pre-service teachers are Higher Education Institutions, school management and the pre-service teachers. In fact, all the stakeholders involved in a mentoring relationship have a role to play to ensure that the objectives of mentoring pre-service teachers are achieved, and should be beneficiaries of it.

This study argues that, unless the role of the school-based mentor is explicitly highlighted to improve the mentoring relationship, the longer term objectives of mentoring pre-service teachers are unlikely to be achieved. Evidence from this study, though it is in a limited context, suggests that all stakeholders in mentoring in this case should share blame for the failure of the mentoring relationship (in many of the cases). These failures were most marked in the cases of Siya, Tanya and Zara. If the HEI played its role in ensuring that the aforementioned pre-service teachers had been placed in schools where management of the school and teachers were concerned about their learners' academic achievement and followed the HEI policy on mentoring pre-service teachers, these pre-service teachers would have been in a better position to have had supportive mentoring. A re-conceptualization of the role expectations of HEI's, School management and pre-service teachers is required to achieve the objectives of mentoring pre-service teachers. Hence a model to represent and illustrate the role expectations of all the stakeholders involved in mentoring pre-service teachers has been provided.

Another aspect of teaching practice that needs attention is the fact that there is neither a requirement in the teaching practice policy nor a platform created by the university for subject lecturers and school-based mentors to communicate on an ongoing basis throughout the teaching practice regarding the pre-service teachers' progress of learning while teaching. This aspect needs serious attention by the university to understand and address the needs of pre-service teachers. Even though subject lecturers do observe the pre-service teachers' lesson presentation in the fourth year, the university could reconsider observation purely for assessment purposes, as is the case at present, and instead focus on assisting pre-service teachers to improve their teaching through observation, before embarking on assessing the pre-service teachers at schools.

## 7.6. Conclusion

As stated previously, the aim of this study was not to make generalisations for a large population of pre-service teachers and school-based mentors across all disciplines. Instead these findings were intended to report specifically on the mentoring context of pre-service teachers in which they were constructed. Ultimately, the reader must eventually decide the transferability of the results and conclusion of this study. The researcher attempted to provide adequate descriptions of the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach and focused on the school-based mentors' responses to the challenges.

The nature of the Accounting discipline is cumulative and if the learners' previous knowledge in Accounting was not mastered in previous grades, it becomes a challenge for the pre-service teacher or teacher to build new knowledge. Hence, this study argues that if a mentor teacher is not qualified to teach Accounting or lacks the content knowledge in Accounting, s/he will be unable to offer the type of mentoring required to enhance the learning to teach Accounting of a pre-service teacher. A school-based mentor, whose content knowledge of Accounting is weak, will be synonymous with the 'blind leading the blind'.

Mentoring is not a miracle solution for professional development (Hamilton, 2003:115). The data collected in this study concur with this notion and show that, despite mentoring having the potential to enhance the preparation of pre-service teachers it does not always yield positive results. This was evident in the case of Neo, Tanya and Zara. Learning through the assistance of the mentor (Tomlinson, 1995:48) had a positive influence on the professional growth of Ally, Neo and Lara. Although these pre-service teachers revealed similar challenges as Siya, Zara and Tanya, the data showed that they were able to overcome their challenges to a greater extent through their mentors' assistance. This study concurs with the notion of Katz and Bay (2008:1259) who view mentoring as a process that can be beneficial to enhance the preparation of teachers.

It was clearly illustrated in the data that the six months' internship allowed the pre-service teachers to experience the expectations of being an actual teacher. This enabled them to teach according to the syllabus prescribed by the Western Cape Education Department, developing a relationship with the learners and teachers, developing an understanding of the environment where they were teaching and to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

This study concurs with the notion of Dreyer (1998:110) and Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009:347) that the more time pre-service teachers spend at a school, the greater the

opportunity to integrate the theory of education and how to practice the theory in schools. Alternatively it can be argued that, even if pre-service teachers spend long periods of time at school, as long as there is no mentor support the objectives of the internship will not be achieved. This was evident in the case of Siya, Tanya and Zara who spent the same amount of time at school as Ally, Neo and Lara but their mentors' responses to their challenges were minimal compared to the other pre-service teachers. Hence what these pre-service teachers learned about teaching Accounting was minimal in comparison to Ally, Neo and Lara.

Pre-service teachers whose mentors displayed commitment to their role as mentor teachers boosted their confidence in teaching Accounting as time progressed (Portner, 2003:75). For example, co-teaching enabled Lara to overcome the challenges she experienced and this motivated her teaching of Accounting. This finding is similar to the view by Mohono-Mahlatsi and Van Tonder (2006:384), who stated that mentoring, when done effectively, provides confidence to the mentee and reduces professional isolation. The opposite was found in the case of Siya, whose teaching practice internship was negatively influenced by Mr Sauls' chronic absenteeism. It became clear that he felt helpless without mentor assistance.

It was evident that learning to teach through observing the mentor is a vital component in mentoring pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers are provided with an opportunity to visualize how a topic is taught in Accounting. Added to this, the pre-service teachers can decide if the method of teaching they have observed is an appropriate one and suits their personal style of learning to teach.

Mentors need to assist the pre-service teachers with unravelling the planning and preparation of the lesson, guiding what to observe, showing and encouraging monitoring, and reflection of their practice to familiarise themselves with the complete teaching cycle (Tomlinson,1995:48). This was evident in the case of Ally, Neo and Lara. Their mentors offered assistance throughout, gave feedback after the lesson and encouraged reflection.

### **7.7. Suggestions for future research**

This study explored the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring at a University of Technology in South Africa. Based on the findings from this study, the following suggestions for future research are presented for further exploration and debate.



Firstly, this empirical study focused on how the school-based mentors responded to the challenges pre-service teachers faced while learning to teach Accounting and how mentoring can be used as a tool to enhance teacher preparation. A further study could be conducted to investigate how a structured mentoring programme could assist in the professional development of pre-service teachers' learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring.

Secondly, additional insights into the nature of the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach in other subject areas in the B Ed:FET programme could provide valuable insights on how to structure a mentoring programme for all the pre-service teachers in the Faculty of Education and Social Science at a University of Technology.

### **7.8. Summary**

The final chapter provided a summary of the findings by focusing on the individual cases of pre-service teachers and how their school-based mentors responded to their challenges. The findings suggested that HEI's should play a greater role in the mentoring of pre-service teachers to ensure that all the pre-service teachers' learning while teaching is enhanced during teaching practice. A brief conclusion of the entire study was made. With regards to the findings of the study, recommendations were made on ways to improve the mentoring of pre-service teachers, and suggestions were given to point the way to future research.

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# APPENDIX A: ACCOUNTING MENTORING WORKSHOP MANUAL

**ACCOUNTING MENTORSHIP WORKSHOP**  
B Ed; FET 4<sup>th</sup> Years  
07 April 2010  
Presenter: Mrs K Dos Reis

**ACCOUNTING MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES:**

- To assist pre-service accounting educators with skills necessary in the pedagogy of accounting education.
- To prepare pre-service accounting educators for the world of work.
- To bridge the gap of theory taught in Higher Education and real life context located in the FET band.

**MENTOR OVERVIEW**

- What is a Mentor?**
- A **mentor** is an experienced individual that serves as a trusted counselor, loyal adviser and coach who helps and guides another individual's development. The mentor is a confidant who provides perspective, helps the candidate reflect on the competencies they are developing, and provides open, candid feedback. Mentors have a unique opportunity to serve as a "sounding board" for the candidate on issues and challenges they may not share with individuals within their own organization. Mentors are people who are interested in and willing to help others.

