

TEACHER EDUCATION BY MEANS OF INTERNSHIP: A CASE STUDY

by

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 342-353-10

I declare that this dissertation

Teacher Education by means of Internship: A case study

Represents my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

SIGNATURE

(J.V. HENDRIKSE)

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my greatest supporter in life, Steve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ✚ My heavenly Father – for His strength and guidance
- ✚ Prof. A.M. Dicker and Dr A. van Schalkwyk – for their encouragement and words of wisdom
- ✚ Steve – for his encouragement and endless cups of tea
- ✚ My children – for their patience and understanding
- ✚ To all my many student-teacher interns, past and present, you make this mentorship programme so worthwhile
- ✚ To Melville for hosting an amazing intern programme

ABSTRACT

Teacher education through open and distance learning (ODL) and internships is not only crucial to addressing current and future needs of learners in South Africa, and Africa as a whole, it also encapsulates the possibilities of several much-needed new perspectives on these two fields.

This research is a qualitative case study drawing from the subjective views of both the mentor teachers and the student-teacher interns already immersed in the ethos and everyday workings of a functioning local private school, PS. A case study was deemed to be an appropriate research design as the researcher is based on site and was able to spend extended time investigating, exploring and observing the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers going about their daily routine. The sample of participants chosen comprised of the student teachers already based at PS and studying through ODL together with their assigned mentor teachers.

The findings of this study reveal an expansion of the student-teacher intern's field of involvement and participation in the school and all school related activities. The mentor teachers, as the data revealed, also benefitted in various ways and most importantly were provided with an opportunity to reflect on their personal teaching practice and philosophy.

The study examined factors that facilitated or impeded the development and professional growth of the student-teacher intern and these factors had a direct bearing on the relationship that existed between the student teacher and their class mentor teacher. The data was collated from the open-ended questionnaires, the informal discussions held and the daily observation of the intern programme in action.

The principle recommendations resulting from this study is based on the reported range of benefits to both the student teacher and the mentor teacher. The intern programme can be recognised and valued as a relevant contribution to the South African educational system as it would seem that the student teachers coming through this system feel confident, well informed and professionally ready to take on their own class of learners.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COTEP	Committee on Teacher Education Policy
DoE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
FP	Foundation Phase
GHS	General Household Survey
HET	Higher Education and Training
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
Inset	Inservice training
IP	Intermediate Phase
MSP	Mentoring Schools Programme
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NCETE	National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
OBE	Outcomes Based-Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PDS	Professional Development Schools

PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
Preset	Preservice training
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SACOL	South African College for Open Learning
SACTE	South African College for Teacher Education
SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TE	Teacher Education
TESSA	Teacher Education in sub-Saharan Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
WBL	Work-Based Learning

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In traditional university-based teacher education preparation programmes, the culmination of the theoretical university coursework is the placement of a future teacher in a school classroom to practice teaching. Feiman-Nemser and Buchman (1987:257) suggest that the main task in teacher preparation is to help the student teachers recognise the difference between *going through the motions of teaching...and connecting these activities to what pupils should be learning* and this connection hopefully takes place during the student teacher's practicum experience. The length and duration of these practice experiences or practicums vary according to the university requirements. Once the criteria for the practicum period have been fulfilled, the student teacher returns to the university.

The matter of where teacher preparation should take place has been one of the *most vigorously debated issues* throughout the history of formal teacher education (Zeichner 2008:263). Open and Distance Learning (ODL) offers an alternate route to teacher-education by allowing students to plan their studies around their existing lifestyle without having to attend a contact University. The internship route of studying to become an educator, places the student in a school environment for the duration (or part thereof) of their Bachelor Degree. The internship route of study does in no way advocate opposition to full-time study at an accredited institution, but merely seeks to investigate the effectiveness and benefits of teacher preparation through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) whilst spending time at a school.

The internship programme opens up the workplace and plays a primary and critical role in the student teacher's pedagogical growth and development through teaching practice under the supervision and guidance of an experienced teacher as a role-model (Mecca 2010:6). The student-teacher intern is afforded the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience in the practical application of his/her theoretical course work. This combination of academic preparation and teaching-practice experience should ensure that professional classroom educators are thoroughly prepared to enter the workplace upon completion of their degree (Linn, Howard and Miller 2004:43).

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of 16 student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers. These student-teacher interns are completing one year of their internship under the supervision and mentorship of experienced mentor teachers whilst studying for their education degree through ODL.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The problem of teacher training in South Africa (SA) has been a predominant and persistent issue, as documented by Hindle (2003:327-335) and Crouch (2001a) in studies showing the decline in both the status and size of the teacher education sector. The literature shows that there is a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers (Bernstein and McCarthy, 2011) and the modelling of quality teacher education by experienced role models in the field has been hindered by the high rate of teacher attrition and the slow recruitment of new teachers (Hammet 2007:340-347). Naong (2011:191) asks whether teaching has lost its appeal and suggests that the shortfall of teachers in South Africa presents challenges for addressing skills shortages, facilitating economic development, poverty alleviation and achieving social redress. According to Kruss (2008:3) it is estimated that the system in 2008 had the capacity to produce approximately 5000-6000 newly qualified teachers in a given year. This leads to concerns about there being a shortage in teacher supply and about the quality of the teachers being trained and their ability to implement the new education system (Department of Education 2005).

The role of ODL in addressing teacher shortages is also highlighted by Pimm and Selinger (1995:47-56). The authors are of the opinion that ODL was brought into teacher education in response to the shortage that existed in Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to Jenkins (1989:41), distance education features prominently among strategies proposed to help African countries deal with the education crisis. In South Africa a number of schools have adopted the internship route of teacher education through ODL in response to the critical shortage of teachers this country is currently experiencing. In a report released by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) (Deacon, Simkins, Rollnick, and Brodie 2011:2), it is documented that South Africa is *producing too few teachers and cannot meet the country's requirement of about 25 000 new teachers a year – we have a current shortfall of 15 000 teachers a year*. Research has proved that many of the newly-trained teachers will not enter the teaching profession, but will choose to work in another field or take their skills overseas. Many student teachers may fail to obtain their degree and so have to be retained in the student system and many others may not go on to complete their degree and choose to enter the workplace. There is an urgent need for teacher education to provide many more

fully qualified teachers and for the alternatives to gaining this qualification to be considered as top priority during this period of time in South Africa.

The researcher is of the opinion that teacher education by means of an internship could alleviate the above-mentioned crisis to a certain degree. It provides an alternate route to qualifying for a teacher's degree in education as well as providing in-service training and hands-on experience. Thus, student-teacher interns, after qualifying, can almost immediately be deployed in the work situation whereas full-time students completing their degree at a contact institution may need assistance or intense mentorship within the *'real world'* of teaching in a school.

An internship, whilst studying through ODL, gives the student teacher an opportunity to put his/her theoretical knowledge into practice. An internship at a school offers total immersion in the school ethos and involvement in all the school activities, and in so doing may *bridge the gap between the academic world of study and the world of the surreal reality of the work situation* (Scholtz 2006:1). To learn while experiencing the situation is referred to as experiential learning which includes the process of preparing someone for a job or activity by equipping him or her with the required knowledge and skills (Van Dyk, Nel, Loedolff and Haasbroek 2001:148; Chiyongo 2010:8).

Lave (1991:67) defined situated learning as *learning that is embedded in a social situation and cannot be dissociated from it and can only be understood within the context in which it occurred*. Situated learning dovetails with David Kolb's theory of Experiential Learning where Kolb (1984:89) suggests a *learning cycle that incorporates concrete experiences followed by observation and reflection leading to the formation of abstract concepts and ideas that are then tested in new situations, leading to new experiences and so on*. It would seem as though the term work-based learning (WBL) is an umbrella term used for any learning or work experience that is gained when the student is placed in the work place (Chapter 2 under 2.2). Teaching is a profession that begs hands-on experience whilst situated in a classroom and within a community of practice.

During the formal teacher-training programme at a Higher Education Institution (HEI), the student may not be adequately exposed to the reality of the classroom experience, whereas a student-teacher intern arrives at a school for a year of internship and enters a community of practice. This requires the student teacher to undergo a process of enculturation into the professional environment and thus start to develop a professional persona.

Within the current models of teacher preparation programmes there is a pedagogical component, a subject specific knowledge component and a practical teaching component. In

a paper presented at a research conference at the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), Probyn and van der Mescht (2000) assert that the pedagogical theories and methodologies of teaching and the daily realities and routines of an actual classroom should become less abstract during an internship. Since the student teacher is still under training, there is need for supervision, support and guidance throughout the undergraduate process. Currently the average duration of the practical teaching component required in the initial teacher education training period is 5 weeks a year, which equals 20 weeks over the four-year period it takes to graduate with a teaching degree (Luneta 2011:42). The teaching practicum provides opportunities to use both the content knowledge and the pedagogic content knowledge and to *develop a dialect between theory and practice* (Carr and Kemmis 1986:142).

Bey and Holmes (1992:144) are of the opinion that the mentoring or internship programme is an effort to help student teachers integrate theory and practice more effectively and that an internship programme will ease the transition between being a student and a first year qualified teacher. The European Commission (EC) (2007:1) suggests that *in the growing complexity of society and the demands on the educational system, schools should play an active and central role in developing teaching methods, improving the quality of teaching and extending knowledge about teaching and learning* in teacher education. In 2006, Darling-Hammond offered a comprehensive overview of changes she deemed necessary to overhaul teacher preparation practices. One of the critical components she suggested that will overhaul outdated teacher education programmes, involves *closer, proactive relationships with schools that serve diverse learners effectively and develop and model good teaching practices* (Darling-Hammond 2006:300).

The internship model of teacher education cannot be studied without regarding the mentoring relationship which plays a vital role in the school-based education of the student-teacher intern. Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1991:1) conclude that the mentor teacher should be available when he or she is needed by the student-teacher intern. They advise that the mentor teachers need to understand this, and need to establish that understanding with the teachers-in-training at the very beginning, namely that mentor teachers are there to offer their expertise and that their suggestions are integral to the success of any internship programme.

The mentor teacher can also improve the teaching practice experienced of the student-teacher intern by transforming professional relations and developing an interest in the professional development of the student teacher. Little (1990:97) draws this distinction between social support that puts newcomers at ease and professional support that advances knowledge and good practice.

Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992:14) identified three perspectives on mentoring. The first, they point out, casts mentors as local guides, the second as educational companions and the third as agents of cultural change. These perspectives encapsulate the educational role of mentoring in the internship programme in schools.

Another important role of the mentor to be considered in the mentoring relationship is that of assessor of the mentee's need regarding professional support or encouragement. Daniel (2004:47) states that it is imperative that the mentor does not *lord it over* the mentee. He states that it is important that room be made for the mentee to make as many decisions as possible and then to allow time for both the mentor and mentee to reflect upon the outcome of decisions taken. This relationship must be purposeful and extend beyond just the classroom. Every situation during the school day presents an opportunity for mentoring to take place. This may be in the staff room, during planning meetings or on the sport field.

1.3 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

At present there are only two qualifications that can be regarded as Initial Professional Education of Teachers (IPET), namely the undergraduate Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd) and the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The BEd is currently a four year undergraduate qualification and the PGCE is a one year post-graduate certificate taken after completion of a first bachelor's degree. No other qualifications have, as their purpose, the initial professional education of teachers (Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education 2005).

It appears that assistance in the form of mentoring programmes offered at schools for students studying for their BEd Degree or PGCE falls far short of the demand for such programmes. This could be due to the fact that teachers see student teachers as another addition to their already overloaded work schedule. Another very real obstacle, according to the researcher, is the lack of funding for this programme to be successful in schools where there is just not enough money. Or maybe schools have just not been exposed to or even considered the option.

Vick (2006:181-198) sees the *disconnection between campus- and field-based teacher education as an on-going problem* – a problem that could be solved by accommodating ODL student teachers in local schools for the duration of their teaching qualification. In the school where this research is being conducted, the internship and mentoring programme bring the teaching practice and academic knowledge together in a less hierarchical way and so

enhance the implementation of the theoretical side of studying by offering the student teacher a hands-on practical opportunity of interacting with learners on a daily basis.

An internship programme for student teachers studying through ODL has been developed in a local school (hereinafter referred to as PS) in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). As word of this internship programme spread, student teachers studying education through ODL in the local area began attending the weekly meetings hosted by the mentor manager of this school and found that they were enjoying the camaraderie of other student teachers and the assistance offered by the local intern programme manager.

The said mentor manager has a thorough understanding of the demands made by distance education, having recently studied through an ODL institution. The mentor manager, through her own experience fully appreciates the flexibility offered by this form of study, but also became aware of the voids left as student teachers often found difficulty reconciling the theory and practicum work concerned. ODL can lead to isolation and a feeling of loneliness as the student teachers are not accommodated in face-to-face lecture rooms, but are required to work at their own pace and within their own time frames. It can become a lonely road to travel.

It would seem that there is a definite need for investigating and implementing a model of internship and mentoring and the researcher illustrates this by using the following rationale:

- A high standard of academic assistance could be offered by experienced school-based mentors, internship programmes and the ODL institutions themselves and so collectively an improved teacher training programme could be created.
- Hours of hands-on experience could be gained by the student teachers, whilst being mentored by experienced and dedicated educators.
- This intern programme could also be beneficial to more established teachers as they are exposed to more reflective teaching practices that are used currently in the educational milieu (C2005 and CAPS).
- The total immersion and integration of student-teacher interns into the ethos of the school/s at which they complete their internship could be beneficial. This would be for a year at a time and so will expose student-teacher interns to different teaching contexts and hopefully prepare the student teacher to adapt to different teaching situations.

- Student teachers would become fully involved in all activities at the schools at which they are completing their internship and so experience a *whole school* rather than just an individual classroom. These activities would include, for example, term-planning meetings, sport functions, curriculum planning, staff functions and preparing and presenting lessons.
- The isolation of ODL can be minimised as the student teachers are in a learning environment conducive to their area of study. Being in this teaching environment also reduces the concern regarding the reductionist model of ODL where it is *feared that the knowledge base of teacher preparation may be jeopardized to fulfil the short term objectives of alleviating the teacher shortage in South Africa* (O'Donoghue and Harford 2010:102).

All this practical and *hands-on* involvement should add to the improved general training of student teachers and should help to prepare the student teacher to feel confident and competent to enter the teaching arena once qualified.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research problem is essentially the *topic to be investigated or what needs to be known* (Powell and Connaway 2004:22). It is assumed that one plans a research study because some problem worthy of investigation has been identified. Karl Popper in Hofstee (2006:85) contends that *no new knowledge can be arrived at if there is no problem to be investigated*. The problem to be investigated needs to be recent and relevant and the research needs to make a contribution to improving a particular problematic situation or solving an identified problem.

1.4.1 Main problem

Can ODL teacher education be improved by implementing an internship programme whereby student teachers are placed in the school environment for the duration of their degree and are mentored by experienced school-based teachers?

1.4.2 Sub-problems

Data emerging from the exploration of student-teacher internships will be critically analysed to address the following problems:

- Why do student teachers choose to study for their teaching qualification through ODL?
- What does the literature reveal pertaining to internship models adopted in other countries as a means of experiential learning, situated learning or work-based learning (WBL)?
- What is the nature of the conversation and relationship between mentor teachers and their student-teacher interns (mentees)?
- What are the benefits of this programme to the particular school (PS)?
- What are the factors that contribute to the development of an internship programme?
- What deficiencies that exist in ODL teacher training can be compensated for through the internship programme?
- To what extent can all of the above inform policy and practice within the Department of Higher Education?
- Should the Educational SETA fund a student-teacher intern programme and in so doing, make the programme more attractive to schools and more accessible to student teachers studying education through ODL?

1.5 AIM

Bak (2008:16) sees the aim of any research as discussing *the possible practical relevance [the] investigation might have*. Bak asks the question as to whether the investigation will lead to improved practice or whether it will inform or influence policy in any way.

1.5.1 Main aim

The main aim is to investigate whether a school-based student-teacher internship programme is an appropriate, sustainable model for hosting student teachers studying education through ODL.

1.5.2 Sub-aims

The sub-aims are to

- review and investigate the main and various aspects of internships and teacher training, both locally and abroad;
- investigate what is already being achieved by an existing internship programme in a local private school (PS); and
- determine whether there were any benefits or disadvantages to the student-teacher interns and to the mentor teachers embarking upon an internship at the selected school (PS).

1.6 DELINEATIONS AND DEMARCATIONS

Vithal and Jansen (2006:14) are of the opinion that *acknowledging limitations empowers the reader to appreciate what constraints were imposed on the study and to understand the context in which the research claims are set.*

Bak (2008:23) argues that *your proposal needs to demonstrate that you have been able to demarcate or delimit your area of study. Limitations of the study are inherent in academic work...you can't do it all and you can't do it perfectly* (Hofstee 2006: 87). Delineations on the other hand *cover your back [and] explain to your reader exactly what you are responsible for* (Hofstee 2006:87).

Student-teacher interns refers to students studying towards a higher qualification in teaching, be it a degree or a post-graduate certificate. They could be at any given stage of their degree, and their chronological ages could vary greatly. These student-teacher interns are employed at a local school, in the KwaZulu-Natal area, and will complete their degree whilst on the intern programme and being coached by an assigned mentor. These student-teacher interns receive holistic training during this time under the mentorship of experienced teachers.

A local private school (PS) was chosen as the site for this case study as this is where the researcher is based. This school has 16 student-teacher interns on campus, all in various stages of completing their initial teaching qualification at an ODL institution.

The student-teacher intern programme at PS is funded solely by the school, and does not receive any financial aid from the Education, Training and Development Practitioners Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA 2002).

This case study is limited in scope by:

- The geographical area chosen
- The sample group of student-teacher interns who are based at the school (PS) already experiencing the intern programme
- The sample group of mentor teachers who are willing to partake in interviews and/or fill in questionnaires
- Student-teacher interns studying their teaching qualification through an ODL Institution

1.7 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method reflects on the literature study, empirical study and the research design.

1.7.1 Literature study

The literature study forms the base for the empirical research and provides the necessary grounding for this study. Research articles in journals, research reports and scholarly books were consulted and reviewed.

The literature study is an important means of acquiring background knowledge relevant to the research topic and of determining what research has already been done. According to Linn in Linn, Howard and Miller (2004:33) there are three reasons to do a literature review before proceeding with a study: *the literature indicates what research has been done in an area of interest; it also provides information on where gaps exist in current knowledge; and it provides a framework for, and establishes the importance of, a study.*

This literature study seeks to identify internship programmes in various vocations around the globe, not just those concerned with education, although these will be given more attention.

Wilson (1988:83) is of the opinion that the existing body of research in internships *has fallen short of the ideal of scientific inquiry to illuminate relationships, predict effects, explain findings in light of existing theory or contribute to theory development.* Wilson goes on to highlight the need for research in internships in order for it to become more credible and prominent.

It became clear to the researcher that little research has been done on investigating student-teacher internships in South Africa. It also became clear that there is a great need for research that could tie educational outcomes on a practical level to educational theory and

ODL coursework. This has led to any related literature being reviewed for possible applicable information. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:113) remark that *new or little-researched topics usually require a review of any literature related in some essential way to the problem, to provide the conceptual framework and a rationale for the study.*

The result of the research undertaken is often used to make recommendations for improving existing teacher training programs.

1.7.2 Empirical study

The aspects defined in the problem statement will be viewed from a qualitative perspective. The student-teacher interns will be completing their year of internship at PS and be studying towards their teaching qualification. The open-ended questionnaire that the student-teacher interns were asked to complete posed questions but also made provision for the student-teacher intern to share his or her personal experiences, opinions and thoughts.

1.7.3 Research design

The underlying epistemology of this research is interpretive which aligns itself with qualitative research and assumes that *the access to reality is gained through social constructs such as language, shared meanings and goals* (Henning 2004:20). Glesne and Peshkin (1992:6) are of the opinion that qualitative researchers see their research task as *coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them*. The interpretist framework is qualitative in that different viewpoints are considered and phenomena are understood through the meanings people assign to them (Henning 2004:21).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2004:74) a *research design is a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends conducting the study*. This research design is based on a qualitative research approach using the student-teacher interns based at PS as the sample of this study. The researcher then interpreted and explained information obtained from the answers supplied by the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers. This information was collated from the questions posed in the open-ended questionnaires. There are a number of qualitative research designs and methodologies available and the researcher chose to use the methodology of the case study for this research. In Mecca (2010:20) the case study is utilized as a *descriptive method used to better understand the nature and meaning of the experience from the participants' perspective in their own words*.

Merriam (1998:1) in her book on qualitative research and case study is of the opinion that *research focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those*

being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education. Discovering and understanding the student-teacher internship programme from the perspective of both the student-teacher interns and the mentoring teachers is the central theme of this research.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Case study

Creswell (2007:73) and Nieuwenhuis (2007:75) deem that in a case study a researcher *dives through comprehensive data collection involving several resources in the form of observations, interviews, and reports in order to produce a case description.* This case study is limited by the geographical location. It focuses specifically on 16 student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers.

Internship

According to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (www.wisc.edu/), an internship is a WBL experience that *involves on-the-job training to prepare for a future career in a given field, with the emphasis being placed on the development of skills and knowledge pertaining to that particular field of work.* A student teacher or a student-teacher intern would therefore gain experience and knowledge and develop vital teaching skills whilst completing an internship at a school and studying through ODL at the same time. In Chapter 2 under 2.2.3, internships and much of what pertains to them is discussed in more detail.

A concise description of what the internship encompasses is offered by Stretch and Harp (1991:67):

A supervised discipline-related work experience;

Controlled experiential learning where a student receives academic credit while employed by an organisation in a chosen area of interest;

A quality work experience, guided and managed by an experienced supervisor, in a position with duties that the student has not previously performed, which will benefit the student in her or his future career goals;

Mentor

McIntyre (1997:202) suggests that in this case *the mentor is the subject teacher who takes primary responsibility for the professional education in classroom teaching*. This research will refer to the mentor teacher as the one who takes the student teacher into his or her classroom as a student-teacher intern for the year. The mentor teacher becomes the coach and evaluator of lessons that the student-teacher intern presents.

Mentoring relationship and mentorship

This relationship can only be built by creating the context for mentoring to unfold. The three areas that are imperative to attend to when creating this mentoring context, according to Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007:16), include providing emotional support, creating a strong relationship and ascertaining the prior knowledge and beliefs about teaching that the student teacher brings into the classroom.

Steinmann (2006:60) attests that the mentorship relationship is:

characterised by a 'getting-to-know-you' process. In the course of doing so, the relationship takes on a firm footing because the necessary framework has been mutually discussed and put into operation; thus concepts and arrangements such as roles and responsibilities, relationship rules, time frames, objectives, frequency of contact, etcetera, have all been thoroughly considered and finalised.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

The South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE 1993:7) describes distance education as *a strategy for meeting new goals in teacher education*. Perraton (2000:58-63) is of the opinion that the main purpose of ODL in teacher education was to address the problem of teacher shortages. Perraton further suggests that the entry of open universities in the field of education between 1970 and 1980 changed the landscape of higher education and created a new mechanism for teacher education.

ODL offers an alternative study route as opposed to full-time university attendance. It allows the student the opportunity to study and work at the same time, so earning a salary and being self-supporting.

Student teacher or student-teacher intern

In this case study the terms *student teacher* and *student-teacher intern* are interchangeable and have one and the same meaning. It is noted in the literature that students completing initial teacher education programmes are referred to by different terms, for example, pre-service student teachers (Latchem 2010:78), teachers-in-training or at times merely teacher trainees (Oxford Internship Scheme,1992).

Teacher education

The Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) (1996:6-52) of South Africa provides a specific definition of teacher education. COTEP contends that *the fundamental aim of teacher education is to educate and train teachers to teach effectively in order to facilitate learning*. Teacher education is a purposeful action that needs to be continually monitored, updated and assessed.

Mamabolo (1996:67-70) believes the aim of teacher education is to *understand and find meanings in the phenomenon of education*. This viewpoint is shared by Campbell and Brummett (2007:4) as they propose that student teachers should *construct their own knowledge, question relationships between theory and practice and investigate their own teaching practice, as opposed to simply imitating instructional styles*.

Teacher education and training

Tertiary institutions (universities and private institutions) offer teacher training. The extent of the training is dependent on what the institution offers. The goal of most institutions is to teach competency, which is divided into six general goals, which are to:

- set up and maintain a safe standard and healthy learning environment;
- advance physical and intellectual competence;
- support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance;
- establish positive and productive relationships with families;
- ensure a well-run, purposeful programme that responds to the needs of the participants; and
- maintain a commitment to professionalism (Seefeldt 1990:187-189).

Graves (1990:13-14) proposes that *teacher education encompasses the issues of competence in subject matter and of the ability to impart it, and allows for a historical investigation of both of these strands*.

Teaching practicum

Learning a skill as complex as teaching by imitation is likely to be particularly unproductive (Simpson 2006:6). Therefore the practicum approach is to place a student teacher in a classroom situation under the supervision of a qualified teacher. It offers the student teacher the opportunity of putting theory into practice and demonstrating the practical competencies of teaching as documented in the Government Gazette number 20844 (Republic of South Africa, 2000:10) on Norms and Standards for Educators and focuses on developing abilities and qualities necessary for competent classroom teaching.

1.9 ARRANGEMENT OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter one – Introductory orientation

Chapter one will serve as the general introduction to this proposed case study. The background prompting this study will be discussed and include the rationale behind this. The possible limitations that may be encountered along the way will be discussed as will the definition of terms.

Chapter two - Comparative literature review

Chapter two provides a theoretical framework of the study and focuses on related literature namely comparative studies and various aspects of the student-teacher internship programme experienced in the USA, Malaysia, Australia, UK and Africa.

Chapter three - Research design and methods of data collection

Chapter three provides information on the research design of the study. The nature of the research questions has necessitated the use of the qualitative research approach. The research method and the measuring instruments used during the process of data collection and the ethical considerations will be discussed.

Chapter four - Findings and discussion of findings

The fourth chapter focuses on the data that has been collected, an analysis thereof, the findings emanating from the data and a discussion of the data. The results of the qualitative research is presented, analysed, and interpreted against the existing literature study. The chapter addresses the specific research questions as set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter five – Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

The fifth and final chapter presents a summary of the findings in relation to the research question that this study set out to investigate, together with the recommendations and opens up the field for further research.

CHAPTER 2

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate an existing student-teacher intern programme and the effectiveness, advantages and disadvantages of such a programme as experienced by both the student teachers and their mentor teachers respectively.

In Chapter one a brief introduction is given with specific reference to internship, providing the background and rationale for this study. Referring to the broad outline given in chapter one, Chapter two is focussed on providing a theoretical framework for this study.

This chapter presents a review of the literature relating to questions raised by this research. The literature reviewed will consider the various internship models used in other countries and consider their successes and failures.

Thus a brief investigation into a global comparative school-based pre-service student-teacher internship programme will be done. The purpose of this endeavour is to draw parallels between different programmes and elicit the most applicable elements from these to apply to the limited programmes that exist locally.

The material surveyed highlights and further explores local and international literature pertaining to this study. The literature review lays a foundation for the empirical investigation. It is intended to familiarise the reader with the relevance of this study to the South African teaching profession.

The following changes in the education sector in South Africa have implications for teacher training, namely

- The effect the political changes of 1994 had on further education in South Africa
 - Political change in South Africa
 - General level of education
 - Right to education
 - Challenges facing the Higher Education System
- The introduction of C2005 and the changing school contexts within South Africa
 - The changing student body of South Africa

- Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and long term strategising
- Transforming teacher education
- Changes in the South African Higher Education System
- International comparative studies done on school-based pre and in-service student-teacher internship programmes
- An investigation into what it means to be a mentor teacher to student-teacher interns training to be teachers

Before spotlighting teacher training in South Africa, we need to familiarise ourselves with the various work experiences offered globally.

2.2 DEFINING WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL)

WBL, sometimes referred to as experiential learning, is an umbrella term that includes a variety of models such as apprenticeships, cooperative education, internships, service learning, 'sandwich' placements, shadowing and externships designed to promote student learning outside of the traditional classroom model (Linn 1999:26-34). WBL programmes would seem to be encouraged and practised world-wide offering students practical experience in their chosen field of study.

WBL or time of internship is critical in a fast-changing world where young workers find they need to qualify with academic knowledge and be skilled to manage their own careers. Many students are discovering that *the traditional college setting of classrooms may not prepare them well to become successful workers in a competitive new environment* (Linn, Howard and Miller 2004:3). These editors further suggest that colleges need to drastically change their way of preparing students for employment by providing practical, meaningful experiences.

In a study done by Hanney (2005:105) it is recommended that students completing foundation or undergraduate degrees experience WBL. Hanney describes WBL as a practice where *practical work is often required to mirror professional practice and students are expected to develop the kind of key transferable skills sought by employers such as communication, team working and problem solving*. In order for this practical WBL to be effective it should take place in a *real world environment and be of sufficient duration for the individual to be able to demonstrate competency against learning outcomes* (Skillset Foundation Degree Frameworks, 2004).

Developing the necessary skills to progress from student teacher to professional teacher empowers the student to move effortlessly into the classroom.

The following are a few examples of WBL experiences offered to students world-wide.

2.2.1 Job shadowing

Geisen and Waggoner-Angleton (2007:24) cited research by Katherine Hansen in which she suggests that the premise of job shadowing is to learn about a company or career by *experiencing it in the shadow of a working professional*. Hansen further describes job-shadowing as a method applied to middle and high school students to determine a career path and points out that:

- Students can see how textbook learning is applied in the real world.
- New career directions can be explored by job shadowing.
- Different job environments expose a person to different job cultures.

Paris and Mason (1995:46) explain job-shadowing as *a work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the work day as a shadow to a competent worker* and so it is very much like working in a specific job, observing the day-to-day activities of that particular person. These authors do however point out that job shadowing is limited in that it allows students to *observe only*; direct work experience, responsibility and skills are not required.

Paris and Mason (1995:47) agree that job shadowing is designed to *increase career awareness, help model student behaviour through examples and reinforce in the student the link between classroom learning and work requirements*.

2.2.2 Externship

Another example of job-shadowing is called an externship (University of Arkansas). Externships vary in length, but usually last one or two days, offer no pay or academic credit and are hosted by volunteers in various organisations to help students gain an insider's view of a particular career field.

Job-shadowing and externships are excellent ways to learn about the day-to-day work life of a professional in a career of interest. Both offer the chance to *test a career without the risk of long-term commitment* (University of Arkansas).

The University of Michigan Law School offers externships, also known as external study opportunities (University of Michigan Law School, www.law.umich). These special externships are based in South Africa and Geneva, Switzerland and require the student to be placed for a full semester. A condition of this externship is that the student may not accept payment for work done, but may accept reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to the programme.

The externship experiential learning opportunity is similar to an internship, but usually lasts for approximately two days to a few weeks and an externship can be completed during a student's vacation time (Itin 1999:91-98).

2.2.3 Internship

All definitions of internships have similar characteristics. The characteristics bulleted in the following paragraph below overlap one another but contain subtle differences that add up to a detailed definition:

- *An internship is a formal arrangement designed to provide opportunities for students to study and experience professional career interests in the community;*
- *An internship is a supervised off-campus working and learning experience, which earns academic credit. Internships give students opportunities to apply and extend the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom to practical experiences, while also allowing them opportunities to view and evaluate careers to which their academic interests may lead. Ideal internships establish positive contacts with prospective employers and are key to building professional networks for students (Stretch and Harp 1991:67)*

In 1906, Herman Schneider, a University of Cincinnati engineering professor and dean, founded cooperative education or internships because he recognised that most students need and want to work while attending college and the practical benefits of internships enhanced the entire learning experience (Linn, Howard and Miller 2004:5).

In addition to these practical benefits offered to the student, Weible (2010:65) summarised the benefits to employers and found that employers benefit from having skilled, part-time help who bring new ideas to the workplace and that hosting or employing interns will expand the *employer's pool of qualified job candidates*.

An internship offers on-the-job training making it similar to an apprenticeship but Reece (2010:8) notes that apprentices usually work during the day and attend classes at night. Alternatively, internships can provide employers with cheap or free labour and there is the prospect of an intern returning to the company after completing their education and the plus factor is that they will require little or no training.

An internship can either be paid, unpaid or partially paid (Internship Evaluation Criteria). This position is usually a part time position as the student studies to complete their degree or professional qualification. The benefits of completing an internship include gaining valuable work experience, having an edge in the job market, an opportunity to decide if this is the right career choice and it is a valuable way to build confidence and gain experience.

Fletcher (1990:41-55) reports on studies done on personal growth that indicate that internship experiences *enhance students' self-confidence, values and attitudes and leads to an increase in student independence, social maturity and interpersonal skills.*

2.3. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL) AND INTERNSHIPS OFFERED IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The following is a broad overview of internships or student placements and how these programmes are applied in other countries.

In Italy it is compulsory for almost all those students studying for a bachelor's or a master's degree to experience an internship. This internship has been found to reduce the gap between the company's demands and the theoretically-focussed degree material. Research indicates that in Italy, student interns are paid, albeit very poorly (Education Italy Rome Explorer).

In the Netherlands the internship period is for approximately five months and during this time, companies are not obliged to pay the student. It would seem that many small companies do not remunerate the student intern at all (Expatica).

The United States of America (USA), Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) offer internship opportunities known as *sandwich placements* as part of their degree programme. *Sandwich placements* place a student in such a way that the placement develops and increases their employability. This practical setting offers the student the opportunity to utilise the academic elements of their degree (Sandwich Student Profiles).

2.3.1 Education internships in the United States of America (USA)

In 'A Call for Change in teacher Education' by the National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education (NCETE) in 1985, and 'Tomorrow's Teachers' by the Holmes Group (a consortium of deans of colleges), conducted in 1986 in the USA, various issues of concern were raised. These issues included the fact that the 6-week student school-based experiences were largely inadequate and unsupervised; there was a lack of curricular connection with the practical experience of being in the classroom; the quality of students in teacher education programmes was poor and that teacher education was seen as having a low status on campuses. The teacher education facilities were described as *idealistic and detached from school realities* (Pretorius 2004:49).