**MENTOR CHARACTERISTICS**

- People Oriented:
- Good Motivator:
- Effective Teacher:
- Secure in Position:
- Technical excellence:
- Respects Others:
- Other Aspects:
- Individuals that have had positive formal or informal experiences with a mentor tend to be good mentors themselves. Good mentors are experienced individuals that have a good reputation for helping others develop their skills. Maintaining the confidentiality of the mentee/mentor relationship is also crucial for success.

**MENTEE OVERVIEW**

- What is a Mentee?**
- Someone who needs guidance, advice, or support in a particular area of their life or career. The mentee is someone who is looking for help and guidance from a more experienced person.
- Why be a Mentee?**
- It can help you gain a better understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the expectations of your employer.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the industry you are entering.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the career path you want to take.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the skills you need to succeed.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the challenges you will face.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the opportunities available.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the resources available.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the support available.
- It can help you gain a better understanding of the mentor's role.

**MENTEE OVERVIEW**

- Patience:**
- Open-Minded:**
- Good Listener:**
- Good Communicator:**
- Good Organizer:**
- Good Planner:**
- Good Problem Solver:**
- Good Decision Maker:**
- Good Team Player:**
- Good Leader:**
- Good Role Model:**
- Good Mentor:**
- Good Friend:**
- Good Colleague:**
- Good Supervisor:**
- Good Subordinate:**
- Good Customer:**
- Good Client:**
- Good Supplier:**
- Good Vendor:**
- Good Partner:**
- Good Stakeholder:**
- Good Community Member:**
- Good Citizen:**
- Good Human Being:**

**ACTIVITY - MENTOR**

- List your strengths as an accounting mentor.
- Passionate about accounting, Motivating learners about social responsibility, patient, learners like the way mentor presents lessons, good worth ethic, initiate new methods to teach accounting, willing to advise, objective, people orientated

**ACTIVITY - MENTOR**

- List your weaknesses as an accounting mentor.
- Time constraints during school hours, busy schedule, too understanding, tend to do things on your own

### ACTIVITY - MENTEE

- List the challenges you faced in the B Ed FET mentorship programme
- Unwillingness of mentor assistance, Mentor allocates ill-disciplined or difficult classes, Lack of basic accounting knowledge, Negative feedback of teachers regarding teaching profession, New methodologies not encouraged by teachers, Perceived as teacher releaver, Learner participation not encouraged, Teacher substitute, Unsuitable mentors.

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### ACTIVITY - MENTEE

- List your positive experiences in the B Ed FET mentorship programme.
- Felt comfortable at school, Mentor assistance with lesson plans before evaluation, co-teaching encouraged, Passionate accounting mentors, Passionate about education overall.

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### ROLE EXPECTATIONS: ACCOUNTING MENTOR

- The roles and responsibilities of the mentor are to:
- Demonstrate a willingness to commit to the mentoring process
- Develop a mentoring contract/agreement clarifying the expectations of the mentoring partnership.
- Assist in developing and monitoring the mentee's Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Provide inroads and opportunities for developmental experiences for the mentee.
- Meet (or connect) with the mentee at least once a week and plan to spend an average of four hours a month working with the mentee.

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### ROLE EXPECTATIONS: ACCOUNTING MENTOR

- Assume four main coaching roles:
  - **Teacher:** Assisting mentee in setting developmental goals and plans to achieve them.
  - **Counselor:** Discussing work-related concerns impacting performance or development.
  - **Guide:** Sharing professional knowledge gained from personal experience.
  - **Challenger:** Providing objective and honest feedback.
- Participate in meetings with the mentee and his/her supervisor to discuss the mentee's IDP.
- Act as a sounding board for the mentee.
- Assist the mentee in setting developmental goals.
- Provide developmental feedback to the mentee. Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership via anonymous surveys at the mid-point and the end of program.

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### ROLE EXPECTATIONS: ACCOUNTING MENTEE

- The roles and responsibilities of mentees are to:
- Take initiative and be proactive in his/her own career development.
- Develop a mentoring contract/agreement that clarifies the expectations of the mentoring partnership.
- Keep the supervisor informed of mentoring progress and schedule to ensure that it does not conflict with assignments and priorities.

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### ROLE EXPECTATIONS: ACCOUNTING MENTEE

- Attend formal mentoring training, progress reviews, and forums.
- Participate in open and honest discussions with the mentor.
- Develop an IDP with feedback from mentors and supervisors.
- Meet with the mentor approximately four hours a month, at least touching base weekly.
- Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership via anonymous surveys at the mid-point and the end of program.

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### B Ed: FET accounting programme

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### B Ed: FET Accounting I

- ACCOUNTING CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES
  - The accounting equation
  - Transactions and the theory of double entry of
    - Service undertakings
    - Retail businesses
- PROCESSING OF LARGE VOLUMES OF DATA
  - Vat system
  - Recording transactions in the journals from source documents
  - Perpetual and periodic inventory system
  - Posting to the ledger
  - Control accounts
  - Trial balance

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## B Ed: FET Accounting I

- **RECONCILIATION**
- Bank and creditors reconciliation statements
- **FINAL ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF SOLE TRADERS**
- (Service undertakings and retail traders)
- Adjustments
- Closing transfers
- Final accounts
- Income statement
- Balance sheet

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **DEBTORS AND CREDITORS RECONCILIATION**
- Reconciliation of debtors'/creditors' statements and accounts. Integrate ethical issues relating to debtors and creditors – payment periods, interest, credit ratings, fraud, etc. Internal audit and control processes relating to debtors and creditors.

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **MANUFACTURING**
- Manufacturing costs
- Direct costs
- Indirect costs
- Fixed costs
- Variable costs
- Break-even point
- Marginal costs
- Production cost statement with notes
- Trading statement and profit and loss statement
- Calculate and interpret:
- Gross profit and net profit
- Break-even points
- Total cost of production
- Marginal costs
- Unit costs
- Integrate internal audit and control processes relating to a manufacturing concern.

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTING**
- Departmental records
- Interdepartmental transfers
- Allocation of departmental expenses
- Financial statements
- At the end of this section students should be able to draft the subsidiary journals, ledger accounts and financial statements after the necessary adjustments were made for the different departments.
- **WAGES AND SALARIES JOURNALS**
- At the end of this section students should be able to make the necessary entries for the:
  1. drafting of a Wages and/or Salaries Journal.
  2. deductions which are the difference between gross wages/salaries and net wages/salaries
  3. employer's deductions in respect of some of these deductions.
  4. posting to the relevant ledger accounts, necessary payments.

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **PARTNERSHIPS**
- Legal aspects
- Partnership accounts
- Appropriation of profit: Interest on capital and drawings, salaries and other remuneration, employees bonus fund, General Reserve
- **Financial statements**
- At the end of this section students should be able to:
  1. understand the basic legal principles for the formation of a partnership.
  2. draft the necessary ledger accounts for a partnership.
  3. appropriate profits according to the partnership agreement and other stipulations.
  4. prepare the financial statements for a partnership.

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **COMPANIES**
- Issue of shares and debentures (at par, premium and discount)
- Use of Stated Capital and Share Premium
- Financial Statements
- Schedule 4: paragraphs 1 - 44
- Statement AC 101
- Cash Flow Statement; Statement AC 118
- Analysis and interpretation of financial statements

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## B Ed: FET Accounting II

- **BUDGETS**
- Analyse, interpret and compare projected income statements and cash budgets including the following:
  - - Projected sales, cost of sales, expenses and profit
  - - Debtors' collections
  - - Creditors' payments
- Integrate ethical issues relating to budgeting and projections.