A reasonably successful initiative in addressing these problems was the establishment of PDS (Professional Development Schools) that served as settings for clinical internships for pre-service teachers. It was a partnership between the school and university personnel offering a time of pre-service education to students (Morey and Murphy 1990:134). In some USA states teachers have to spend a full year in a school after their initial teacher training before they can become certified teachers (Dreyer 1998:110).

In view of the abovementioned initiatives in the USA, the question we could ask is whether we can introduce and establish PDS in South Africa? Does the South African Education Department have the necessary resources to implement and oversee such a project? South Africa is desperately short of schools and qualified teachers (COSATU Today, Monday 29 September 2008).

2.3.2 Education internships in Western Sydney, Australia

In a study conducted by Woodward, Sinclair and Thistleton-Martin (1999), the Faculty of Education and Languages at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur (UWS Macarthur), together with local schools began the process of devising a mentoring schools programme thereby creating opportunities for student teachers to excel in the education profession.

There is a move away from the notion of the school being the setting for student teacher supervision and the assessment of the application of university knowledge. School-based mentoring is seen to be where *the university and the school together facilitate the professional development of student teachers* (Woodward, Sinclair and Thistleton-Martin 1999:1).

In this same case study, undertaken by Woodward, Sinclair and Thistleton-Martin (1999), the UWS Macarthur wanted to establish new and cost-effective ways for the schools and the university to work together successfully throughout the four year initial teacher education degree. The suggestion was to immerse teacher education students in particular schools for the duration of their four year programme. From this idea the Mentoring Schools Programme (MSP) was established. This MSP would enable students to have *continual access to schools and the milieu of the school and to construct activities to excel in the teaching profession* (Woodward, Sinclair and Thistleton-Martin 1999:2).

The students reported that this programme, MSP, was invaluable in ensuring the reality of the workplace and the theories the students had constructed during their campus based course work, were linked with classroom practice.

The students in turn made a significant contribution to the schools in which they were placed as they built valuable relationships, attended staff meetings and were part of term-planning activities. Woodward, Sinclair and Thistleton-Martin (1999:8) reported that the students saw *the MSP as a positive experience greatly benefitting them.*

2.3.3 Education internships in the United Kingdom (UK)

In the United Kingdom *the most obvious cry was that not enough time was being spent upon practical concerns, which thus affected the quality of teaching and education. This led to a move towards redefining what makes an effective teacher which, in turn, led to a new conception of what constitutes teaching quality and emphasis on 'learning by doing'* (Pretorius 2004:55).

This, in turn, led to a move towards school-based teacher training. Hoyle and John (1998:7) argued that teacher education should be taken out of the hands of colleges and universities and put into the hands of teachers. The result of this suggestion led to various interventions.

An important intervention was the competency-based training which sought to redefine the nature of teaching proficiency. This was to be achieved by involving practicing teachers in the design, implementation and assessment aspects of the teacher training courses (Galvin 1996:86). By involving practicing teachers, the next step followed logically, and student teachers were allocated a mentor within certain schools (Pretorius 2004:56). This led to reforms in policy and in 1992 it was decided that British student teachers should spend at least 60 per cent of their training component in schools that were in partnership with the universities (Dreyer 1998:109).

Classroom experience and competence was seen to be absolutely essential in teacher education, but are not in themselves sufficient. A competency framework was then introduced by the government detailing a national curriculum for teacher education. This framework covered content knowledge, pedagogy and assessment in the fields of literacy, numeracy and science and information technology. More formal entrance qualifications for student teachers were also introduced (Furlong 2002:24).

2.4. AFRICA

The demand for qualified teachers is illustrated in several African countries and in the opinion of DeJaeghere, Chapman and Mulkeen (2006:515-533), the need for qualified secondary teachers will not be met through current teacher education provisions.

As Africa enters the century of *African Renaissance and Rebirth*, Ntuli (2002:54-55), challenges Africans to *re-examine their lives, their traditions, customs and knowledge systems*, especially within the context of education and the importance thereof. In an article written by Richter, van der Walt and Visser (2004:4) the African Renaissance or African rebirth, should be seen as addressing questions regarding *religion, world view, culture, knowledge, values, language and education* – with a particular emphasis on education. Ntuli (2002:60) is of the opinion that education or the lack thereof would seem to have a direct bearing on the overall development and general standard of living of people and he encourages Africans to distance themselves from their *unsavoury past and to rethink themselves anew*.

Several efforts have been made to address the shortcomings in African teacher education programmes in a number of African countries:

- Aderinoye presented a paper at the World Conference of the International Council for Distance Education and contended that in Kenya, in an effort to address the lack of formal teacher education qualifications, radio broadcasts have been used to support print-based open and distance delivery of teacher education for basic teacher qualifications. This effort has reached large sections of the population being poorly served by past education policies and practices and has highlighted the need for properly educated teachers to be trained (Aderinoye, 1995).
- The Open University of Tanzania offers both undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programmes. Chale (1993:21-41) highlights Tanzania's commitment to education by the development of a qualified teaching workforce

through a combination of co-operative education, rural newspaper-based materials, village libraries, remote study groups and radio broadcasts and in so doing has made teacher education an achievable goal.

- A major pan-African initiative, launched in 2006, is the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) project, which is a UNESCO initiative designed to improve national teacher education policies and strengthen the provision of programmes (UNESCO 2007). The TESSA project highlights the need for fully qualified teachers to impact the world of teaching.
- Simpson and Kehrwald (2010:25) are of the opinion that UNISA *has played a major role in developing distance-delivered teacher education programmes in South Africa*. They mention that nationally there has been a focus on information gathering to inform policy and address issues such as subject area shortages, uneven distribution of qualified teachers and the upgrading of qualifications for current teachers.

It is evident that the education of student teachers needs to be given urgent attention and the current academic programmes need to respond to the new conditions in Africa and to the new national policies on teacher education (TE). Richter et al. (2004:5) argue that teacher education should *keep up with the changes taking place so that the teachers become the agents of change and transformation*. What better way to do this than to immerse student teachers in the everyday workings of local schools.

Teacher education in Africa faces many unique challenges , particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and it cannot continue as in the past. It would seem that teacher education programmes need urgent attention and need to be made available to all people wishing to enter the teaching profession. Teacher educators need to be innovative as they *reconceptualise and redesign their programmes to be relevant for African conditions, but also fulfil international educational criteria* (Richter et al. 2004:4).

Africans are confronted with many unique issues and challenges in the context of education. Some of these include the following (Richter et al. 2004:11):

- Training teachers must develop empathy for the destitute and poor people. Their teaching career could demand that they teach in poverty-stricken rural areas, but could also take them to more developed and affluent societies.
- The training of teachers must include skills in order to be able to work in the most adverse conditions making do with small educational budgets, small incomes and inadequate infrastructure. They need to be taught to find the strength within themselves to operate in these conditions.

- During teacher training, time should be spent on helping these students learn how to devise and manage upliftment programmes so that they can effectively implement such programmes in areas that need them.
- Teacher training should include training in the use of the latest technology for both communication and in the classroom setting. But if such technology is not available teachers should be able to improvise without a fuss.
- Another important aspect of teacher training involves the restoring of respect for the dignity of the human being, no matter where the individual has been or what he has been exposed to.

Successful transformation of the 'New Africa' demands restructuring of the teacher education programme so that it encompasses a respect and acceptance of a diverse society.

In order for teachers to fulfil international educational criteria, their standard of formal education must attain and maintain high educational standards. Formal education with a qualified lecturer and appropriate text books is becoming more and more inaccessible and beyond the financial reach of the majority. These circumstances have led to the government and the public considering alternate viable and cost-effective strategies. These strategies include distance education and earning while learning to provide the much sought-after education that students need.

The aim of these teacher education programmes is to train teachers to educate and teach effectively in order to facilitate learning in the classroom (Richter et al. 2004:7). In the South African context, effective teaching requires knowledge of the learning process and the acquisition of the following dispositions: knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; mediation of learning; sound knowledge of subject content; the ability to design and interpret learning programmes; to be a leader, administrator and manager in the classroom, to practise and promote a critical attitude, having a committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of responsibility towards others, and the ability to integrate assessment in teaching (Department of Education 2000).

2.5 POLITICAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

It was necessary to consult research which draws attention to the context of the teaching profession in South Africa. Once South Africa was recognised as a democracy in 1994 many of the public and social structures were changed in order to more equitably meet the needs

of the whole society. Thus the teaching profession experienced changes on a number of levels. Reviewing and understanding these changes and the resultant challenges they present is necessary as this may significantly shape the work experiences of teachers.

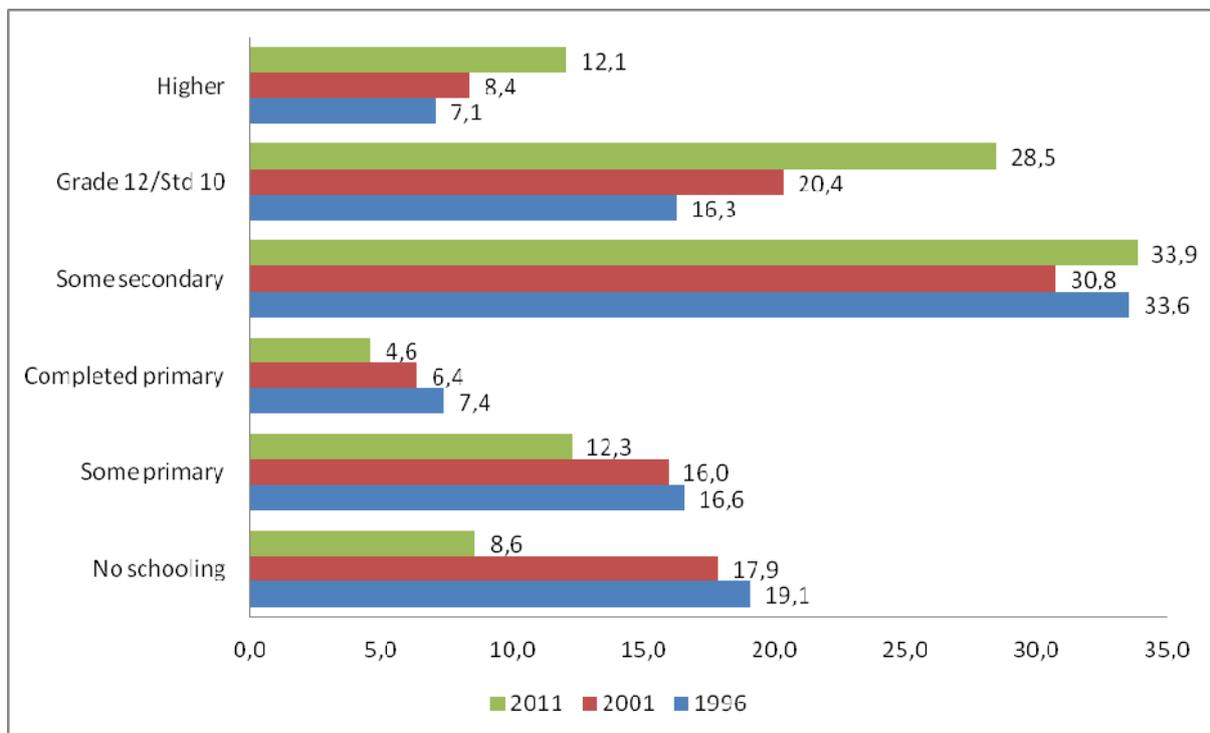
On 1 January 1997, the South African Schools Act came into effect. It stated in its preamble that South Africa needs a new national schooling system to redress past injustices and to provide quality education (Department of Education 1996:2).

2.6 FACTORS LEADING TO A RE-THINKING OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.6.1 General level of education

The General Household Survey (GHS) was instituted to determine the level of development in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The General Household Survey covers six broad areas of population interest, the educational status of South African citizens being one of them. Table 2.1 represents the results of the educational status as reported by the GHS conducted in SA in 2011.

Table 2.1 Highest level of educational attainment
(Percentage of persons aged 20 years and above)



Statistics South Africa, 2011. General Household Survey

Table 2.1 shows a slight increase of 33,9% of the population aged 20 years and older that have completed some secondary school education in 2011, compared to 30,8% in 2001 and 33,6% in 1996. The proportion of the population that does not have any formal schooling has been reduced from 17,9% in 2001 to 8,6% in 2011. The percentage of the population who have completed higher education (including certificates, diplomas above Grade 12, degrees and postgraduate qualifications) increased from 7,1% in 1996 to 8,4% in 2001 and again showed an increase in 2011 to 12,1%. The area of great concern is the primary level education results which show that the proportion of the population which had some primary level education had decreased from 16,0% in 2001 to 12,3% in 2011.

While Table 2.1 shows an improvement in certain areas of education compared to previous years, the country's education profile remains inadequate to meet current growth ambitions (Kohler 2008:2).

2.6.2 Right to education

After the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994, the inequalities that had existed in the educational arena were addressed. The provision of equal access to education became one of the paramount objectives in the government reformation process. The individual could now exercise his or her right to education. The right of every South African Citizen to an education is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996) Section 24 of the Constitution, in the Bill of Rights, states that:

1. *Everyone has the right*
 - a. *To a basic education, including adult basic education; and*
 - b. *To further education, which the state through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.*

2. *Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account*
 - a. *Equity;*
 - b. *Practicability; and*
 - c. *The need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.*

The statement that *everyone has the right to education*, be it basic education or further education, cannot be disputed in the South African context. The transformation brought about through education gives hope to an otherwise hopeless people. *Education lifts people out of their spiral of poverty and hopelessness and although education cannot transform the world, the world cannot be transformed without education* (Nasson 1990:85).

Education opens doors for students that would otherwise never have been opened, for example, studying to practice medicine or architecture. In order to provide basic education for all, there must be enough qualified teachers.

2.6.3 Challenges facing the South African System

In a lecture given by the Minister of Higher Education and Training (HET), Dr Blade Nzimande, to the 250th seminar of the UJ Faculty of Humanities (Friday, 14 August 2009), Dr Nzimande points out a number of challenges facing the South African education system (Nzimande, 2009).

One of the greatest challenges, as pointed out by Dr Nzimande, is that about 3 million South Africans between the ages of 18 and 24 years, are not in employment, education or training. Dr Nzimande continues by saying that in accordance with the right to further education, access to higher education institutions must be increased and made available to young people who cannot find their way to university by the conventional route, but who have the potential to succeed.

Dr Nzimande has an aim to increase the current enrolment in higher education from approximately 770 000 students to 820 000 students in the next five years. He further says *universities have an important role to play in improving the quality of the learning experience that it provides to the students* (Nzimande, 2009).

Dr Nzimande's speech is in keeping with the ideals of a right to a basic education and further education as documented in the Bill of Rights. It would seem that schools need to play a more active role preparing our youth for the post-school world. According to Dr Blade Nzimande, the failure among first year students can be attributed to young people entering the unfamiliar world of the university. The new learning demands are quite different to those which students faced at school. Dr Nzimande further said that increased freedoms in university go hand in hand with increasing demands for self-discipline.

At its briefing to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the 4 May 2010, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) released its long-term strategic plan entitled *Schooling 2025: An Action Plan for the Improvement of Basic Education* and identified a number of critical areas

needing urgent attention. One of these areas is the *supply of new teachers and challenges of the distribution of teachers in their areas of expertise* (DBE Briefing Report: Schooling 2025).

2.6.4 The changing student body

In a speech at Wits University, the previous Minister of Education, Dr Naledi Pandor (Wits teaching colloquium speech, 18 August 2008) made mention of the changing character of the student body and added *that new needs and demands in society mean that old practices and approaches may require review and change*. The student body, in this speech, refers to those who are studying at any Further Education and Training facility in South Africa, therefore any form of tertiary education. The speaker indicated that this change may also mean the re-crafting of programmes and curricula to ensure maximum support of our students. As a country we should be doing everything possible to produce competent and able young professionals.

Dr Pandor (Wits teaching colloquium speech, 18 August 2008) referred to the DoE Report 2005. The statistics in this report showed that of the 120 000 (30%) students who enrolled in higher education 2000 dropped out in their first year of study. A further 24 000 (20%) dropped out during their second or third years. This accounts for 50% of the students who entered higher education in 2000. Of the remaining 50%, only 22% of the students went on to complete their undergraduate degree.

There are a number of reasons contributing to the high dropout rate which need to be considered:

- Many students come from schools that have poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching resources and teaching that does not prepare them for the academic standard of University education.
- Many students do not have an adequate command of the English language and discover just how limited their English really is when they enter the challenging environment of tertiary education (Wits teaching colloquium speech, 18 August 2008).

One of the main missions of a new educational dispensation would then be one of uniting and empowering all citizens in South Africa.

A number of researchers (Bot 2005:1-10; Motimele and Dieltiens 2005:16-19) have indicated that the attrition rate of teachers leaving the service in South Africa is alarming as is the serious decrease in the number of students training to be teachers. Park (2006:143-156) shares his concern by acknowledging that a number of researchers have also indicated that there has been a serious decrease in the number of students entering teacher training institutions. This research indicates a cause for concern in SA due to the imminent shortage of trained professionals entering and remaining in the teaching profession. The teacher age profile also suggests a looming shortage and a growing need for greater numbers of younger teachers as more than two thirds of South Africa's teachers are older than 40 years of age (Deacon et al. 2011:3).

Already in 2001, Luis Crouch, an international researcher, conducted a study for the National Department of Education on the supply and demand for teachers in South Africa (Crouch 2001a:6). Crouch was also of the opinion that the number of teachers in initial teacher education programmes is far below that which will be required to service the school sector in the next 30 years. Danaher and Umar (2010:36) state that initial teacher education refers to *that part of a teacher's education, preparation and training that leads to fully qualified and credentialed teacher status within a national or state system.*

A survey done by the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005) found that the majority of students enrolled in the country's tertiary education were female and white. These statistics are attributed to, amongst other factors, a lack of bursary support, educators discouraging learners from taking up the profession, unattractive salaries and inaccessibility of education institutions to black students from rural areas.

It would also appear that insufficient people of quality are being attracted to the teaching profession. In a report prepared for the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), *Educator Supply and Demand in South African Public Schools, 2005* (HSRC.ac.za) recommendations were made regarding the attracting of quality students to education and the retaining of high quality educators. The suggestion was that part of this process will include implementation plans for an improved career path structure and adequate resources being allocated to improve the conditions of service of educators and loans for students studying education.

In this same integrated report, *Educator Supply and Demand in South African Public Schools, 2005* (HSRC.ac.za) it was reported that few African students are choosing teaching as a profession. It was further reported that Black African educators who join the teaching fraternity are said to usually be academically less proficient. It would also appear that teaching is often not their first-choice career. Parker (2003:61) is of the opinion that the

teaching profession among this group of students is often seen as a stepping stone to other careers. It is also documented in the CDE Executive Summary that many talented graduate teachers either emigrate or take up other professions resulting in a loss of thousands of teachers every year (Deacon et al. 2011:3). This same CDE Executive Summary reports that more than a quarter of all newly trained teachers do not take up teaching posts in South African schools, deterred by low salaries and the poor image of the profession.

Research reveals that only 2 to 3% of matriculants opt for teaching as a career (Crouch 2001b:40). In addition to this very real problem there is a desperate shortage of Primary School Educators at present. According to statistics reported in the ELRC (2005:85) *Educator Supply and Demand in South African Public Schools* (HSRC.ac.za), the number of young children aged 6-13 who were in Primary Schools in 2005, is approximately 8.2 million learners at a learner-to-educator ratio of 35:1, this requires approximately 220 000 educators for this learner age group.

The research undertaken here may also challenge future researchers to build on these findings and produce recommendations that are useful and realistic, which may even inform policy and entice those with the vocation to teach, to do so. In this way this study hopes to contribute to the broader body of research.

2.6.5 Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and long-term strategizing

A new curriculum should endeavour to bring about reconciliation and nation building. This ideology is currently evident as it *fosters learning which encompasses a culture of human rights, multilingualism and multi-culturalism and sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building* (DoE 1997).

In light of the above-mentioned ideology, the new *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2011-2025)* prepared by the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Basic Education (DHET and DBE, 2011) seeks to support teachers to adopt new orientations and approaches, and to improve their subject content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, practice and situational knowledge through a recognised, accredited system of continuous professional development, and through systems that support the establishment of professional learning communities.

The DBE recently released its long-term strategic plan entitled '*Schooling 2025: An Action Plan for the Improvement of Basic Education*' (DBE Briefing Report: Schooling 2025). This provides the clearest indication of the range of planned interventions identified to address all

the challenges facing South Africa's schooling system. This strategic plan, DBE Briefing Report: Schooling 2025, focuses on broad areas, namely:

- A new integrated plan for teacher development to increase the pool of qualified new teachers (the practical, hands-on experience the student teachers gain as they are immersed into schools whilst studying through distance education)
- Improved curriculum implementation
- Enhanced pro-poor packages to eradicate previous inequalities in school funding
- Establishing a long-term sector plan, *Schooling 2025: An Action Plan for the Improvement of Basic Education*

2.6.6 Unequal school contexts

In South Africa there are many differing and unequal school contexts. C2005 has not narrowed the gap between the education of the privileged and the previously disadvantaged, instead it has served to widen the gap (Christie 1999:45-53;280). Evidence suggests that schools have responded to C2005 in uneven ways. Schools most historically advantaged were flourishing with C2005, while those most disadvantaged appeared to be floundering (Harley and Wedekind 2004:199). This begs the question as to whether students are ready to take on the challenge of university study, particularly studies in the education field through distance learning, as opposed to studying and being incorporated into a mentorship programme and enjoying personal guidance and a hands-on approach.

Inherited disadvantage may be compounded by shortcomings in teachers' and students' command of the English language. It is also often a problem for second language speakers of English to understand the complex terminology used in academic language. Township and rural students are most in need of support in this area.

Inherited disadvantage from the previous apartheid regime made it very difficult for learners to complete Grade 12. Many of those who did successfully complete Grade 12, did so in the challenging environment of under-resourced schools. Whilst this is indeed a credit to their achievement, it must be noted that they have not enjoyed the privileges of a learning experience in a well-resourced school.

The researcher proposes that school-based teacher education and mentoring is an excellent way to immerse all the student teachers studying towards their BEd into the educational milieu of schools. This first-hand exposure and hands-on approach will empower many students, through excellent mentorship by committed teachers, to realise their dream.

2.7 CHANGES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

It is necessary to consult research which draws attention to the context of the teaching profession in South Africa. Once South Africa was recognised as a democracy in 1994, many of the public and social structures were changed in order to 'more equitably' meet the needs of the 'whole' society. Thus the teaching profession experienced changes on a number of levels. Reviewing and understanding these changes and the resultant challenges they present is necessary as this may significantly shape the learning experiences of student teachers.

The school-based student-teacher internship programme cannot be looked at without considering the changes that were introduced into the higher education system in South Africa during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Jansen (2004:293) suggests that some of these *were small and gradual changes, initiated from within institutions, while others have been large-scale changes, initiated from without*. He also advocates that change in the policy, planning and political landscape of this country needs to take place.

The change, as seen by Jansen (2004:294) that deserves further discussion and analysis in this dissertation, is *'the changing size and shape of higher education'* (NCHE 1996:266).

In his *Call to Action* in July 1999, the then Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, announced that: *The shape and size of the higher education system cannot be left to chance if we are to realise the vision of a rational, seamless higher education system and that the institutional landscape of higher education will be reviewed as a matter of urgency in collaboration with the Council on Higher Education. This landscape was largely dictated by the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners* (DoE Call to Action 1999 in Jansen 2004:294).

2.7.1 The new further education and training policy (FET)

The new FET policy is directed towards the development of a differentiated but co-ordinated education and training system, and has as its central features a new governance framework for programmes and qualifications, new quality assurance mechanisms, and a new funding mechanism (DoE 1998:18). It is intended to support both the development challenges facing South Africa, and the increasing knowledge and information-driven character of modern economies.

2.7.2 Higher education transformation

The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation, 1996, documented *that the system of higher education is limited in its ability to meet the demands of the New South Africa* (DoE 1996:5) and the education system, at that time, would seem to have perpetuated an inequitable distribution of access and opportunities for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geographical discrimination.

This led to change in 2001, when on 5 March, the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, released a National Plan for Higher Education that argued that *the number of public higher education institutions in South Africa could and should be reduced* (DoE 2001:87).

2.7.3 Former colleges of education

A parallel process was followed for colleges of education. The physical locations of these Colleges of Education during the years of apartheid, effectively maintained the need to impose racial and ethnic segregation. By 1994 there were 18 education departments responsible for teacher education and about 105 colleges of education scattered throughout the homelands system. This resulted in a very expensive system of teacher training (NTEA 1995 as cited in Sayad 2004:248) with marked differences in costs between and within colleges and universities. These colleges also offered a range of qualifications of varying quality. Prior to 1995 colleges of education had the major responsibility for initial teacher education.

A document was then delivered called *The Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector: A Framework for Implementation* (DoE 1998). This process resulted in the number of colleges being reduced from 120 (80 000 students) to 50 (15 000 students) by the start of 2000 (Council on Higher Education 2001:22). The South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) and the South African College for Open Learning (SACOL), both distance colleges, were absorbed into the University of South Africa (UNISA).

At the start of 2003, Colleges of Education had all but disappeared from the higher education landscape. This was as a result of being closed down or being incorporated into universities and technikons. Modes of delivery in higher education also began to change and the traditional contact institutions started to expand their instructional programmes into various kinds of distance education (Jansen 2004:305).

The *Mail and Guardian* reports that in 2008 the ruling African National Congress (ANC) called for the reopening of teacher's training colleges. This call came as it was believed that

the training given at universities may have been too theoretical and that the closure of the teacher's training colleges may have caused a dip in the quality of teacher training.

Nevertheless, the then Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, indicated that the colleges would not be reopened, and that expansion in teacher training had to take place within the existing training framework. O'Donoghue and Harford (2010:101) investigated the teaching crisis in the Republic of Ireland and reported in their findings that Ireland also moved all of its teacher education programmes from colleges to universities, *with excellent results*, and suggest that there is no reason why the same development in South Africa should not have similar outcomes.

This shift in focus and expansion of teacher education programmes in the higher education system led to the provision of equal and wider access to lifelong education and training opportunities. These opportunities are now available to those who did not previously have the option of enrolling in any institution offering further education and training.

2.8 TRANSFORMING TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (SA)

Over the last decade or so, *teacher education in South Africa has undergone major reforms* (Wolhuter 2006:124-139) and this is reflected in the new approaches to the teacher education curricula. The concepts of learning have altered so that learning is no longer thought of as a simple transfer of knowledge. Learners are no longer viewed as passive receivers of knowledge from a teacher who is perceived as having all the answers. Outcomes Based Education (OBE) sees the learner as an active creator of his own knowledge with the teacher playing the role of class facilitator.

This has led to shifts in teacher education and whereas these shifts have played out over decades in other national contexts, they have been compressed into a very short time frame in South Africa. Since 1994, change has been initiated on all fronts and at all levels simultaneously (Parker 2003:16-144).

2.9 LEARNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

Learnerships were formally introduced into South Africa in 2001 during an opening address delivered by Mdladlana, the then Minister of Labour, on the occasion of the launch of the National Learnership Programme (Mdladlana, 2001). Learnerships are a government initiative regulated by the Education, Training and Development Practitioners Sector

Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA 2002). This initiative is school-based and differs from the more traditional in-service education and training programmes in that the school is regarded as the work-place and the learnership must lead to *a coherent, fully integrated, whole qualification* (Potgieter 2003:180; SAQA, 2001).

Potgieter (2003:167) proposes *that learnerships be seen as a mode of delivering a learning programme for the training of educators in South Africa and offer exciting, fresh and innovative possibilities to all stakeholders and role players in education*. A learnership opportunity would place the student teacher, studying through ODL, in a school.

Learnerships may be viewed as paraprofessional and vocational education and training programmes, combining both theory and practice so that the learner is trained *not only as to why things are done, but also as to how they are done* (Department of Labour, 2001). In essence a learnership is a WBL route to a qualification integrating education and training as well as theory and work experience.

The greatest advantage of using learnerships to train educators in South Africa is that they will *continually gain valuable teaching experience under the watchful eye of officially appointed mentors, whilst studying towards a nationally recognised teaching qualification* (Potgieter 2003:170).

Learnerships are strictly regulated and only the ETDP SETA can register a learnership for the training of educators and the terms of the learnership agreement have to comply with the Skills Development Act as well as any other relevant legislation (Government Gazette no. 22197, 2001). These regulations governing learnerships in education and the fact that the Department of Labour suggest that the acceptable norm is that learnerships should not take more than one year to complete, make the four-year Bachelor of Education Degree unachievable through the learnership programme.

For this reason, Potgieter (2003:179) suggests that the educators who do not fulfil the learnership criteria look at the *possibility of doing an internship in a school and negotiate bilateral agreements between their respective schools and the ODL institution which will allow them to learn at work*. This case study seeks to investigate this internship route of studying towards the BEd Degree through ODL in a local school (PS).

2.10 PRE-SERVICE OR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Kilgo and Bruder (1997:81-102) suggest that pre-service education *occurs prior to a person being licensed or certified to perform in a job category and that this usually occurs within an institution of higher education and culminates with a degree*. In-service education or training, on the other hand, occurs once a person is performing in a job category and a certificate is awarded by an institution of higher education upon completion of the required training (Yates and Hains 1997:27-51).

In South Africa, teacher education programmes can take the form of pre-service (Preset) or in-service training (Inset). In-service training (Inset) takes the form, in most instances, of distance education as teachers who are already employed in the teaching profession either upgrade their present level of education or embark on an educational route to becoming a qualified teacher according to the Education Department of South Africa.

Nkopodi (2006:67-83) reports on an in-service training programme aimed at educators in South Africa and highlights the point that educators or training teachers from the previously disadvantaged communities, often have *long-term financial and family commitments and this is what makes it difficult for them to upgrade their qualifications through full-time contact tuition*. This has led to an increasing need for distance education and for students to be able to continue to be employed and to earn a salary whilst studying on a part-time basis.

2.11 DISTANCE EDUCATION OR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

From as early as the 1980s, distance education has featured prominently among strategies proposed to help African countries escape from the education crisis, improve access to formal education and to address the problem of teacher shortages (Jenkins 1989:41; Chiyongo 2010:46).

Jegade, Fraser and Curtin (1995:89-94) concur that various factors have been responsible for the healthy growth in distance teaching and learning worldwide. They mention high costs at conventional educational institutions, political unrest at residential campuses, overcrowding and raising of academic standards and criteria for admission as some of the factors that have enabled distance learning, distance teacher education included, to develop rapidly. UNISA is already considered a major player in the field of distance teacher education and this is proved by the following statistics which were shared with an audience by Dr Diane Parker in an address given at the opening of the College of Education at UNISA (Parker, 2012): In 2010 UNISA ODL delivered 488 BEd graduates and 1 211 PGCE

students; this constitutes 1 699 or 20% of the 8 200 new teachers who graduated from all the public higher education institutions in that year. This is a substantial contribution to the supply of new teachers from one ODL institution.

Amongst other factors, distance education allows the student to work at a pace in keeping with the demands of their lifestyle. It also gives the students control over the academic workload they take upon themselves, and therefore they can structure their academic commitments around their personal needs and family commitments. According to Panda (2006:121) one of the reasons that has made distance education tremendously successful in meeting the needs of the greater majority of people, is the fact that the planning and management of all the complex activities and operations within distance education are well-structured *to lead to visible outcomes which all can see and appreciate*. Louw (2007:34) refers to distance education as a *multi-dimensional system aimed at bridging the time, geographical and transactional distance between student and institution, student and lecturer, student and peers and student and material*.

However, Fraser (1993:30-34) in Chikuya (2007:63) concedes that there are problems that surround the ODL teacher training programme. The main concern is the separation between the teacher trainee or student and the lecturer of the institution. University-based training offers the prospect of input from staff with high levels of disciplinary expertise, enrichment through research relevant to learning and teaching, multi-disciplinary perspectives and access to superior teaching resources. On the other hand, ODL is often criticised as the learning material fails to establish an interpersonal relationship between the lecturer and student, and if the student is not school-based during their time of study, the road to attaining their BEd can be a long and lonely one. The researcher is of the opinion that both the effective management skills of the student and a school available to house the student teacher, are necessary for a successful distance educational programme.

In the November 2011 edition of its newsletter 'Enlight', the College of Education at UNISA signalled its intention to grow the number of students who enrol for its BEd Programme directly after they have completed grade 12 (Enlight, November 2011). Dr Diane Parker's (Parker, 2012) caution with regard to the rapid expansion of the ODL student body, is that a *measured approach needs to be taken and careful thought must be given to the readiness of students who have just exited the school system to engage effectively in distance education programmes*. These students need to experience meaningful learning opportunities and be supported so that they experience a reasonable chance to succeed in their studies. This support and effective management of students studying through ODL should be offered by good schools and together with the pedagogic direction that UNISA offers, the quality of

teacher education provided will be such that it should lead our students to success and thus contribute positively to the education system.

The effective management of student-teacher interns studying through ODL could be offered by schools and in so doing create opportunities for student teachers to be part of the school environment for the duration of their studies.

Davies (1995:22) agrees with this concept of effective management of the student teachers studying through ODL and adds that a *co-operative relationship between university tutors and school staff will mean a much greater sharing of responsibility for the student teacher's practicum work and help to successfully bridge the gap between policy and quality practice*, thus a system of planned student teacher support would benefit all those involved. This relationship lends itself to mentoring.