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## B Ed: FET Accounting III

- **INCOMPLETE RECORDS**
- Draft a statement of affairs to calculate the owner's equity
- Single entry system
- Conversion into double entry system

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### B Ed: FET Accounting III

#### • PARTNERSHIPS

- Amalgamation of sole traders
- Admission of a partner
- Retirement of a partner
- Changes in the profit sharing ratio
- Dissolution of a partnership

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### B Ed: FET Accounting III

#### • COMPANIES

- Redemption of redeemable preference shares
- from profits
- from new issues
- issue of capitalization shares
- Financial statements
- More advanced work than in II with regards to disclosure
- - Unusual and extraordinary items AC 103
- - AC 101
- - Schedule 4
- Cash flow statement AC 118
- Ratio analysis

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### B Ed: FET Accounting Didactics programme

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### B Ed: FET Accounting didactics II

- **GRADE 10 ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM**
- **METHODOLOGY: DIRECT INSTRUCTION**
- **LESSON PRESENTATION**
- **YEAR PLANNER, QUARTER PLANNER, TEACHER FILE**
- **SELF-REFLECTION: COLLEGIAL CONVERSATION**
- **QUIZBOWL**
- **QUICKBOOKS [LEVEL 1]**

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### B Ed: FET Accounting didactics III

- **GRADE 11 ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM**
- **METHODOLOGY: INQUIRY**
- **LESSON PRESENTATION**
- **YEAR PLANNER, QUARTER PLANNER, TEACHER FILE**
- **SELF-REFLECTION: COLLEGIAL CONVERSATION**
- **QUIZBOWL**
- **QUICKBOOKS [LEVEL 2]**

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### B Ed: FET Accounting didactics IV

- **GRADE 12 ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM**
- **LESSON PRESENTATION**
- **YEAR PLANNER, QUARTER PLANNER, TEACHER FILE**
- **REFLECTION JOURNAL**
- **TEACHER PORTFOLIO**
- **INTERVENTION PROGRAMME**
- **QUICKBOOKS [LEVEL 3]**

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**APPENDIX B: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER REFLECTION JOURNAL**

**REFLECTION JOURNAL**

**NAME**.....

**SCHOOL**.....

**GRADE**.....

**TOPIC**.....

**WEEK**.....

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Explain briefly what your lessons entailed for the week.

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2. How did you feel about this week's lesson and did you achieve the lesson outcomes

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3. What were the challenges in your lesson (presentation)?

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4. What were the strengths of the lesson (presentation)?

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5. How are you going to overcome the challenges?

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6. In what way(s) did your mentor assist you this week (eg. observation of lessons of mentor)

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7. How did your mentor's assistance influence your lesson preparation/presentation for the following week?

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## **APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. DESCRIBE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCES WHILE TEACHING ACCOUNTING DURING TEACHING PRACTICE THIS YEAR.
2. HOW DO YOUR MENTORS RESPOND TO YOUR CHALLENGES?
3. DO YOU LEARN AND REFLECT FROM YOUR OWN TEACHING EXPERIENCES?

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**APPENDIX D: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE - BACKGROUND OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Provide a brief background of yourself.

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2. When did you matriculate?

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3. Describe in detail how you experienced Accounting at school and university level.

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4. What are your goals for the future?

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## APPENDIX E: WCED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Navrae Enquiries IMibuzo  
Telephone IFoni  
Faks Fax IFeksi

Dr RS Cornelissen  
(021) 467-2286  
(021) 425-7445



---

Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

---

Western Cape Education Department

---

ISEBE leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

---

Verwysing Reference ISalathiso  
20100223-0022

Mrs Karen Dos Reis  
Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Mowbray Campus  
Highbury Road  
Mowbray

Dear Mrs K Dos Reis

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL: DEVELOPING A STRUCTURED ACCOUNTING EDUCATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 April 2010 to 30 September 2010**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

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

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE:**

**23**

**February**

**2010**

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MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /  
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000  
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

**INBELSENTRUM /CALL CENTRE**

INDIENSNEMING- EN SALARISNAVRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22

## APPENDIX F:

### Department Name: Research Ethical Clearance Compliance Form

All postgraduate students and researchers are required to complete this form before commencing with research or submitting applications to the University Research Fund (URF). All URF applicants are requested to please submit this form together with all the relevant URF application forms to their Faculty Research Committee (FRC) for approval.  
(Where applicable mark relevant boxes with an X)

Project Title: Developing a structured accounting education mentorship programme for pre-service teacher education students at a University of Technology.
---

Applicant/ Researcher:	Surname, first name, title: JOS REIS, KAREN, MRS	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	Staff	X
Office Telephone: (021) 8803024	Cell: 0840024741	Email: jcreis@cup.ac.za			

Supervisor (if applicable):	Surname, first name, title: Thuynma, Beatrice, Dr	
Office telephone: (021)8645552	Cell: 0827640026	Email: thuynmab@cup.ac.za

Research Checklist:		Yes	No
1:	Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? Examples include children, people with learning disabilities, or your own students. Animals?		X
2:	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? Examples include students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing homes — anyone who is under the legal care of another.		X
3:	Will it be necessary for participants to participate in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time — for example, covert observation of people in non-public places?		X
4:	Will the study with the research subject involve discussion of sensitive topics? Examples would include questions on sexual activity or drug use.		X
5:	Will the study involve invasive, infusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind (e.g. drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to the study participants)?		X
6:	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing on sentient subjects?		X
7:	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X
8:	Does your research involve environmental studies which could be contentious or use materials or processes that could damage the environment? Particularly the outcome of your research?		X

If you have answered 'No' to all questions, submit the completed and signed form to your FRC together with the completed URF application forms


If you have answered 'Yes' to one or more questions, kindly attach a report describing more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. It does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal to your faculty's Research Ethics Committee.

**Declaration**

As Researcher/Applicant I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to follow Ethical Standards and good research practice.

I declare that I am not aware of any potential conflicts of interest, other than those declared on THIS form, which may influence the ethical conduct of this study.

**Signatures:**

Researcher/Applicant: 
Date: 10/11/2009

Supervisor/Senior (if applicable):
Date:

**Faculty Research Ethics Committee comments:**

The Faculty of Education Ethics Committee unconditionally grants you ethical clearance for the study titled "Developing a structured accounting education mentorship program for pre-service teacher education students at a university technology." The certificate is valid for 6 years from the date of issue.

Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referred back	Dr. C. Moggito Chairperson 	Date: 20/11/2009
--	---------------	---	------------------

No country can neglect the standard of training their teachers as this can influence the quality of their education. In South Africa, post-1994, a great deal of attention has been focused on improving the education system thus more emphasis are placed on improving the training of pre-service teachers (Quick and Siebörger, 2005; Wyk and Daniels, 2004). Over the last decade international and national studies conducted provided strong arguments that Higher Education Institutions play a pivotal role in developing and implementing mentoring programmes for pre-service educators (Dreyer 1998; Robinson, 2001; Martinez, 2004; Scholtz, 2006; Kardos and Johnson, 2008). There is a common belief in the latter studies that mentoring pre-service educators can improve teacher preparation. It is against this backdrop that I want to explore the experiences of accounting pre-service teachers and their mentors during their 6 months internship.

Certificate Reference: EFEC 1-11/2009

## APPENDIX G: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER CONSENT LETTER



Universiteit vir Tegnologie:  
Kaapse Skiereiland  
Cape Peninsula  
University of Technology

Highbury Road  
MOWBRAY

7700

26 January 2010

Dear Student

### **PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

A study to explore the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in a context of mentoring will be conducted. The aim the study is to develop an Accounting mentorship programme.