2.12 MENTORING

In writing about the conceptualisation of mentoring in the field of education, Anderson and Shannon (1988:40) offer a definition of mentoring:

a nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé.

Teacher mentoring programmes became a popular means of supporting [novice] teachers at the pre-service and induction levels in the United States in the early 1980s (Wang and Odell 2002:481-546). This Teacher Trainee Programme works hand-in-hand with the Mentor Teacher Programme and is designed to retain capable teachers by expanding their rewards and opportunities as they mentor teachers in training.

There is a lack of consensus amongst authors as to what mentoring constitutes exactly as different authors focus on different dimensions of mentoring. Some emphasise the *relational dimension* of mentoring (Gehrke 1988:190-194) and focus on the relationship built between the mentor and mentee and others, like Roberts (2000:154) describe mentoring as a *complex social and psychological phenomenon which cannot easily be clarified*. It is this relational dimension that is developed in the educational arena in a classroom between a

student-teacher intern and his/her mentor teacher as they share the space of a classroom together.

The Avaya Mentoring Programme (Cranwell-Ward, Bossons and Gover 2004:103-116) highlights ways in which a mentoring relationship can develop. The authors indicate that mentoring a student teacher should be considered more as developing a relationship rather than representing a structured role with certain preconceived duties. They then highlight five ways in which the mentoring relationship develops in support of student teachers on their journey to becoming more confident and competent teachers: *Firstly the mentor-student teacher relationship is seen as a journey; secondly the mentor acts as a guide to practical knowledge, is a source of moral support, is not seen to take control over the student teacher's actions but provides the space and flexibility to permit the student teacher to show what he or she can do and the relationship is based on equality.* They attempt to place the mentor and student teacher as equal partners through the development of a relationship, avoiding the usual hierarchical structures often associated with existing supervision models.

Other authors emphasise the *developmental dimension of mentoring* and focus on mentoring functions and behaviour aimed at promoting the professional and personal development of both the mentor and mentee (Maynard and Furlong 1994:69-85). Additional mentoring roles as suggested by Anderson and Shannon (1988:42) are seen as being an *encourager, counsellor and befriender.* Gehrke (1988:190-194) likens the mentoring role to the transferring of a gift and maintains that this *passage of the gift binds people to each other and therefore it becomes a vehicle of cohesiveness in the culture.* It is interesting to note that Clifford (1999:144) suggests that it is not enough that mentors are excellent classroom teachers, but that they must also excel at interacting with adult learners since they are mentoring other adults as they interact with student teachers.

Another emphasis is on the contextual dimension of mentoring and focuses on the importance of recognising the powerful influence of the school organisation and culture on teacher learning. Student-teacher interns should be immersed into the culture and ethos of schools and then use their influence and ideas as they in turn move on to other schools. Feiman-Nemser (2003:26) suggested that the relevant context of teaching must be addressed when dealing with issues of curriculum, instruction, assessment, management, school culture and the larger community. She further suggests that mentoring is about helping novice teachers and student teachers fit into the school system and *then maximising learning opportunities for these students with emphasis on professional collaboration and teacher learning across all experience levels.* Campbell and Brummett (2007:2) offer an interesting observation, in that they agree that one of the main goals of mentoring is to

prepare the student teacher to fit into the teaching profession, but also recognise that *new teachers can be seen as the source of potential change*.

The UNISA ODL offers the following mentor training course - '*Short Course in Mentoring, Guidance and Support of Teachers and Trainers (71013)*' (UNISA) to be completed over the period of a year. This course covers the following aspects regarding the mentoring of a student teacher by an experienced, qualified teacher:

- Contextualising mentoring and learner support
- Mentoring relationships
- Mentoring skills
- Learner support skills
- Identification of protégé needs
- Strategies, techniques and activities for providing mentoring

The purpose of this mentoring course is to provide practitioners with the necessary skills and expertise to give guidance and support to learners and to refer learners to the appropriate counselling or development agencies. This course will appeal to the following target group:

- Any person involved in providing mentoring, guidance and support to protégés in education and training settings or in the workplace
- Senior-teachers who act as mentors for learnership student teachers
- Teachers in the new career path leading to senior teacher and learning area specialist positions where they have to mentor, guide and support beginning teachers, student teachers, learnership teachers and their peers
- Departmental officials who mentor, guide and support teachers on a daily basis

This short course offered by UNISA would seem to be an excellent source of providing guidance and training to educators who take on the responsibility of mentoring student teachers completing an internship in schools.

2.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher has outlined the theoretical framework of this research and has presented key perspectives pertinent to the study. The literature highlights the types of WBL that is offered in other countries and spotlights educational internships as practised in various parts of the world.

The literature focusing on education in Africa, specifically South Africa, exposes the challenges facing the teaching profession together with the changes in educational policy. These two factors have led to the re-thinking of teacher education in South Africa and to the transformation thereof.

The main purpose of internships undertaken by student teachers is to provide support for their personal and professional development in classroom environments whilst the student teachers complete a qualification in education through ODL. The purpose is also to expose the student teacher to different and innovative approaches to teaching and learning within the environment of a local school.

The following chapter details the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

It should not be the researcher who decides what counts as Knowledge, but what the participants view as knowledge, emerging from interactions between participants and the researcher.

Nieuwenhuis (2007:56)

3.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM OF CHAPTER

Chapter 2 is the conceptual framework of this study and its feasibility as co-operative approach to teacher training in South Africa.

The overview of the literature undertaken in Chapter 2 brings us to the conclusion that internships are indeed a viable and necessary component in *on-the-job* training and it is practiced, as are other forms of work-based learning, in other countries with much success. The literature overview also allows for a deeper understanding of how these internships are managed. In this chapter the empirical research design of this study, including the research method, population and sampling, process of data collection and analysis and the instruments of measurement will be discussed. The researcher will investigate various research designs and decide which design is best suited to this study, namely:

To investigate the effectiveness of the student-teacher internship programme at a school (PS) and the positives and negatives of this programme for both the student teacher and the mentor teacher respectively.

Chapter 3 of this study seeks to investigate the empirical research design, namely the qualitative method. In this study, qualitative data analysis began at the time of commencement of qualitative data collection and was carried out on an on-going basis until the end of the study. Qualitative research is suited to investigations that have an interest in the subjective experiences of groups of people. The current research employed a qualitative approach as this best complements the gathering of descriptive, exploratory data of the subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants (Guba and Lincoln 2004:5).

The research process is a purposeful, meaningful and systematic exercise and is carried out in a distinctive fashion. By using the qualitative empirical method of research, so much more can be explored about the concept and meaning of *learnership or internship*. One such area that is explored in this research is investigating how the student-teacher interns experience their time of learnership and allows for suggestions on improving this specific method of teacher training. It also explores how the mentor teachers experience their time of hosting a '*teacher-in-training*' in their classroom.

This chapter pays particular attention to how the data will be collected, the sampling method that was adopted and how the data collected was analysed.

3.2 EMPIRICAL-QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The term *empirical research* according to Webster (Webster's Online Dictionary), is any research that bases its findings on direct or indirect observation. Empirical research attempts to describe accurately the interaction between the instrument and the entity being observed. In this case study the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers not only completed the questionnaire, but were also observed during their daily routine by the researcher based on site.

In keeping with this research paper, an article written by Burns for the Fullerton Pollak Library (CalState Fullerton Pollak Library, 2007), refers to empirical research as the reporting of results that uses data derived from actual observation. Furthermore this article states that empirical research will include charts and graphs depicting the data collected, as seen in Chapter 4.

The most common methods of empirical research design are the quantitative and the qualitative methods. Depending on the nature of the research undertaken and the aims of the research, the researcher selects either a quantitative or qualitative approach (Fraenkel and Wallen 1990:386; Leedy 1997:104). In this instance the researcher has selected the qualitative research approach, since the characteristics of a qualitative approach accommodate the researcher's aims for this study.

Creswell (1994:2) defines a qualitative study as a *process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting*. Gillham (2000:10) agrees with this description, adding that qualitative research is *essentially descriptive* in nature. Bogdan and Bilkin (1992:31-32) argue that the objective of qualitative research is *not to find*

data or prove or disprove hypotheses researchers may have held before embarking on a study, but rather to gather pertinent information pertaining to the study.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004:68) are of the opinion that one of the major reasons for the development of a qualitative approach is that researchers *often want to try and understand the world from the perspective of other people (a person or a group)*. Merriam (1998:6) believes that a key concern of qualitative researchers is to understand a *phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspectives, not the researcher's*.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:8) agree that qualitative research attempts to make sense of the world around us and brings meaning to situations, relationships and activities. This characteristic of qualitative research corresponds with the researcher's intention to investigate in the natural setting and understand what the mentor teachers and student-teacher interns experienced during their year of internship. Merriam (1998:17) is of the opinion that *qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception and it is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring*. The researcher agrees with this description given by Merriam, in that the internship experience is in need of interpreting rather than measuring as the experience is subjective and relies on personal interaction and the perception of those involved.

3.3 CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

Borg and Gall (1983:115-129) as well as Hofstee (2006:120:131) describe various research designs that a researcher can employ. These include, amongst others, the case study, historical studies, experimental designs, action research and extended literature reviews. This list is not exhaustive, but does show that research designs are varied.

The research process is purposeful, meaningful and systematic and is carried out within the realms of a distinct and definable mode of investigation (Chikuya 2007:87). In essence the research design becomes the researcher's plan of action that provides the framework of operation and steers the process through the various research stages.

Although there are a number of different research designs which can inform qualitative research, the case study is the design chosen for this study focussing on Open and Distance Learning (ODL) student teachers completing a year of internship at a local school (PS). Myers (1997:7) is of the opinion that a case study is an *empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context*. Qualitative researchers spend much

time in a particular setting collecting data because they are concerned with context and the data that is collected typifies that specific social environment (Leedy 1997:107). In line with the opinions of both Myers (1997) and Leedy (1997), the researcher was careful to contextualise the collected data and understood that this study would be conducted in a specific social environment within a limited time frame. Hofstee (2006:123) understood the constraints of a case study in that it needs to be tightly structured and is best used as a research design when detailed knowledge of a particular case is required.

3.4 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE USE OF THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

A case study was deemed to be appropriate as a research strategy because the main aim of the researcher was to focus this research on student teachers working towards their teaching degree through ODL and by means of an internship. Merriam (1998:27) is of the opinion that the case study strategy is very useful in research where manipulation of behaviour is not possible and highly undesirable in order to get factual and progressive information in any research area (Chikuya 2007:90).

The case study does, however, present the reality of *being expensive and time consuming* (Merriam 1998:2-5). In addition, Hofstee (2006:123) advises caution regarding the risk of the researcher losing the focus of the study, the generalisability of the results of the study across other geographical areas that it may not apply to and, of course, the great risk of subjectivity when the results of the research are correlated and are ready to be published.

Stake (2000:445) is of the opinion that case study researchers should spend *extended time on site personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting and revising meanings of what is going on.*

Creswell (1998:61) further describes a case study as an exploration of a *bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. This bounded system is bounded by time and place and it is the case being studied – a program, an event, an activity or individuals.*

The case study is an appropriate research design when researchers want to define and investigate topics broadly and utilise and rely on multiple sources of evidence (Ligadu 2008:90). One of the strengths of a case study, according to Yin (1994:8), is the ability to *deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews and observations.*

As the literature confirms, case study researchers are required to spend extended time on site and to be personally in contact with the activities and operations. It is for these reasons that the researcher chose a case study to investigate, explore and obtain greater insights into the purpose of teacher education by means of internship in a school (PS) in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

This study aligns itself with qualitative research methods such as participant observation and questionnaires. It will involve a number of respondents. The aim is to understand and describe the need for and effectiveness of teacher education by means of internship.

Open-ended questionnaires proved to be the most suitable research instrument, hence the study drew extensively from survey research. Two questionnaires were developed and administered, one for the student-teacher interns and another for the mentor teachers. These questionnaires were qualitative in their research method (Appendix B and C), and like any qualitative study, this case study was intended to generate trustworthy, constructive and plausible outcomes (McMillan 2008:283).

3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Anderson (2002:170) concurs that if a questionnaire is well constructed, it permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data in a simple, cheap and timely manner. However, Anderson is of the opinion that there are *many sloppy questionnaires and these yield unreliable data of limited validity and utility.*

Open-ended questionnaires were developed, this study, to guide the gathering of relevant data. They were designed in such a way that they entailed both evaluation and exploratory aspects of the research (Appendix B and C). The researcher also determined to keep the questions short, easy to comprehend and to avoid asking ambiguous or loaded questions.

Knobel and Lankshear (1999:88) believe that participants who undertake to answer questionnaires are directly involved in data construction. An advantage of the questionnaire is that it offers confidentiality to the respondents and is often easier to analyse. An important consideration according to Saris and Gallhofer (2007:186) is that the questions should be relatively simple, apply to all respondents and also be interesting in order to increase the co-operation to respond.

Powell and Connaway (2004:146-147) agree that an advantage of the questionnaire is that it offers confidentiality to the respondents and is often easier to analyse, rather than

complicated. An important consideration as noted by these two authors is that the more structured the questionnaire is, the easier it is to compare results at a later stage and that *short questions are good questions* (Powell and Connaway 2004:146).

3.5.1 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

Qualitative research features the issue of trustworthiness, which addresses the more common quantitative issues known as reliability and validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) agree that *to establish the trustworthiness of a study, they use the terms credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability as alternate terms for internal validity, reliability, external validity and objectivity.*

3.5.2 Reliability in qualitative research

Reliability is defined as the precision or accuracy of the instrument used (De Vos, Strydom and Fouché 1998:85).

Hofstee (2006:3) states that the construct and reliability of a good dissertation is built upon the foundation on which the academic work rests. This means that the researcher will address reliability issues in designing this study and in the data collection strategies. It is understood that the reliability of the questionnaire is determined by the consistency of the results.

Bostwick and Kyle (1981:113-120) affirm that reliability can be defined as the accuracy of precision of an instrument; as the degree of consistency or agreement between two independently derived sets of scores; and as the extent to which independent administrations of the same instrument yield the same (or similar) results under comparable conditions.

Synonyms for reliability are dependability, stability, consistency, predictability, accuracy, reproducibility, repeatability and generalisability. In other words, an instrument is reliable to the extent that independent administrations of it or a comparable instrument consistently yield similar results.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:183) confirm that reliability refers to the consistency of measurement and the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instruments or occasions of data collection. In other words, if an instrument has little error, then it is reliable and this reliability can be measured by how consistently a trait is assessed.

Silverman (1993:145) and Fink (1995:41) concur that reliability is further regarded as the connection between recorded data and what has actually occurred in the setting being studied after the collected data has been analysed and interpreted in a uniform manner.

Reliability is therefore primarily concerned not with what is being measured, but with how well it is being measured. Obviously, the more reliable the research instruments and observations, the more consistent and dependable the results will be. Leedy (1997:95) concurs that the researcher can measure something accurately only when he/she can also measure it consistently. In other words, in order to have validity, the researcher must also have reliability. The more valid and reliable the instrument is, the more likely the researcher is to draw appropriate conclusions from the data collected and thus to solve the research problem in a credible fashion.

Referring to this study, the term *reliability* was used to mean the degree to which the findings are independent of accidental circumstances of the research (Kirk and Miller 1986:203). Clear and relevant questions were formulated for the open-ended questionnaires with the aim of getting reliable data pertaining to the research question of this case study.

3.5.3 Validity in qualitative research

In this study, validity is understood to mean the ability of an instrument to provide data that are true to what is being studied (Babbie 1992:129-133). Validation or the accuracy in qualitative research is imperative hence the trustworthiness of results must be considered in relation to certain qualitative concepts such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Creswell 2007:202-204; Babbie and Mouton 2001:271).

Borg and Gall (1983:404-405) contend that if an instrument can provide data which are true to what is being studied, it logically follows that such data, with some degree of caution, can be generalised to the population from which participants of the research process were drawn.

Research should present a true and accurate picture of what is being investigated and as such, Thakhathi (1996:85) defines validity as the correspondence between the research and the real world. Validity is outlined by Fink (1995:49) as the degree to which a survey instrument assesses what it purports to measure. In this instance, the study of student-teacher interns at PS, all studying through ODL is valid if the researcher formulates and asks questions that are relevant to investigating the effectiveness of their time at PS and both the benefits and negatives of this intern experience are reported on.

These 16 student-teacher interns were chosen from a particular school, but represent a much larger intern programme that has been adopted by a number of schools in the KwaZulu-Natal area. So according to Borg and Gall's abovementioned statement, the data collected for this study can be considered valid and can be generalised to the wider student-teacher intern population completing a teaching degree at the respective schools involved in the programme.

It is therefore clear that based on the above theory, validity is utilised to ensure that the data collected includes everything it should and that it does not include anything that is irrelevant to the study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:324) offer a precise summary of the term validity when they explain that validity refers to *the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world*. Validity involves proper interpretation and use of the information gathered through the data collection process.

Joppe (2000:1) provides the following explanation of what validity is in qualitative research:

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit 'the bull's eye' of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions, and will often look for the answers in the research of others.

The researcher in this case study has endeavoured to understand and interpret the description or composition of events as they are recorded by the participants.

3.6 METHODOLOGY

The methodological design is the logic through which a researcher addresses the research questions (Mason 2002:30) and gains data for the study. Research methodology encompasses the complete research process: the research approaches, procedures and data-collection or sampling methods used (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:74).

The researcher employed a qualitative research design and collected data by means of questionnaires and on site observation of the student-teacher interns as they went about their daily duties.

3.6.1 Research instruments

Collecting data means identifying and selecting individuals for a study, obtaining their permission to study them and gathering information by asking people questions or observing their behaviour (Creswell 2012:10). To collect this data research instruments are used. Hofstee (2006:115) asserts that a research instrument is *pretty much anything you use to get the data that you're going to analyse*.

Research instruments are designed around the size, type and relevant importance of the sample selected. The sample, as described by Henry (1990:12-26), is the unit that provides a practical and efficient means of collecting data as it serves as a model of the population under study.

Padgett (1998:18) asserts that it is through the researcher's facilitative interaction that a context is created where respondents share data regarding their experiences. LeCompte, Millroy and Preissle (1992:19-29) are of the opinion that the qualitative researcher can be viewed as the key research instrument, because data collected in the field is dependent on her or his personal involvement in the setting. The researcher in this study is personally involved in managing the student-teacher intern programme at PS, so is not only based on site but also able to observe the participants daily.

3.6.2 Participants and site

A purposeful sampling was used so that the researcher could collect more specific and relevant data from participants.

The theory of sampling (or to take a sample of) is in fact the study of the relationship between a population and the samples drawn from it (Bless and Higson-Smith 2006:98). These two authors are of the opinion that good sampling implies a well-defined population as well as an adequately chosen sample and an estimate of how representative of the whole population the sample is. Sampling is also a practical way of collecting data when the population is extremely large. The process of generalisation from findings based on the sample is called statistical inference (Bless and Higson-Smith 2006:98).

The data collection method the researcher used was open-ended questionnaires distributed to the participants, namely the student-teacher interns and mentor teachers of the school that was chosen (PS).

The selection of PS as the site for this case study is based upon the fact that the researcher is employed at PS and is head of the existing intern programme. This fact facilitated the

collection of data and allowed for continual interaction between the observer, the student-teacher interns and the mentors of the intern programme. The focus group chosen was composed of current student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers, these being classroom teachers at the same school referred to as PS.

3.6.3 Observation

Observation, as proposed by Creswell (2012:213), is *the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site*. A distinctive feature of observation is to observe individuals or groups in their natural environment over an extended time, and to collect data to describe what happened or what meanings they ascribe to specific entities such as events, persons or objects (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:43, 406).

The observations that were carried out were conducted in both a formal context where the researcher provided formal feedback to the student-teacher intern after observing the delivery of a practicum lesson and in an informal context on a day-to-day basis where the researcher was a non-participant observer with limited interaction with the student-teacher intern. Information was recorded in the form of extensive field notes. Brunner's advice (1994:33) was heeded, and in so far as was possible, narrative forms that would *engage the participants aesthetically as well as critically*, were used.

Participant observation or ethnographic research involves the close observation of a particular group of people. In this research the group refers to student-teacher interns studying their teaching degree through an ODL institution. The caution that Hofstee (2006:127) gives, is that ethnographers need to remain objective in their observation, to adhere to the necessary ethical considerations and to keep to the focus of the study.

3.6.4 Unstructured and semi-structured interviews

Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:107) are of the opinion that information gathered directly from the respondents during an interview, constitutes both factual and subjective information. For example, the respondent's personal likes or dislikes, values, preferences, interests and tastes, thoughts, attitudes, belief and personal life experiences will undoubtedly infiltrate the responses given by the interviewee.

The interviews that were undertaken were informal in that they were in the form of an informal general discussion. Within the broad framework of informal and sometimes more formal discussions, the student-teacher interns were able to talk at length and reveal unanticipated concerns and information. These informal discussions included how the

student-teacher intern was managing with ODL, teaching practicum dates and times, the demands of everyday school life as a training teacher and so forth. During these times of informal discussions the researcher undertook to remain objective and impartial regarding any information discussed. Additional unplanned data was also gathered during the year during times of one-on-one discussions or times of reflection after a planned time of teaching had been observed. The weekly meetings also afforded many opportunities for informal discussions to take place.

To ensure objectivity some basic conditions relating to this conversation, have to be met. The Latin word for conversation, *conversari*, means *to keep company with* (Thompson 1995:292). This type of company refers to a relaxed and friendly forum that is created. The interviewee must be relaxed and motivated to be part of the process and not feel that they need to give what they believe to be the 'correct response' or the response the interviewer is looking for.

Respondents should be able to communicate the information and should not feel intimidated or insecure in any way. Henning (2004:87) is of the opinion that some questions should be open-ended to allow the participant to speak freely and voice any concerns or issues that may come to mind. Group interviews were chosen because of their apparent practical and organisational advantages (Watt and Ebutt 1987:25-33).

The researcher maintained an open-door policy and was available to the student-teacher interns during school hours. Communication was kept open and honest and solutions were sought as any issues were brought up or complications arose in the classrooms. This was done by conferencing with the student-teacher intern, the mentor teacher and the mentor manager.

Throughout the observation and interview process, constructs from both the student-teacher interns and the mentor teachers were negotiated and refined to establish major themes. To ensure the trustworthiness of the process, participants checked the narratives that were produced to ensure authenticity of the accounts. Clandinin and Connelly (1996:16) define narrative as *the making of meaning through personal experience by way of a process of reflection in which story telling is a key element and in which metaphors and folk knowledge take their place*.

Stake (2002:435-454) refers to many scholars within education who have used stories and storytelling as a central element in their research. Carter (1993:12) further asserts that *the attractiveness of story in contemporary research on teaching and teacher education is*

grounded in the notion that story represents a way of knowing and thinking that is particularly suited for explicating the issues with which we deal.

The next part of the interview consisted of two open-ended questionnaires which were given to the student-teacher interns and mentor teachers. They were designed as follows:

3.6.5 Design of the open-ended questionnaire

3.6.5.1 Questionnaire handed to student-teacher interns

Question 1: The respondents were to indicate whether they were male or female.

Question 2 and 3: Respondents were to indicate: Mr, Miss or Mrs and disclose their age. These details informed the researcher that the age of the student-teacher interns included a range of ages and that the data collected was not age-specific.

Question 4: This answer indicates how long the respondent has been studying and can therefore indicate the length of time the student-teacher intern has been in the internship programme.

Question 6: This answers the question whether or not teaching is their first option or if other study or work options have been considered.

Question 7: This indicates how well the internship programme is known amongst the student teachers of this specific geographical area.

Question 8: This answer is indicative of the reason the intern programme was chosen as a form of studying.

Question 9: This question supplied answers as to why the student-teacher intern had chosen the intern programme as opposed to attending a full-time university.

Question 10: The student-teacher intern was asked to comment on whether they felt they had sufficient time to complete their assignment work for their degree purposes.

Question 11: This will indicate how involved the student-teacher intern had become in the daily workings of the host school. Was the student-teacher intern seen as a teacher by the host school and treated accordingly?

Question 12, 13 and 14: These questions offered the student-teacher intern the opportunity to share their own personal likes and dislikes as they served their time of internship. They were encouraged to share their opinions, their successes and disappointments in a confidential and honest manner.

The school (PS) was the research site chosen to conduct the research. The participants are all based on this site as is the researcher as she manages the existing student-teacher intern programme.

3.6.5.2 Questionnaire handed to the mentor teachers

Question 1 The mentor teacher indicated what he or she had experienced as the advantage/s of mentoring and accommodating a student-teacher intern for a year in his or her classroom.

Question 2 The disadvantages of hosting a student-teacher intern was discussed in this question.

Question 3 This question simply enquired whether conflict had arisen between the student-teacher intern and anybody else (mentor teacher and learners included).

Question 4 The mentor teacher was asked to expound on their answer to question 3 regarding conflict and how it was dealt with.

3.6.6 Site selection

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:343) agree that the site must be suitable to the research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility and skills. Permission for access to that site must be obtained – formal authorisation is essential. In this research study the researcher gained the formal authorisation to conduct this on-site research from the school principal (Appendix A).

According to Lancy (1993:236) it stands to reason that the choice of research site should be guided by the specific problem the researcher wants to address. It was for this reason that the site of the private school (PS) was chosen as it is where the researcher is based. The researcher manages an existing intern programme and there were sufficient student-teacher interns to support a case study based on the site chosen.

The researcher selected PS situated in an area of KwaZulu-Natal as this area was easily accessible and serves a diverse culture and population. It must also be noted that PS is a private school serving mainly an affluent, up-market area. This facilitated the funding of a student-teacher intern programme of this size within the particular school chosen as the research site.

3.6.7 Purposeful sampling at site

LeCompte, Millroy and Preissle (1992:65) concur that although there is no hard and fast rule regarding what constitutes sufficient time on the site, observation should last long enough to permit the researcher to see things happen, not once but repeatedly.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:343) researchers search for information-rich informants, groups, places and events from which to further select their subunits for more in-depth study.

Purposeful sampling refers to researchers selectively choosing the persons, situations and events most likely to yield fruitful data about the research topic and the sound data collection procedures that should be employed (Teddlie and Yu 2007:77-100). Purposeful sampling was used in this research so that the researcher could collect specific and relevant data from all the participants.

To gain a better understanding of the effectiveness and the benefits of the internship programme to both the teacher offering the mentoring and to the student-teacher interns, students of different ages participated in this study. Those at different stages of their BEd degree were involved as were student-teacher interns from the Preschool, the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase at the school (PS) chosen (see table 3.1).

It must be remembered that the mentor teachers had already been selected by the school management team. Mentor teachers mentor and supervise the student-teacher interns during their year of internship. The researcher was not involved in the placement of student-teacher interns with mentor teachers.

The participants in this study were 16 student-teacher interns and 16 mentor teachers. These participants were from diverse cultural backgrounds and consisted of both male and female respondents.

The site of this research is a private, Christian co-ed school (PS) established in 1994. At the time of this research, the school had 595 learners from Preschool, Grade 000 up to Grade 7. The learners come from diverse backgrounds and multi-ethnic groups.

PS has a teaching staff complement of 48. Table 3.1 below provides the profile of teacher mentors who participated in this study. To protect the anonymity of participants, a letter code was assigned to each participating mentor teacher. The mentor teachers are categorised in Table 3.1 by grouping them into age groups, tabling how many times they have mentored a

student-teacher intern and displaying how many years they have been in the teaching profession.

Table 3.1 Profiles of mentor teachers

Mentor Teachers	Age Group	Mentoring Experience	Teaching Experience
M	50-55	8 th time	30 years
N	25-30	3 rd time	5 years
B	40-45	7 th time	25 years
P	45-50	6 th time	26 years
J	45-50	7 th time	23 years
V	35-40	5 th time	18 years
S	40-45	2 nd time	19 years
KC	40-45	7 th time	22 years
R	45-50	8 th time	20 years
O	25-30	4 th time	8 years
VB	40-45	3 rd time	22 years
C	40-45	9 th time	22 years
L	20-25	1 st time	4 years
K	40-45	6 th time	23 years
A	40-45	3 rd time	15 years

Table 3.2 categorises the profiles of the student-teacher interns, putting them into age groups, showing their gender and which year of study they hope to complete during the year this research was conducted.

Table 3.2 Profiles of student-teacher interns

Student-teacher interns	Age	Gender	Year of Internship (All in process of obtaining BEd Degree)
4	19 yrs	Male-1 Female-3	3 in 1 st year 1 in 2 nd year
3	20 yrs	Female	2 nd year
1	21 yrs	Female	PGCE (in 1 year)
1	22 yrs	Male	1 st year
1	23 yrs	Female	4 th year
1	26 yrs	Female	1 st year
1	27 yrs	Female	1 st year
2	34 yrs	Female	1 in 1 st year 1 in 2 nd year
1	38 yrs	Female	1 st year
1	41 yrs	Female	3 rd year

3.6.8 Theory in connection with the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data

The biggest challenges in conducting research, according to Bruce and Pine (2010:40), is to collect and analyse data, organise and code the collected data, to realise that it may be necessary to rewrite the research question in response to what is being learnt and to look for findings that are both similar to and contrary to the assumptions, findings and theories uncovered in the literature review. This approach was adopted by the researcher as it was necessary to reconsider the research question as the findings of the data became clear.

Data collection is seen by Hofstee (2006:117) as *useless unless it is turned into evidence*. To convert data into information analysis is necessary. The data must be explained to the readers so that it can be understood and can explain how one arrives at said (sub) conclusions. Any form of evidence is data to be used by the researcher and that data, the sources and the evidence are used synonymously to mean information obtained by the

chosen research methods (McMillan and Schumacher 2006:10), which in this case study will be done by feedback given in the open-ended questionnaires.

Merriam (1998:2-27) suggests that the *analysis of data gathered in a case study is generally presented descriptively*. The process of data analysis, say Marshall and Rosman (2006:154), *is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating and it does not proceed in a linear fashion – it is not neat*.

The researcher of this case study has presented findings in a descriptive manner. After collecting the data, the researcher explored the data by reading the information derived from the questionnaires. Analysing and interpreting the data, (Creswell 2012:10), involves drawing conclusions about it and representing it in tables, figures and pictures and explaining the conclusion in words to provide answers to the research question. Analysis occurred as the researcher was synthesising, sifting and selecting relevant data from the field notes. This process evoked new assertions and questions in the form of a recursive review as recommended by Erickson (1998:1162).

The researcher was able to get a general sense of the information as well as to organise it and to see whether sufficient or insufficient data had been collected for this study.

3.6.9 Theory on data organisation as applicable to this study

Marshall and Rosman (2006:161) highlighted the seven phases in data analysis: *organising the data, immersion in the data, generating categories and themes within the collected data, coding the data, offering interpretations of the collected data, searching for alternative understandings and then writing the report*. These seven steps were followed in the collection of data in this study.

Once the completed questionnaires had been received by the researcher, various themes in the data were looked for as the data was interpreted. The researcher applied her mind and in a subjective manner she sought to organise the data collected into categories and formulate an overall picture of the responses received.

From the data analysis one needs to develop the findings and implications of the research. Bruce and Pine (2010:42) explain that it is not the data but the meanings that are applied to the data that are critical and whether there are significant differences between what the data says about the research question and what was expected.

Stake (1995:113) indicates that *data source triangulation is an effort to see if what we are observing and reporting carries the same meaning when found under different*

circumstances. The triangulation process involves the studying of evidence from different sources to shed light on a particular theme or perspective (Creswell 1998:202). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:374) assert that researchers use triangulation for the purpose of cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes.

The validity of the gathered information is assessed through the cross-checking or triangulation of the data collected. Triangulation is a critical aspect of qualitative data analysis. It was used by the researcher in this case study to cross-check the data collected and so increase the trustworthiness of the data presented in this study. This was done by checking the responses given by the student-teacher interns in the open-ended questionnaire and comparing them to the responses received during times of informal discussion.

This led to the researcher needing to gain informed consent from all parties involved in this research.

3.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

Cultural and ethical research always requires particular consideration to the ethical aspects of the research in order to gain the support of the participants (Creswell 2007:141). This support is vital as the researcher is meant to collect, analyse and interpret information in an ethical manner to ensure the study's trustworthiness and credibility.

When doing research there is always the potential for the rights of the research participants to be violated, either knowingly or unknowingly. This concern has led researchers internationally to develop a code of ethics that has been developed over a number of years (Bak 2008:28).

This code of ethics refers to the fact that the researcher is to remain within the bounds of all research and ethically employ strict rules regarding voluntary participation, informed consent, safety in participation, privacy, confidentiality, trust and withdrawal of participants at any stage (McMillan 2008:277; Creswell 2007:212).

Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:150) remind researchers that participants may not be harmed in the research project, but that the research should rather potentially contribute to the well-being of others. Qualitative researchers must elicit the co-operation, trust, openness and

acceptance of their interviewees. This may, at times, entail assuming helping roles and even dressing in a certain manner (McMillan and Schumacher 2006:335).

In the light of the abovementioned literature, ethical considerations pertaining to this research include the participants' voluntary consent, a detailed explanation verbally of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, the right to terminate participation at any given time and to any potential risk participation in this study may expose them to. A letter of permission to conduct the research was signed by the principal of the school (Appendix A) and the permission given by each participant was done at a collective meeting held on the research site before the research began.

Participants of this study were reassured that they would be protected at all times and that none of the material would bear their names or any other identifying characteristics (McMillan 2008:277). It was necessary to mention the fact that even though all necessary precautions had been taken with regard to ethical anonymity, it was impossible to be certain that discussions emanating from this research group would remain anonymous. It was difficult to ensure that participants from the focus group did not enter into further dialogue outside the research site.