A workshop will be hosted with the mentors and mentees to provide detailed information of their role expectations. The final year students in the B Ed:FET Accounting programme will be the focal point of the study. Reflection journals, unstructured interviews and focus group interviews will be utilized as research methods.

With your permission, a tape recorder will be used for purposes of facilitating data analysis. Strict measures will be taken in order to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. I will ensure the anonymity of the participants and their schools by omitting the use of their names and/or the schools' names.

Should you agree, you hereby give consent to be tape recorded in the research project.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2010.

.....  
**Signature: Participant**

**Thank you for your support**

## APPENDIX H: SCHOOL-BASED MENTOR CONSENT LETTER



**Dear Educator**

### **PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am currently a lecturer/doctoral student at the above-mentioned institution. My thesis is titled: **Developing a structured Accounting education mentorship programme for pre-service teacher education students at a University of Technology.** Our fourth year Accounting students will embark on a six-month internship (April – September) at your respective schools. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges pre-service teachers face while learning to teach Accounting in the context of mentoring. Your insight on this topic will be highly valued as you could provide first hand information regarding how to develop a structured Accounting mentorship programme.

With your permission, a tape recorder will be used for purposes of facilitating data analysis. Strict measures will be taken in order to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. I will ensure the anonymity of the participants and their schools by omitting the use of their names and/or the schools' names. Each interview will be audio-taped, transcribed verbatim by myself as the researcher.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and as a participant you are under no obligation to participate in the study. As participant you reserve the right to withdraw consent at any stage during the research process should you wish to do so. A summary of the research findings will be made available to you on request.

Should you agree, you hereby give consent to the participation in the research.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2010.

.....  
**Signature: Participant**

**Thank you for your support**

## APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE OF ATLAST.TI - CODES, PHRASES AND MEMOS

Report: 13 quotation(s) for 8 codes

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HU: LARAMENTOR  
File: [C:\Users\Karen\Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASTi\TextBank\LARAMENTOR.hpr6]  
Edited by: Super  
Date/Time: 2011/07/12 09:19:24 AM

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**Mode: quotation content, memos and hyperlinks**

**Quotation-Filter: All**

**MENTOR BIOGRAPHY**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:ENCOURAGING INDEPENDANT LEARNING**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:LEARNING FROM STUDENT**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:OBSERVATION**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT LEARNING TO TEACH ACCOUNTING**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT/LEARNER INTERACTION IN CLASS**

**MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP**

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:1 [Lecturer: Or maybe posters hav..] (6:7) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12]

Lecturer: Or maybe posters have posters up and refer to the poster when saying remember us doing that; now this is where that fits in, something like that. But what would you say are Lara's weaknesses?

Mentor: The thing is it's from the learners side they are actually taking advantage of some of the student teachers, but on her side she must be more firm with them. Learners tend to be more friendly to when you are a student teacher and that is not...She must actually prevent that; becoming too friendly to learners.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 (Super, 2011/07/12 08:54:12 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS - STUDENT NEEDS TO BE FIRMER WITH LEARNERS.

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:2 [Lecturer: And teaching account..] (8:9) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT LEARNING TO TEACH ACCOUNTING]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [1]]

Lecturer: And teaching accounting, where would you say is her weaknesses in teaching the actual subject; in front of the class?

Mentor: Okay, she knows the content but what I experienced is...Okay this is also a learning curve for her, but she must try to do short pieces at a time. But she will catch up with the experiences as we go along.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [1] (Super, 2011/07/12 08:55:21 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:3 [nd her strengths? Mentor: Okay..] (10:11) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT/LEARNER INTERACTION IN CLASS]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [2]]

nd her strengths?

Mentor: Okay, she likes to befriend the learners; she actually walks through the desks to give them some individual assistance. Otherwise she's doing fine. Experience will come over time.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [2] (Super, 2011/07/12 08:56:24 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:4 [Lecturer: Ja. Ja, and how do y..] (12:15) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [3]]

Lecturer: How do you think did she develop from the first term, up until now? Was there any development?

Mentor: I spoke to her about being stricter with the learners, but it appears to me it is still the same.

Lecturer: Yes...

Mentor: She still to...not like us where we have a distance, you know not literally but

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [3] (Super, 2011/07/12 08:57:55 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:5 [Lecturer: Know your place as a..] (16:19) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT DEVELOPMENT]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [4]]

Lecturer: Know your place as a learner and as a teacher, okay. Was there any growth in terms the way she teaches accounting?

Mentor: For me, the growth is not that but she improved from 5 to 10%. Not much.

Lecturer: In what way, do you say 5 to 10%?

Mentor: I think that the way she carries the message over, you know is like more... I told her the last time, she must actually first get the attention of the learners; in that sense she developed, first get the class to sit down and keep quiet and then you carry on with what you have to do. That is one of the improvements she has developed.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [4] (Super, 2011/07/12 08:59:25 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 2: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW1.docx - 2:6 [Lecturer: And how often do you..] (24:25) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:OBSERVATION]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [5]]

Lecturer: How often do you observe her?

Mentor: To be honest with you, say only once a week.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [5] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:00:37 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:1 [Mentor: As I said to you it is..] (2:2) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT DEVELOPMENT]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [6]]

Mentor: As I said to you it is like a learning curve. Everyday she is improving bit by bit. The last two to three weeks I gave her tips on how to start a lesson; I emphasized to have her background clear because kids tend to look for that and try to get the connection to at least the previous work as well. Kids have a tendency to ask why the statement of receipts and payments is different to the statement of income and expenditure; so just to get an idea. That is the best advice I can give her and then try to at least work from a textbook for about a week or so; because if you give them loose pages then they tend to bring their books the one day and then leave it at home the rest of the days.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [6] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:03:19 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM CLUBS



**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:2 [Mentor: So my advice to her is..] (4:4) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:STUDENT DEVELOPMENT]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [7]]

Mentor: So my advice to her is to try and stick to the textbook.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [7] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:04:09 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM CLUBS -

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:3 [Lecturer: And how long you hav..] (7:24) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR BIOGRAPHY]

No memos

Lecturer: And how long you have been in the profession?

Mentor: I started my studies at Pentech that was in 1986 and I finished in 1989.

Lecturer: Okay, so what did you do? What qualification did you do?

Mentor: Well...HDE.

Lecturer: HDE. Commerce?

Mentor: *Ja*, commerce.

Lecturer: I also did my initial diploma there.

Mentor: I only taught one year at Lavender Hill High.

Lecturer: Okay.

Mentor: And then I went back to do my civil technician degree.

Lecturer: Okay.

Mentor: For three years. Then I worked for three years in the industry and then I came back to teaching in 1996; two years in Hanover Park.

Lecturer: Hanover Park High School?

Mentor: Yes.

Lecturer: Okay.

Mentor: And then up till 2006 I accepted a permanent post in Strand. Then I looked at the bulletin again and then I saw this post in the bulletin in 2007; I thought they wouldn't take me...so in 2008 I checked the bulletin again and I got this post.

Lecturer: Okay...and your HDE; what were your majors?

Mentor: Accounting, Business, Typing and Economics.

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:4 [Mentor: What is so nice about ..] (38:48) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:LEARNING FROM STUDENT]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [8]]

Mentor: What is so nice about them is that they have all their planning and LO's in place; but for us as teachers we need to learn from them as well. Have everything on your memory stick and then just change dates here and there.

Lecturer: We push electronics; you know technology. Do PowerPoint's and type memos, etc.