The researcher had to achieve the research ambitions but did not do so at the expense of the participants of the research (Babbie and Mouton 2001:271). With this in mind the following issues were dealt with stringently:

3.7.1 Informed consent

Silverman (2011:418) maintains that with informed consent, the research *subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time*. Linn, Howard and Miller (2004:32) concur that an important goal when conducting a research study, is to obtain *buy-in*. *Buy-in* means obtaining support and endorsement from individuals at all levels of the institution under consideration as a research site. These three editors agree that *buy-in* is a core requirement for a successful study, in that it is a precondition for access to key data and informants.

Informed consent refers to the right that the participants have. They have the right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation and the fact that they have the right to decline to participate if they choose to do so (Bless and Higson-Smith 2006:152).

The researcher gained the permission of all participants, namely the 16 student-teacher interns and their mentors, beforehand. This was done as a collective group at a meeting

where the researcher explained the area of research and how it was to be undertaken. It was also explained to these participants why this research was deemed important to report on. They were made aware of their rights and could decline to answer any question that may be thought of as being sensitive in any way. The student-teacher intern participants were more than willing to be part of the survey and to share their experiences, both positive and negative. Some of the mentor teachers felt that it was time-consuming to answer 'another questionnaire' when they already had a very full work load.

Written permission was also obtained from the Principal of the school, Appendix A.

3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Bruce and Pine (2010:40) are of the opinion that confidentiality is an *ethical principle that must be addressed in the research plan*. Furthermore, the above-mentioned authors conclude that the term *confidentiality* includes the handling of participant identity and information and the storage of data so that it cannot be linked with the identities of the participants.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:334) concur that the settings and participants should not be identifiable in print. Locations and settings are disguised to appear similar to several possible places. Code names should also be used when referring to people and places.

Confidentiality was a stated priority for the researcher. At no time is an individual identified by name, but rather by a code as seen in Chapter 4. The researcher took all possible measures necessary to enforce confidentiality throughout the entire data collection process, findings, analysis and recommendations. The participating school is referred to as PS.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the positioning of the research, choice of methodology, research instrument, the data collection process, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study have been addressed.

A case-study methodology using qualitative techniques was selected for this study.

The following chapter presents the data and analysis process that was followed by the researcher as well as the interpretation of this collected data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

We are by the very act of story making, deciding what to tell and what to leave out and imposing structure and meaning on events...what we tell and how we tell it is a revelation of what we believe...from this perspective stories are not mere raw data from which to construct interpretations, but products of a fundamentally interpretive process that is shaped by the moralistic impulses of the author (Carter 1993:9).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3 the research methodology, population and sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis, instruments, and the ethical considerations of this study were discussed.

This chapter endeavours to provide the reader with an understanding of the internship programme and the interaction between the participating student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers. It also aims to familiarise the reader with the participants' biographical information (Table 4.1) and their professional backgrounds (Table 4.2) so that the reader may have a clearer picture of the participants and how they relate to the answers they offer in the questionnaire.

To answer the research question data were gathered from the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers through informal discussion groups, open-ended questionnaires and on-site observations made by the researcher as the student-teacher interns went about their daily activities. The data were analysed and categories and themes emerged. These research findings provided an in depth look at the structure of the student-teacher intern programme at PS, and reported on the impact this programme had on both the student teachers and the mentor teachers.

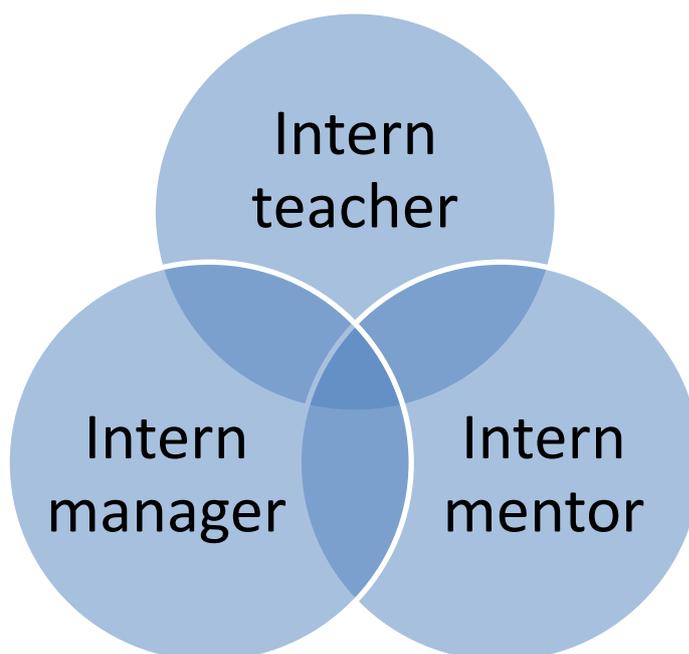
The following research statement will guide the themes emerging in this research:

This research is done to determine the benefits and disadvantages of an internship programme at a school (PS) for the teaching profession and to the student teachers involved.

4.2 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT-TEACHER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME AT PS

PS has a clearly defined organisational structure. This structure enables a clear line of communication to exist between the student-teacher intern, the mentor teacher in the classroom and the mentor manager (Diagram 4.1).

Diagram 4.1. Organisational structure



Student-teacher interns need to be briefed about the school culture, school rules, policies, ethics, code of discipline, sport commitments and so forth. It is preferable if they are familiar with the school surroundings and the learners before presenting their practicum, as this knowledge and relationship building builds confidence in the student-teacher intern.

The policy guideline, '*Guidelines for the Year of Internship*', is a working document that is used to familiarise the student-teacher intern with the intern programme at PS and all the related expectations including the accepted code of behaviour.

4.2.1 Guidelines for the year of internship for student-teacher interns, mentor teachers and the mentor manager

4.2.1.1 Objectives of the student-teacher intern programme

The objective of the internship is to provide future teachers with on-the-job training experience under the daily supervision and modelling of the classroom (mentor) teacher. These student-teacher interns take the responsibility upon themselves to find a school willing to accommodate them for a year. PS has a well-established intern programme which has been operative for the last 9 years.

The objectives of the year of internship should encompass, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Retaining quality students studying to be teachers
- Improving the student teacher's skills and performance
- Supporting student teacher morale, communications and collegiality
- Creation of a supportive school climate
- Provision of time for the student-teacher intern and their mentor teacher/s to work, plan and reflect together
- Building a sense of professionalism and a positive attitude
- Facilitating a seamless transition putting the ODL theory into practice
- Preventing student teacher isolation from occurring – being part of an intern programme in a school prevents this from happening
- Building self-reflection

The internship programme is a year-long professional educational experience. This case study seeks to investigate this experience as it is offered by a school (PS). These guidelines contain an overview of this programme, objectives of the student-teacher internship experience, responsibilities of the mentoring teachers and information about the evaluation process as applied.

Familiarisation with the PS school culture and the various policies is addressed as an important issue in creating an environment that is conducive to a positive learning experience.

Student-teacher interns are exposed to and required to participate in all school activities related to their time of internship and to engage in professional development at every opportunity afforded them.

These opportunities include:

- Developing proficiencies in lesson planning and term planning
- Developing classroom management strategies which enhance classroom learning
- Observing learners' progress and various barriers to learning that present themselves in the classroom environment
- Adding to the establishment of a classroom climate that is conducive to learning and the student-teacher interns adopting a learning posture themselves
- Reflecting on teaching practices and evaluating the effectiveness of academic instruction with attention given to different teaching and learning styles
- Developing collaborative skills with fellow teachers/professionals
- Exhibiting professional behaviour, ethics and values both in the school and in the community
- Using sound judgement and thoughtful decision-making with consideration of the consequences

At PS the cost of attending professional development courses offered by the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) is funded by the school (PS).

4.2.1.2 Overview of the internship programme

The internship is a year-long educational experience combining daily experiences in the classroom setting, time allocated to work on assignments and exam preparation, and time spent coaching extracurricular activities.

Student-teacher interns follow the calendar of PS school and work in partnership with members of the teaching staff.

Intern orientation includes:

- General information about the school (PS) (parking, length of school day, school rules, school calendar, break duty responsibilities, school mission statement and the school ethos)

- Specific school policies and procedures (learner and teacher confidentiality, legal responsibilities of the teacher, parent and teacher interviews, emergency procedures, discipline policies, learner privacy issues)
- Timetable for meeting with the mentor teacher and the mentor manager respectively
- Reviewing curriculum and learner academic information (learner records, report cards, homework policy, how the learners are grouped in the class and why they are grouped as such)

PS has a shelf in the library containing many of the prescribed books required for degree purposes. These academic books are available to be used by the student-teacher interns. Individual used books are either purchased from the students when they are no longer needed or directly from local bookshops.

4.2.1.3 Policies and guidelines

The internship is defined by the school calendar and is valid for a year or part thereof. The internship contract may be cancelled by giving 30 working days' notice. The contract is to be renewed for each subsequent year that the student-teacher intern remains at PS (Appendix D).

Student-teacher interns are subject to the same holidays and in-service days as the full-time school personnel.

The numbers of hours the student-teacher interns are to spend in their designated classrooms, working on ODL assignments (during school hours) and partaking in extra-curricular activities is determined by PS. These criteria may also vary according to the phase in which they are studying, being either foundation phase (FP), intermediate phase (IP) or senior phase (SP).

The student-teacher intern collaborates closely with his/her mentoring class teacher and the school intern manager. Direct teaching does take place and includes side-by-side team teaching with the class teacher present.

The student-teacher intern participates in professional growth activities within and outside the school, whilst being careful to maintain the standards of confidentiality regarding learner information.

4.2.1.4 Attendance

Student-teacher interns are not excused from school because of work schedules. Au pairing, helping children with private academic coaching, waiting on tables and so forth are activities that are to be arranged in the “off duty” time of the student-teacher intern.

Absences from school are acceptable in cases of personal illness. ODL institution discussion classes are considered times of professional development for the student-teacher intern, and they are attended whenever possible. Prior notification of the attendance of any such classes must be communicated to the class teacher concerned and the intern manager timeously so as to cause minimum disruption of the school timetable.

4.2.1.5 Substitute teaching

Regarding substitute teaching, certain conditions have to be met. Student-teacher interns **may serve** as substitute teachers in PS if:

- The student-teacher intern has worked in the school for at least 2 months and is familiar with the school policies and routines;
- The student-teacher intern is familiar with the learners assigned to him/her and can relate and empathise with the learners;
- The student-teacher intern is competent and confident enough, according to the class teacher, to assume the requisite responsibilities; and
- an emergency situation arises where a teacher falls ill suddenly or a personal emergency occurs.

Under the following conditions student-teacher interns may **NOT** serve as a substitute teacher in PS:

- Should the student-teacher intern not be acclimated to the school and has not been briefed about school policies and routines (how to address the learners, discipline procedures in the classroom).
- Should a full-time staff member be absent, the student-teacher intern may not be used as a general “free-lance” substitute anywhere on the school campus, anytime the need arises. This decision is to be made in consultation with the intern manager.

The intern manager is to be consulted before the student-teacher intern is moved about between classrooms and used for other school-related activities. This will prevent any

particular student-teacher intern from being monopolised while another may hardly be called upon at all.

4.2.1.6 School guidelines

Student-teacher interns must follow the school's policy as it applies to all the staff of PS. Included is arrival and departure times, parking, attendance of staff meetings, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and similar activities.

4.2.1.7 Professional guidelines

Learner Behaviour

Student-teacher interns are accountable for learner behaviour during educational activities, especially when presenting their practical lessons or when the class teacher is not present.

Punishment

Corporal punishment may NOT BE ADMINISTERED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. Discipline strategies are to be in keeping with the school policy, which at PS is developing greatness in the learners and disciplining in a 'firm, fair and friendly' manner. No learner may be made to feel degraded in any way and after discipline reconciliation is to take place before that learner goes home.

Confidentiality of information

Each student-teacher intern must maintain professional confidentiality regarding learner performance, personnel records, staff meetings and information regarding learners, teachers or mentors. This confidentiality clause is explained to the student-teacher interns at PS so that they are fully aware of what this entails.

Professional conduct

Student-teacher interns must maintain ethical conduct by refusing to speak in disparaging terms about members of staff, the learners, the administration of the school or other colleagues on the program.

Social behaviour

A student-teacher intern must assume the role of teacher in the community concerning socially acceptable behaviour. The learners and their parents could observe them at any time and in any place.

Dress code

Student-teacher interns should dress professionally in a manner similar to other school staff. Clothing is often an important factor in the learners' perception of the student teacher, both as an adult and as a teacher.

4.2.1.8 The professional team

The professional team at PS is composed of the:

- student-teacher intern;
- mentor teacher; and
- mentor manager.

The primary objectives of this team are:

- To plan the year-long internship in such a way that it provides a variety of classroom-based experiences and fulfils the guidelines given by the ODL institution.
- To meet the learning needs of the student-teacher intern wherever possible. Included in these needs is time off for ODL institution contact sessions and exams.
- To prepare the student-teacher intern for the teaching profession and to have the student-teacher intern successfully complete the year of internship.

If problems do arise during the internship, they are best handled through a team approach.

The mentoring teacher

The role of the mentoring teacher is of fundamental importance to a successful internship experience. Mentoring at PS includes sharing, modelling, and encouraging professional competencies in the context of daily classroom life.

The mentoring process at PS is characterised by the following:

Orientation

- Communication with the student-teacher intern takes place prior to the start of the internship during the interview phase. The new student-teacher intern is then introduced to the PS staff at a general staff meeting held before the school year begins.
- A desk and specific place for the student-teacher intern is provided for in the host classroom by the mentor teacher.

- The student-teacher intern is to provide their personal identity number and other information needed by PS to the administration department. This includes their banking details so that their 'salary' can be deposited directly into their bank account by PS.
- The mentor teacher is to facilitate the acceptance of the student-teacher intern by the learners in their designated class. This is done by introducing the student-teacher intern to the class and explaining what his or her role and function will be.
- All staff assist the student-teacher interns to become acquainted with the PS school rules and procedures. This may include break duty procedures, sport duty responsibilities, school rules regarding the wearing of the school cap, games allowed on the school grounds and the general expected learner behaviour in the school corridors and classrooms.
- When the student-teacher intern is introduced to the learners it is done in such a way that the student-teacher intern is accepted as a teacher with equal authority to that of fully employed staff members.
- The student-teacher intern is encouraged to access the classroom curriculum materials and to be aware as to what curriculum is covered in that particular grade.
- The mentor teacher is to review the rules and procedures of her or his particular classroom with the student-teacher intern and discuss reasons for the rules and why and how they are enforced.
- Mentor teachers are to assist parents in understanding the role of the student-teacher intern in the classroom.
- Mentor teachers are also to monitor the student-teacher intern's attendance and punctuality.

Planning and Instruction

- The mentor teacher is to provide opportunities for the student-teacher intern to observe instructional methods which are appropriate to all teaching situations in so far as is possible.
- The mentor teacher and the mentor manager at PS will clarify all student-teacher intern responsibilities with respect to planning, classroom discipline, organising learning materials and learner evaluation.
- It is ensured by the mentor teacher that the student-teacher intern has a smooth induction into the actual teaching of the learners.
- The student-teacher intern is involved in the planning and in the evaluating of the learning experiences (reflection).

- The student-teacher intern is assisted during the planning phase of a lesson.
- Conferring about the grading of the learners also takes place at PS. This includes allowing the student-teacher intern to grade the learners at times, but remembering that all grading responsibility ultimately rests with the mentoring teacher.
- Opportunities are created for the student-teacher intern and the mentor teacher to plan together.
- Opportunities are also created to discuss problems together – both as a group of student-teacher interns together with their mentor manager or together with their individual mentor teachers.
- Student-teacher interns are also assisted at PS in developing skills of discipline and classroom management.
- The mentor teachers provide regular consultation and assistance as the student-teacher intern assesses learner needs, plans lesson instruction, selects appropriate instructional materials and strategies, and assesses learner progress.

Time for evaluation and reflection

- Both the mentor teacher and the mentor manager meet regularly with the student-teacher intern.
- They keep the student-teacher intern informed of their progress or the reasons for the lack thereof and make suggestions as necessary..
- They help the student-teacher intern identify critical moments in the classroom and use these for maximum learning experiences for both the student-teacher intern and the learner/s
- They encourage the student-teacher intern to reflect on his/her progress.
- They are specific in suggestions for improvement.
- The mentor teacher is to observe the student-teacher intern presenting class lessons and then to provide feedback on a regular basis.
- The mentor teacher and the mentor manager together with the student-teacher intern often engage in joint problem solving about pedagogical issues at PS.
- The progress of the student-teacher intern is evaluated by providing frequent, formative evaluations. This is done by the full-time qualified staff of PS as lessons are presented in the various learning areas throughout the school. It is believed at PS that praise goes a long way in developing confidence in the student-teacher intern and in her or his ability to teach effectively.

Professional development

- It is emphasised to the student-teacher intern that the first priority in every decision made in the classroom should be made in the best interest of the learners.
- The staff at PS are encouraged to accept the student-teacher intern as a co-worker.
- The sharing of ideas amongst staff, including the student-teacher intern, is encouraged by the management of the school, PS.
- Promoting personal integrity and an understanding of the ethics of the teaching profession is high on the agenda at PS.