Mentor: I actually want to get some lesson plans from them to keep me informed as well.

Lecturer: Yes. So you felt that you learnt from them as well?

Mentor: Definitely, yes.

Lecturer: Yes...in what way?

Mentor: When they come into class they have their material ready, for the lesson.

Lecturer: Okay.

Mentor: We know they know the work content but having it on paper is what the kids want.

Lecturer: Structures in place.

Mentor: *Ja.*

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [8] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:07:21 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:5 [Mentor: What I have noticed is..] (50:52) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:ENCOURAGING INDEPENDANT LEARNING]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [9]]

Mentor: What I have noticed is, the first week then the kids moan Sir must come back... but after that they get use to having them around. So I want to let them teach for the rest of the term.

Lecturer: Yes.

Mentor: Because they are going to be tested on what they are doing now. If I take over then their whole mindset will change.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [9] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:09:08 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:6 [Mentor: I would rather prefer ..] (54:54) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:ENCOURAGING INDEPENDANT LEARNING]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [10]]

Mentor: I would rather prefer them to finish off.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [10] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:12:51 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

**P 3: LARAMENTORINTERVIEW2.docx - 3:7 [Mentor: What I want to do next..] (58:58) (Super)**

Codes: [MENTOR FEEDBACK:LEARNING FROM STUDENT]

Memos: [ME - 2011/07/12 [11]]

Mentor: What I want to do next year with my Accounting...is to work out all my exercises that are not in the textbook.

Memos:

**MEMO: ME - 2011/07/12 [11] (Super, 2011/07/12 09:15:31 AM)**

Type: Memo

3RD TERM - CLUBS

## **APPENDIX J: INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY REPORT**

### **NEO'S STORY**

#### **Neo's background**

Neo is a so-called black student and was born in the Eastern Cape. He described himself coming from a poor family background and despite his parents' low educational level, he Neo explained that they encouraged him to study. With regard to his secondary schooling he struggled with Accounting in Grade 10 and attributed his difficulty with the subject to his accounting teacher's poor content knowledge. However things changed when he in Grade 11 because his Accounting teacher was knowledgeable and could provide detailed answers to his questions. He iterated that his experience with accounting at tertiary level was good as a result of attending classes regularly, completing homework assignments and realising where your mistakes are.

Neo registered in the B Ed:FET programme in 2007 as a first year student. Neo observed that his relationship with his previous accounting mentors during his prior teaching practice session was not fruitful because the mentors were reluctant to allow him to teach their classes independently. In response to the Accounting mentorship workshop introduced before the internship, Neo felt that he was equipped to work with his school based mentor and university based mentor. Mr Niemandt, Neo's mentor, attended the mentorship workshop. His feedback of the Accounting mentorship programme was that he understood his role as mentor and was informed of the pre-service level of expertise. In addition he expressed that he will make a concerted effort to have regular meetings with Neo and that he is comfortable at the school.

Neo did his teaching practice internship at a school located in Khayelitsha which is located on the outskirts of Cape Town. The school had an enrolment of five hundred and sixty children and had an average class size of thirty five. English was the medium of instruction even though most of the learners were first language Isixhosa speaker. Majority of the learners came from poor backgrounds and according to Mr Niemandt the school has a major problem with school violence. In fact Mr Niemandt was threatened numerous times by learners to physically harm him when he reprimanded them. The school had security guards at the gate and visitors had to sign a register before they were allowed access into the school.

#### **4.3.1 THEME 1: LEARNING TO TEACH THROUGH OWN ATTEMPTS**

##### **DATA FROM REFLECTION JOURNALS**

###### **4.3.1.1 Challenges encountered while learning to teach accounting**

**ANXIETY ABOUT STRENGTH OF CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**

Neo appeared to have doubts regarding his content knowledge when his mentor requested that he revised the learners’ homework given by the mentor. When he had to provide the learners with an answer related to the general journal, he felt that he was unprepared to provide the correct answers to the learners. In this regard he said:

I had to mark the homework that was given by my mentor so when I needed to tell the learners the source document of discount allowed and discount received as well as the journal that you must write I was a little bit confused and I was not prepared. I thought on my own I must use the General journal and journal voucher but in front of the learners I just said they don’t know the GJ yet so I used the same e.g. CPJ and cheque counterfoil. I also knew that we are not cancelling that transaction challenge me but I was not prepared.

In addition Neo felt conflicted when the learners used a different method to complete transactions in the general journal. The learners were given homework to complete entries in the general journal and confusion arose around which method to use when more than one account affects a particular account. In this light Neo entered the accounts differently to what the learners were taught by their accounting teacher. He illustrated that he entered the accounts as follows in the general journal:

Date		Details	Debit	Credit
Feb	3	Water and electricity	533	
200	0	Telephone	497	
7				
		Accrued expenses		1030
	-	Consumables on hand	1120	
		Packing material		976
		Stationery		144

The learners on the other hand separated the accounts and Neo was confused and dealt with the situation accordingly. He said:

The learners were right in the homework but they separate the accounts, for example the water and electricity with accrued expenses, I was a bit confused when they asked which way is right to do the accounts together or separately. I said as long as you apply the correct principles it is right.

**ANXIETY ABOUT STRENGTH OF PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**

Omitting information to explain the closing of accounts in the nominal account section to their final accounts prompted Neo to rethink his method of teaching. The learners were unable to grasp why only

the accounts in the nominal account section are closed off as oppose to the balance sheet account section. Hence they were unable to distinguish between purpose of the balance sheet and nominal account section. Neo blamed his teaching ability for the learners' confusion. According to Neo he omitted information which resulted in learner confusion and said:

I didn't show them the bigger picture of the balance sheet section and nominal accounts section and I didn't explain why the nominal sections are closed off and the balances sheet section is balanced instead of closing it off. Some learners were confused and I had to explain it.

Neo's explanation of why nominal accounts are exclusively written off to final accounts did not have the desired effect when he gave the learners a homework activity on that particular topic. In his opinion he omitted information necessary for the learners to do their homework and therefore the learners did their homework activity incorrectly. According to Neo some of the learners balanced the nominal accounts as oppose to closing it off. He said:

I did not specify to the learners how to close off the accounts so they even balanced the nominal accounts and I had to explain why we don't balance instead we close off the accounts in the nominal account section".

Neo reached an understanding that a lesson presentation can be unpredictable. He revealed that he needed to be prepared for different levels of questioning from the learners and thus not take things for granted. In this regard he said, *"I need to expect any questions that will arise in the classroom. I must not think everything is simple and I must also bear in mind that the little things can lead to bigger problems in the classroom situation"*. Dealing on an ongoing basis with the learners' confusion, Neo resorted to blaming the prescribed textbook for his inability to facilitate the learners' understanding of accounting. He was of the opinion that the textbook does not have enough examples to illustrate the application of transaction in a particular topic. Neo thus felt compelled to *"research many textbooks to find out how they explain examples of transactions"*.

### **MANAGING GAPS IN LEARNER KNOWLEDGE**

A major challenge for Neo was the language barrier of the learners. All the learners at that particular school are second language English speakers and there first language being Isixhosa. Neo devised numerous ways to overcome the aforementioned challenge, and he expressed that, *"what I need to do is to break down every word or phrase in accounting into pieces so that it can be meaningful to everyone, especially the learners."*

Assuming that the learners would be familiar with new concepts could prove to be detrimental when presenting a new lesson. Neo realised that having assumptions of the learners' knowledge could have a negative impact on his lesson presentation. He felt that he should have been better prepared for the learners' lack of knowledge and thus make inquiries before he embarks on a new lesson. He expressed that:

The learners did not know the difference between the perpetual stock system and periodic system. I assumed that they knew the difference between the two so if I did know that they know nothing I should have been doing the research or do more examples of physical stock taking. I must be prepared.

The value of lesson preparation plays an important role when presenting a lesson even though the content might appear to be easy to understand for the teacher. On several occasion Neo revealed in his reflection journal that what he might regard as easy concepts to understand in Accounting might not be similarly viewed by the learners. Moreover even if he knows the content knowledge in Accounting adequately, he should always be well prepared to teach the learners. In this regard Neo said, *"I must be well prepared for every part of accounting and I must not take things easy as simple things can confuse the learners"*.

## **COPING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES**

To overcome his challenge to address his competence in teaching the learners Accounting. Neo strategised to refer to the basic principles of accounting on a continuous basis to facilitate his ability to learn to teach the learners. An example of this strategy was illustrated in the following excerpt: *"the lesson was easy to understand for the learners when I reminded them about how to apply the basic principles of accounting"*. Continuously reinforcing the basic principles of Accounting and linking prior knowledge assisted Neo to achieve his lesson outcomes and in this regard he remarked, *"by applying the basic accounting principles makes it easy for the learners to understand and the link of previous knowledge also helps me and the lesson was so great"*. According to Neo, if the learners know and understand the basic principles of Accounting this facilitates their understanding of the double entry system. In this regard, Neo remarked that, *"If the learners know for example that debtors is an asset and assets increase on the debit side, explaining the double entry system would then be easy if they can identify the contra accounts"*.

Neo learned that linking the learners' knowledge from previous lessons to a new lesson could assist in achieving lesson outcomes. When he posted the year-end adjustments to the general ledger, he referred to the accounts he posted in previous lessons and he was delighted that *"the previous knowledge of the general ledger that learners did was the best link and made my lesson go very well"*

*and easy to achieve the lesson outcomes which was great*". Hence linking prior knowledge to a new lesson was helpful in achieving his lesson outcomes and in this light Neo lamented *"this week's presentation was great because I link the debtors account with the creditors account, so everything went smoothly. I achieve the outcomes of the lesson"*.

Utilizing visual aids became an important tool for Neo when he realised that a particular concept was confusing to the learners in a previous lesson. He wanted the learners to understand 'prepaid expense' but was unsuccessful in his previous lesson and thus said, *"I must be more creative and use visual aids, for example if I draw the financial year on the board or have a poster that will show the beginning and the end of the financial year so that the learners can see how the business pays for the extra month that is outside of the financial year"*.

To capture the learners' interest when introducing the topic 'clubs' Neo made reference to the Soccer World Cup 2010 which was hosted in South Africa and said, *"It was easy for me to tell them about the 32 countries that participated in the 2010 World Cup and that they had to pay affiliation fees"*.

As time progressed in Neo's internship he began to illustrate more explicit details on how he planned to execute his lesson and, more importantly, how he wanted to facilitate the learners' understanding. The following illustration exemplifies the latter statement:

My lesson entailed how to close off the nominal accounts section. It excludes the sales, debtors allowances and cost of sales. I want them to know how to write off the nominal accounts section to the profit and loss. I want them to know what type of the account is the nominal section for example the nominal account section is owner's equity and the owner's equity on the nominal section consists of the income and expenses.

Having content knowledge also boosted Neo's confidence when he taught the subsidiary journals and in this light he remarked, *"The knowledge of the topic was helpful and I had great confidence during the lesson presentation"*. Moreover his confidence was further boosted because *"the learners' interest gives me a lot of strength"*. Referring to the basic principles of Accounting assisted Neo in achieving his lesson outcomes and therefore motivated Neo to learn to teach. He enthusiastically declared that, *"I feel so good and great because the lesson went very smoothly when you apply the basic principles of accounting to post the accounts to the general ledger which makes it easy to understand for the learners"*.

In summary, Neo revealed general coping strategies to overcome the challenges he faced when learning to teach Accounting during his internship and observed that, *"I must be prepared in the classroom for each and every question that is asked. Subject knowledge is very good combining with the general knowledge and doing more examples with the learners."* To facilitate the learners'



understanding of the application of concepts in accounting, Neo expressed that, *“I need to do a lot of research before I present my lesson and bring it to the real world and make a lot of examples”*.

### **4.3.2 THEME 2: LEARNING TO TEACH THROUGH SCHOOL BASED MENTOR ASSISTANCE**

#### **4.3.2.1 MENTOR AS CARETAKER**

At the school where Neo did his internship there were two Grade 10 Accounting classes. His mentor assigned one class to Neo to take charge of and the mentor was in charge of the other Grade 10 Accounting class. Neo thus had an opportunity to observe how his mentor presented a lesson to the other Grade 10 class before he presented a lesson to the class he was assigned to. Neo stated that there was one particular lesson his mentor presented where he used a teaching method called ‘simulation’ which he found extremely interesting and would like to emulate this method in his classes. He said:

I observed my mentor on other class of Grade 10. He did the simulation and I learnt a lot from that. One learner was a debtor, second was a business, third one was the bank of the business and the fourth one was the bank of the business. The business issued receipt to the debtor and sent to their bank, the bank of the business contacted the debtor’s bank and there was no funds and then everything turned backwards. It was nice I learnt a lot from it. I must learn a lot to do simulations in my class.

At the initial stages of his internship Neo revealed that he observed his mentor often and he was learning the mentor’s method of presenting an Accounting lesson. Neo found out that, *“that is not more different from the one I use but he knows the learners understanding better than me”*. Furthermore in light of observing his mentor he also stated that, *“I learn a lot of methods on how to present a lesson”*. According to Neo his mentor would ask him on a daily basis what he was planning to do that specific day. He said that, *“my mentor always asks me what I am going to do, I show him and he gives me some advice by editing my lesson. After the lesson we chat”*. When Neo’s mentor observed him at the initial stages of his internship, his mentor advised him to encourage learner participation during his lesson presentations. Regarding this Neo expressed that, *“I must get more involved with the learners, ask different questions and force them to answer the questions. In that way I am drilling them”*.

Neo reflected that his mentor would not observe his entire lesson and thus said, *“sometimes he just observes ten minutes from the start of the lesson and after that he would leave and come before the end of the period”*. He did not only observe his mentor teaching the Grade 10 Accounting class but

also the Grade 11 Accounting class and stated that he was able to duplicate the style of teaching the mentor used with the Grade 11 class in his assigned Grade 10 class. In this regard he remarked, *“I even observed my mentor teaching Grade 11 so I noticed the method he uses in that class. I learned a lot how he teaches the different grades and now I am able to apply it in my Grade10 class”*.

Neo met with his mentor on a regular basis before and after his lesson presentation. Apart from editing or checking his lesson, Mr Niemandt also provided him with advice on how to present the content knowledge to the learners. Neo revealed that his mentor’s feedback was helpful to avoid unnecessary mistakes that he could make whilst presenting his lesson. He said:

My mentor assists me by observing the lesson in the classroom and after the lesson he gives me feedback, for example he explained to me why the nominal accounts section are written off to the profit and loss and not the balance sheet section. Now I learnt that before I begin the next lesson I should ask my mentor and show him the lesson plan and discuss the lesson before I go to the class.

At an early stage during the first term, Neo’s mentor gave him an opportunity to work independently with the learners due to the mentor’s managerial responsibilities. Neo was pleased with his overall lesson presentation and said, *“The lesson went very well and the learners behaved in a positive way even though their teacher was not around the school so I was in charge the whole day in his class”*.

Neo regarded his mentor’s assistance as a positive influence on his learning to teach Accounting and observed that, *“my mentor is very helpful to me before and after the lesson so his influence is always positive”*. His mentor would always allow time for discussing the challenges Neo encountered during his lesson presentation *“I asked my mentor about the challenges of my lesson presentation and he helped me by explaining those issues”*, he pointed out. After every lesson presentation, Mr Niemandt would provide Neo with advice on how to improve his lesson. In light of how Neo felt regarding his mentor’s advice and learning to teach new topics he said, *“after my mentor’s assistance I always gain confidence and I can’t wait for another new topic in order to learn more new things. Each and every time I am doing a new topic I am learning new things”*. Moreover he stipulated that his mentor boosted his confidence in teaching Accounting each time he gave him advice and said, *“before I present the lesson I show my preparation and we have a discussion before the lesson and again he observes my lesson. I grow in confidence every week”*.

Mr Niemandt advised Neo to teach in small chunks after he observed his lesson on posting year-end adjustments to the general ledger. According to Neo, his mentor advised him *“to stick to one thing and I must not do many things at one time that will confuse the learners therefore if I am doing the double entry system I must stick to it and not talk about the balance sheet or income statement for*

*example*". Neo had a positive view of his mentor's assistance on his learning to teach Accounting. The following excerpt illustrates his overall view of his mentor's assistance:

I learned a lot from my mentor since this is my last week at the school. The overall advice that he gave me was that before I go to the class I must be well prepared, confident and I must have knowledge of the subject. I must know that I'm in charge and I know better than the learners. I must break down every term in accounting in pieces. So next time I must be well prepared and go in the class with some confidence.

On another occasion when Neo explained to the learners the entries in the general journal, his mentor warned him "*not to assume that the learners understand the lesson*". He stated that his mentor warned him against omitting information, and he said: "*when I was doing the general journal I did not include the debtors and creditors column section and the narrations or reasons in my general journal*". Thus to overcome the latter mistake he made he pointed out that, "*I learned that I must always work perfectly and do the things as it is supposed to be*". Neo indicated that he was learning "*not to take things for granted*" by assuming that "*all learners understand when even though all of them say 'yes'*" when asked if they understand the work. Furthermore Neo's mentor made him realise that learners differ from each other and he said, "*there are learners that are not so vocal, I took that point*".

In essence, Neo described his overall experience with his mentor as being "*the only teacher I work hand in hand with*", as opposed to having a similar relationship with his subject major assigned mentors. He further stated that, "*I didn't work or gain any experience in my other teaching practices because the teachers always ask us to invigilate their classes and that is the one thing that was disturbing*". He attributed his good working relationship with his mentor to the accounting mentorship workshop and in this regard said:

I think first of all the mentorship that you (teacher educator) developed at school and the meeting that you called for us and our mentors before we came here is one of the things that helped to develop that relationship. So when I came here, he knew what is expected from him and what is expected from me.

#### **4.3.2.2 MENTORSHIP IS INTRUSIVE**

On the other side of the coin, Neo encountered a bad experience when his mentor unexpectedly requested that he takes charge of an accounting class he was not assigned to. Neo wrote that he was

unexpectedly requested by his mentor to present a lesson on ‘clubs’ to a Grade 11 class which he was unprepared for. He related this story:

My mentor faxed what I must do for that day in Grade 11. I had to quickly do some research on what was requested before the period began. Firstly, the learners expected their teacher not me. I introduced myself to the learners and they asked me a lot of unnecessary questions. I tried my best and it worked a bit. I achieved the outcomes but not really because it was not my class and I was not well prepared for the lesson.

According to Neo the latter request derailed his planning and ability to teach for that specific day and he hoped that he would be more assertive the next time he is requested to present a lesson he has not prepared for. *“I must say no next time if I am being asked to do something while I am not well prepared”*, he lamented.

To emulate his mentor’s style of teaching was a challenge for Neo. He stated that, *“the strategy my mentor is using is not easy to change because he uses it for the whole of his accounting learners”*. He furthermore expressed that using his mentor’s style of teaching *“is easier for the learners to understand the lesson”*. Neo thus felt compelled to emulate his mentor’s style of teaching. Hence Neo related that, *“at first it was not easy for me to adapt that style and now I am learning to use his style and to combine it with mine”*. The extract below illustrates how Neo’s mentor wanted him to teach a particular topic which he found challenging:

Before I begin my lesson I show my mentor that I’m going to begin to explain the adjustment that is taking place and I will do the T- accounts and the general journal but he said I must first show them the types of the accounts, identify and classify before I do those things.

When Neo took heed of his mentor’s advice on which method to use when teaching the learners, he found the method to be problematic when he taught the learners the concept ‘stock on hand’. He provided the following extract to illustrate why *“the learners took a long time to understand” the following transaction.*:

The physical stock-taking on 28 February 2006 shows that the following is unused:

Stationery	R122
Packing material	R387

So let’s take stationery and identify the accounts:

Stationery	122	Credit
Consumables stores on hand	122	Debit

According to Neo, confusion arose amongst the learners regarding *“why the stationery has to be credited if it is an expense, so I tried to explain”*. With regard to emulating his mentor’s style he said, *“the style that the mentor is using is one of the challenges that I faced but I try to cope and it is sort of*

*working*". Neo felt compelled to emulate his mentor's style of teaching and observed that, "*it is not easy for me to copy the style of the mentor*", even though he stated that the mentor's style was "*confusing me a little bit but I want to use it and he says he wants the children to be taught like that*". According to Neo, his mentor's teaching method was confusing as the mentor wanted the learners to assume that in a transaction one account will increase and the contra-account decrease which is not the case in Accounting. In light of this assumption Neo said, "*I don't want to lie but that style is confusing me, I think it is better if I use T-accounts to illustrate the double entry system to the learners because it is easy to do it like that*".

## **DATA OF INTERVIEW WITH MENTOR**

### **4.3.3.1 MANAGERIAL DUTIES INFLUENCE MENTORSHIP**

Due to Mr Niemandt's responsibility as deputy principal of the school he was sometimes unable to assist Neo as his Accounting mentor and he stated that, "*I think of Neo but I'm too busy with other things that I don't actually get the time to really focus on him but I am always available after school sometimes until 16h00 and especially in terms of lesson preparation I can assist him a lot*". In terms of how many times he observed Neo, Mr Niemandt said, "*I could observe him probably only once a week due to my administrative duties*". In fact Mr Niemandt stated that at the initial stages of Neo's internship, "*he was in my class for a while and then eventually he took over from me and I told him the first term that there wasn't enough time for me to give him support that I really wanted to give*".

### **4.3.3.2 MENTOR AS CARETAKER**

Mr Niemandt stated that regardless of him being unable to observe Neo consistently they were compelled to work together as there are two Accounting Grade 10 classes at the school. Neo and his mentor would therefore always discuss the lessons beforehand to ensure that both classes stayed abreast with the requirements of the syllabus. The mentor remarked:

I also had another Accounting class, those two classes had to be on par; they both are Grade 10, so we had to make sure that we are correlating our work. So whenever he is teaching, I make sure that he does what I expect of him. At all times I was making sure that whatever work he does is expected of the learners. So it wasn't that he was left alone to do whatever he wants to but it was making sure that because here are two Grade 10 Accounting classes, one I'm teaching and one he is teaching, that those two classes are having the same amount of work.

Mr Niemandt gave Neo an academically stronger Grade 10 class and provided the following description of the class: "*they are the top Grade 10 class at the school, they are enquiring and they are responsive. You know another class will sit quietly especially when there is a stranger in the room but this class will always respond*". The Accounting Grade 10 class assigned to Neo during his

internship is a “*challenging class*” according to Mr Niemandt. Assigning this particular class to Neo was giving him an opportunity to reflect on his ability to learn how to teach accounting. Mr Niemandt described the class in the following excerpt:

He has a very challenging class in a sense that they have high expectations of themselves and the challenge is the teacher going in there makes sure that their standard doesn't drop. Therefore what is happening now is for him being there he is able to reflect whether or not he is doing the right thing, because if these kids are not going to understand what he is doing then it means that somewhere he is doing something wrong. So he has acknowledged that, you know that for him it's important to have this class because they will be able to be a reflection back to him in terms of if they don't understand and they are supposed to be the top learners in the school, then it means that somewhere there are short-comings in the way that he teaches them.

#### **4.3.3.3 GAPS IN LEARNER KNOWLEDGE**

Mr Niemandt stated that Neo encountered several challenges while teaching Accounting. In his opinion the change of the Accounting curriculum to accommodate the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) system posed many challenges for the Accounting teachers in the Further Education and training (FET) band. The major challenge the FET band faced was that Accounting became an aspect of a broader subject called Economics Management and Science (EMS), thus most of the topics taught in Accounting Grades 8 and 9 was omitted to accommodate Economics and Business Studies, which also forms part of EMS. In light of the aforementioned Mr Niemandt said, “*the one problem I have with the learners in accounting Grade 10 is that they don't have a background*”. Moreover, Accounting teachers have a syllabus to complete for a particular grade and this makes it difficult to accommodate the content the learners were not taught in Grades 8 and 9 due to OBE requirements. Mr Niemandt appeared to be frustrated regarding the foregoing matter and said, “*as much as you know there are things that you can do with the learners, you are always pushing to complete the syllabus before the exams*”.

Another problem the mentor encountered was the language barrier at the school, as most of the learners are second language English speakers and he stated that, “*because of the language barrier you can't give the learners too many words*”. He advised Neo to “*come in with interactive ways of teaching, for example simulation, and the learners will respond to it*”. In certain cases the learners' ability to understand and write in English was insufficient for learning their subject in English, and in this light Mr Niemandt said, “*sometimes you ask them to do something but then they don't even understand what the instruction is telling them*”.

#### **MENTEE WEAKNESSES**

Several weaknesses of Neo were revealed by Mr Niemandt. According to Mr Niemandt, Neo was struggling to emulate his style of teaching and Mr Niemandt did agree with “*the layout in terms of*

how Neo presents the accounts, amount as an increase or decrease and debits or credits”, but in his opinion “there is a better way to do it”. He stated that Neo found his way to be “confusing” and he gave him an illustration of how to present his lesson by saying, “I have been showing him exactly how I do it with my learners and encouraged him to actually do it the same way and make sure he does it consistently the same way so that the learners get to see and learn the logic”. Furthermore, he stated that Neo consulted him regarding his teaching style. In this regard Mr Niemandt said:

The problem Neo encountered and came to me about was my way of teaching which he is not familiar with but he is making that link between the rules which are accounts increase and decrease. He has the Accounting knowledge, he knows the rules but for some reasons making the link between the two accounts of the transactions and applying the rules is a problem for him. For example knowing which accounts will increase or decrease and are they assets. You know there were one or two instances where he seemed a bit unsure about that.

Mr Niemandt observed that Neo found sustaining the learner’s attention challenging. He advised him to utilize visual aids and said, “your lesson will face down hill if the learners’ attention is not fully with you, so when you illustrate work on the chalkboard you are forcing them to look at you so they are seeing what you write on the board and they are thus listening to what you are saying”. In addition, Mr Niemandt said that Neo needed to learn how to manage his time when he planned his lessons. He also gave Neo a few tips on how to avoid learner confusion and hence facilitate learner understanding. However, the tips provided by the mentor on how to approach a particular topic in Accounting confused Neo. Mr Niemandt said:

I think that is one thing that we discussed yesterday, and I think he is not used to that. You will learn that...even the way you wrote on the board, that is a skill as well. How you manage and illustrate to the learners so that they don’t get confused, and I think the one thing I would prefer you to start off with the amount. Say to them this is the amount you are going to use and once you have the amount, and then you ask what are the two accounts and now you ask them must the accounts increase or decrease. One of the tricks that you teach them, they don’t even have to understand why it is. I think when they start to understand the end of year adjustments, they’ll begin to understand why it increase or decrease and one of the tricks you teach them is that those accounts must increase; the accrued income, accrued expense, prepaid expense, income received in advance, consumable stores on hand; it must increase. So you tell them; you emphasise that so that when they are busy with adjustments they will know that it must increase, so they will increase it automatically.

When Neo was presenting a lesson on year-end adjustments his mentor observed that Neo did not situate the overhead projector correctly in order for all the learners to see the work illustrated and the chalk was insufficient. In this regard he said, “Don’t be afraid to move the overhead projector because not all the learners could see and there was no chalk, nothing stops you to go to find the chalk”. Mr Niemandt also conveyed that Neo needed to improve his voice projection and work on his assertiveness in the classroom and he lamented, “ I think he speaks very softly, sometimes I think he needs to be more assertive and surer of himself”. He also related that Neo must interact more with the learners and make his lessons more interesting for the learners. He said:

In the lessons I observed, he is very static in class and I feel sometimes it is very important to move around. You know actually he need to be more expressive and make the lesson more interesting and vibrant for the learners. There seems to be no variations in his tone as well. I think that is thing he needs to work on, be a bit more vibrant. Learners are looking for some excitement, you know.

Mr Niemandt was of the opinion that Neo appeared *“to be sometimes withdrawn in terms of the personality he has because he is very quiet”*. However, despite this side of his personality, *“he is a person who is willing to learn”*, observed Mr Niemandt, and he firmly believed that Neo’s personality would develop as his confidence grew, and *“as he becomes more secure within the teaching profession”*.

#### **4.3.3.4 MENTEE STRENGTHS**

In terms of Neo’s pedagogical strengths Mr Niemandt described him as being, *“a very hard worker, diligent when it comes to preparing for lessons and he takes his work very seriously”*. He further pointed out that, *“he is constantly busy with school work”*, and regarded Neo’s behaviour at the school as being *“a very good sign”*. Lastly Mr Niemandt remarked that, *“he is always making sure that before he goes to class he is well prepared”*. Moreover Mr Niemandt expressed the fact that Neo would continuously seek his advice when he experienced any challenges with his lesson presentation or preparation, and said: *“any problems or concerns he has, he will come to me to clarify it and that is the one thing I liked about him”*.

Mr Niemandt regarded Neo’s attitude towards his work as being *“a very good work ethic”*. With regards to Neo’s content knowledge Mr Niemandt said, *“I think generally I am happy with his content knowledge and I don’t think there is a lot lacking in terms of knowing the basics of Accounting”*. Added to this, *“Neo is keen to learn about where his shortcomings are”*, according to Mr Niemandt, and he had shown interest in finding out *“how to do things differently”*. Moreover, Mr Niemandt stated that Neo *“is not really a problem in terms of trying to learn more about the subject and trying to find more ways to teach the subject”*. Evident in Neo’s commitment to teaching was his willingness to learn and, more importantly, his awareness of his weaknesses as a pre-service Accounting teacher. In this regard Mr Niemandt said, *“he knows that at the end of the day there are going to be mistakes but he is willing and trying to find ways to overcome the shortcomings he has”*.