The designated mentor manager at PS accepts the following responsibilities:

- Participating in meetings of the professional team to identify student-teacher intern needs, to assist in the planning of teaching strategies and discuss the progress of the student teacher – or lack thereof.
- Observing and coaching the student-teacher intern seeking professional development opportunities and assist, where possible, with ODL related issues.
- Assisting in clarifying the roles and responsibilities in the internship experience with all the role players concerned.
- Liaising with the mentoring teacher in designing a programme which provides the student-teacher intern with the maximum opportunity to develop and demonstrate teaching competencies.
- Serving. as a resource in helping develop skills or in locating resources to help the student-teacher intern enhance strengths and remediate weaknesses
- Meeting once a week with the student-teacher interns to discuss their performance and needs whilst based at PS
- Counselling and advising mentoring teachers and the student-teacher interns in their roles and responsibilities.

The mentor manager will meet weekly with the student-teacher interns to discuss matters pertaining to the programme. Attendance of these meetings is compulsory for all student-teacher interns. An agenda is handed out (Appendix E) at every meeting and various issues pertaining to the intern programme is discussed.

Student-teacher interns are also reminded of any upcoming sport events that they are required to be involved in. Mentoring support is offered, the school policy regarding various issues, for example HIV/AIDS, is discussed and any day-to-day challenges that the student-teacher intern may be struggling with are also discussed and hopefully resolved. This

meeting encourages the lines of communication to remain open and accessible to the student-teacher intern.

All 16 student-teacher interns are also involved in the bi-monthly staff meeting. These meetings often include a staff lunch and the meeting is chaired by the headmaster. At this staff meeting the student-teacher intern learns about the general running of the school, upcoming courses that staff may be required to attend, new appointments on staff and a host of other school-related issues.

The staff meetings are often used as a time of staff training in a particular field, for example, how to teach mathematics using algorithms.

4.3 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

The quality of support offered by the mentor teachers to their student-teacher interns varies greatly. Overall the following is discussed with the student-teacher interns: teaching strategies, content, lesson planning and familiarity with the school culture and policies. Upon confirming that this support was given to the interns by their teacher mentors, the degree of the adequacy of this support could not be specified.

4.3.1 Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring is a significant feature of the intern programme. This takes the form of assistance in their daily lesson planning, sharing of teaching aids, discussion of the different teaching techniques and strategies and classroom management skills.

Peer mentoring was encouraged with regard to the university course work. First year student-teacher interns often approached third and fourth year student-teacher interns for advice and guidance regarding a particular university assignment or module.

The student-teacher interns also shared their compulsory set-work books with each other. This was particularly helpful to those interns who were financing their own studies.

Peer mentoring appears to have played an important support role amongst the interns, especially for those interns who lacked adequate support from their mentor teacher/s during the programme. Their positive relationships and shared knowledge created mutually supportive bonds between the interns as they progressed in their professional development. There were, however, some interns who preferred to solve problems on their own and did not find peer mentoring valuable.

4.3.2 Mentoring relationships and communication

Mentoring relationships and communication are vital components in the success of the intern programme.

The single most important and influential individual in the internship programme is the mentor teacher who interacts daily with the student-teacher intern. Ideally, the role of the mentor teacher includes but is not limited to helping the student-teacher interns acquire and demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare them as classroom teachers. The mentor teacher serves not only as a supervisor but as an evaluator, completing the practical evaluation forms whilst observing the student-teacher intern presenting a lesson. These practicum forms are then submitted to the ODL institution. Teaching skills are modelled for the student-teacher intern to first observe and then to practice in front of the classroom of learners. The mentor teacher provides constructive feedback, and an opportunity for the student-teacher intern to experiment and model effective classroom management techniques.

The student-teacher intern's role begins with a period of observing the classroom/mentor teacher teaching and then progresses to the point of taking over some of the daily responsibilities performed by the full-time teacher. These responsibilities include maintaining a daily planner recording lessons taught, attending weekly planning meetings with the Phase Head and teacher colleagues and attending bi-weekly staff meetings. A weekly intern meeting is also conducted. These meetings address a number of planning issues including the organisation of teaching times to be assessed, sport commitments, ODL concerns (exam time study leave/assignments/obtaining and sharing set work books) and offer a time for the student-teacher intern to voice any concerns they may have. It is also a time for the student-teacher intern to discuss the internship experience with their fellow student-teacher interns.

The mentor manager of the intern programme has the major responsibility to help the student-teacher intern achieve the goals and objectives as set out by the ODL institution – preparing them to become successful teachers by linking the theory to practice. The mentor manager also collaborates with the mentor teacher and often acts as a resource person between the ODL institution and the student-teacher intern.

This forms the triad members of the intern programme – mentor manager, mentor teacher and the intern teacher.

The relevance of the principal's involvement is evident as he sets the tone for a learning community and fully endorses the intern programme as he sees the importance of training

excellent teachers for tomorrow's generation. Varrati, Lavine and Turner (2009:481) note that *effective principals are considered instructional leaders of their school, leaders who present their school as a learning community engaged in continual improvement.*

Intern teachers need to be briefed about the school culture, school rules, policies, ethics, code of discipline, sport commitments and so forth. They need to be familiar with the surroundings and learners before presenting their practicum.

4.4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS ON RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE STUDENT-TEACHER INTERNS

The 16 student-teacher interns on site at PS were chosen as a subject for this case study. The researcher, being based at SP and being the mentor manager of this programme, found it convenient and beneficial to conduct the research on site.

All of the questionnaires that were handed out were completed and returned to the researcher. The researcher has been careful not to breach the confidentiality of the student-teacher interns involved in this case study and so pseudonyms were used when their responses were recorded.

The biographical information of the student-teacher interns was supplied in answers to question 1-5. A total number of 16 student-teacher interns completed and returned the questionnaires. Two of these were male and 14 were female respondents.

The student-teacher interns ranged between 19 and 41 years of age. These students were in various stages of their BEd Degree or Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) through ODL. For some, this was their first year of internship, having worked elsewhere, for others it was their final year of their degree and one student-teacher intern was completing a PGCE.

The student-teacher interns were placed in the school, in so far as was possible, in their area of specialisation. The following show where the student-teacher interns were placed in this school:

- Preschool (Grade 000-0) = 4 student-teacher interns
- Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3) = 7 student-teacher interns
- Intermediate Phase (Grade 4-7) = 5 student-teacher interns

This made their year much easier as they were able to build relationships with both the learners and the staff and present their practicum lessons without having to disrupt another class in another phase in the school. Most student-teacher interns spent an entire year of their internship with a particular mentor teacher, enjoying relationship building and being part of all the activities within that class and phase. The movement of student-teacher interns between classes did take place when a permanent staff member was ill or away for training.

The student-teacher interns hailed from various backgrounds. Some had matriculated in the previous year, while some had spent time waiting on tables in restaurants, two had been employed as domestic servants, some had au paired, one was a qualified chef, another was a qualified beauty therapist having practised for twenty years in the profession.

Most of the student-teacher interns were unmarried, three of them were young, single mothers raising young children. Another four were married women with children of school-going age.

Listed in table 4.1 below, are the ages of the student-teacher interns and which year of their four year B Ed degree or PGCE they hoped to complete.

Table 4.1 Overview of student-teacher interns

<i>Age of student-teacher Intern</i>	<i>Number of student-teacher Interns</i>	<i>Year of study with the ODL Institution</i>
<i>19 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2nd year</i>
<i>19 years</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>20 years</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2nd year</i>
<i>21 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>PGCE</i>
<i>22 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>23 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4th year</i>
<i>26 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>27 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>34 years</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>38 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1st year</i>
<i>41 years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3rd year</i>

The years of work experience of the respondents prior to the programme were varied . Table 4.2 shows the prior work experience range and the number of respondents falling into each of the ranges.

Table 4.2 Prior work experience of the respondents

<i>Prior Work Experience</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>
<i>None</i>	7
<i>1-3 years</i>	3
<i>4-5 years</i>	2
<i>6-10 years</i>	1
<i>11-15 years</i>	2
<i>16-20 years</i>	1

None of these student-teacher interns had prior teaching experience

It was interesting to learn of how the student-teacher interns learned of the intern programme being run at PS – the answer was unanimous – by word of mouth. This programme is not advertised as such. There is a link to view what the programme entails on the school website. A yearly report about the programme is presented to the Board of Governors and published in the annual school magazine.

It was determined why the student-teacher intern chose the intern programme and ODL as opposed to attending a local university as a full-time student. Financial constraints and the fact that ODL was a more affordable option, was the most common reason given. One student (K8) responded: [the ODL Institution] *offers a more affordable alternative to our otherwise lack-lustre universities in KZN.* A female student (TM7) responded as follows: *I am also a family woman, and as such I wanted to further my studies. I also wanted to earn a little bit of an income to assist me with [paying for] my studies. The intern programme met my situation.*

A young, unemployed, 18-year-old student (Z9), wanted to go to University but when she *found out about the fees [she] lost hope [of ever affording her tuition].*

Two student-teacher interns (P6 and J16) explained that finding affordable transport to and from a contact university was not possible and it was easier to travel to the PS intern programme on a daily basis. The 34-year-old female student-teacher intern (P6) recorded that she stayed *‘in a rural area and it was not easy [for her] to get to town every day’*,

indicating that PS was positioned geographically closer to her place of residence. This fact made it easier for her to be part of the intern programme and study through ODL with a group of like-minded individuals.

Five respondents cited that *hands-on* experience and being fully involved in the day-to-day happenings of school life is what attracted them to the internship programme. One student (T7) referred to the programme as *a valuable learning experience*. Another (ME2) said she expected to benefit from *personal growth* whilst gaining hands-on experience.

Being immersed in the classroom culture and everyday school environment was also seen as a benefit of the programme.

At PS a definite distinction was made between a student-teacher intern and a teacher assistant (TA). A student-teacher intern, although fully involved in the life of the school, had to prioritise his/her ODL studies. They also had to be a registered student with a recognised ODL institution, studying towards their BEd Degree or PGCE.

A teacher assistant (TA), on the other hand, had to be in the classroom all day and be a hands-on helper to the full-time teacher all day. Time was not allocated every day for the teacher assistant to study or work towards the submission of assignments. Should a TA be studying towards a qualification of some sort, this work had to be done outside of the school hours.

The manager of the internship programme at PS made time available each day for the student-teacher interns to work on their degree assignments, to go on line and read updates received from the institution and to attend any local contact sessions that were offered by the ODL institution. PS gave the student more than sufficient time, according to the responses received, to work on assignments, for study leave and exam preparation.

All 16 student-teacher interns responded positively, agreeing that they were given more than enough time to complete their university assignments and preparation daily and S5 shared that PS was *very accommodating when it [came] to time [off]*.

The library is the place where most of the intern teachers worked on their ODL studies. There they had access to the computers, a printer, the internet, a place to sit at a desk and work and a shelf full of prescribed university books at their disposal. Being a library, was also a quiet place and conducive to studying.

Those student-teacher interns in the preschool were allowed to leave at 1pm each day, with no extra-mural obligations being required of them. This early leaving time was in lieu of

having time off during the school day to work on their ODL degree studies. This was decided so that movement in and out of the classroom could be kept to a minimum as it could prove disruptive for the younger children. JA13 responded saying that *being in the Preschool, the interns are allowed to leave early, at 1pm* [each day]. Another student-teacher intern, C14, responded noting *we could leave the school at 1pm* [each day] *so that leaves us the rest of the afternoon and evenings* [to study].

As further part of the research, the respondents were offered a choice of words from which they could select appropriate words describing their relationship with their mentor teacher. The response is tabulated in Table 4.3 as follows:

Table 4.3 Tabulated response to ‘relationship’ words

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS OFFERED	POSITIVE RESPONSE	NEGATIVE RESPONSE
ROLE MODEL	13	3
ENCOURAGER	15	1
FRIEND	8	8
COUNSELLOR	5	11
MENTORING AND GUIDANCE	9	7
CONFIDANT	5	11
INTERESTED IN YOUR STUDY MODULES	8	8
LENT A LISTENING EAR	12	4
HELPED YOU REFLECT UPON LESSONS	13	3
INTEREST IN YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH WAS SHOWN	12	4
WILLINGNESS TO EXCHANGE IDEAS	13	3
DEVELOPER OF TALENT	7	9
SENSITIVE ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED (ATTITUDE/STYLE)	7	9

Every student-teacher intern, except 1 (A3), felt that their mentor had also been their encourager. The quality of 'encourager' scored the highest number of affirmations from the respondents. Both the qualities of 'counsellor' and 'confidant' tied in scoring the lowest scores. Only 5 student-teacher interns saw their mentor teachers fulfilling this role. Both of these roles encompass a much more personal level of involvement, as does the quality of 'friend', which scored 8 out of 16.

Thirteen of the 16 respondents considered their mentor teachers as role models, being willing to exchange ideas and being available and willing to assist the intern teacher to reflect upon his or her lesson.

Twelve of the 16 respondents reacted positively to the suggestion that their mentor teacher was interested in their personal growth and would lend a listening ear. M11 noted: *she [mentor teacher] helped me grow and reach my potential as a teacher.*

Just over half of the respondents, 9 out of 16, felt that their relationship with their mentor teacher was one of mentoring and guidance. Exactly half the number of respondents, 8 of 16, saw their mentor teacher as a friend and as someone who took an interest in their studies.

Seven of the 16 respondents affirmed that they could describe their relationship with their mentor teacher as one that developed talent and one where they were able to discuss sensitive issues. ME2 recorded the following: *my teacher was always willing to help in any way possible.* TM7 added: *All the words I circled [on the questionnaire] say it all.* JA13 further wrote: *My teachers have been so helpful and have made me feel very special and appreciated.* T1 added the following comment to add to the positive response she felt towards the internship programme [] *does an incredible job – she manages to keep both [PS's] interests and the interest of the intern at heart.*

The student-teacher interns were asked to indicate, from a given list of activities, which particular activities they were personally involved in, Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Tabulated response to the activities that the student-teacher intern was involved in

Activity	Positive Response	Negative Response
<u>Knowledge</u>		
<i>Term Planning</i>	7	9
<i>General Discussion</i>	7	9
<i>Staff meetings</i>	16	-
<i>Parent Teacher Meetings</i>	Nil	16
<i>Mentoring Meetings</i>	16	-
<u>Skills</u>		
<i>Strategies</i>	8	8
<i>Staff tea</i>	13	3
<i>Extra-Curricular Activities</i>	13	3
<i>Saturday Involvement</i>	14	2
<i>Break Duties</i>	13	3

All 16 student-teacher interns indicated that they were involved in the weekly mentoring meetings.

Fourteen student-teacher interns indicated that they had been involved in school activities on a Saturday. They are all expected to commit to one gala and one athletics meeting a year. These take place on a Saturday. PS is also involved in inter-school sport. These inter-school sport commitments take place on either a Friday or Saturday at a local stadium in Durban City.

Extracurricular commitment is a requirement of the intern programme. The student-teacher interns were, in so far as possible, placed where they felt most comfortable and a good mix of cultural and sporting activities were offered. The student-teacher interns in the preschool were not required to offer up their time in extracurricular activities as JA13 pointed out that *being in the Preschool, there are no extracurricular activities or break duties or tea times. During break you stay with your class while they eat [their packed lunch].*

Staff tea times take place twice daily. Staff gather in a central staff room and it is a social time for all. The student-teacher interns were made to feel welcome in this area.

Thirteen student-teacher interns indicated that they were included in staff tea times at break, had performed break duties together with a permanent staff member and had extracurricular commitments.

Break duties entailed being on the field amongst the learners during break time. This was to keep a watchful eye on the learners and be available should anything happen that required intervention by an adult. The student-teacher intern was always accompanied by a full-time staff member.

Eight of 16 student-teacher interns responded positively to being involved in the skill of strategies/planning of classroom activities. Seven of 16 responded positively to being made part of term planning sessions with the permanent staff. The same number of student-teacher interns, 7 of 16, reported that they were privy to discussions regarding barriers to learning evident within the class they were spending their year in.

None of the student-teacher interns were part of discussions that took place during parent/teacher meetings. The student-teacher intern was introduced to the class parents and their role in the class was explained but they had no one-on-one interaction with the parents. This interaction was not encouraged as many of the student-teacher interns were young and inexperienced. They are also not qualified to discuss learner progress or lack thereof with parents.

J16 added a comment to question 12: [We were] *given opportunities to attend courses to enrich our experience as a [intern] teacher*. PS did offer to pay for student-teacher interns, along with permanent staff members, to attend teaching courses, especially those offered by NAPTOSA.

The student-teacher interns were asked to comment on changes they may like to see made regarding the intern programme.

Two of the 16 respondents (JA13 and TR4) indicated that this question was not applicable to them. Eight of the 16 responded that the programme was running smoothly and they were happy with the way in which it was administered. C14 said: *I honestly feel that everything works perfectly as is and nothing needs to change*. T1 responded by saying: *The intern programme has been of tremendous benefit to me. I am grateful to be involved*. Th15 responded as follows: *I have really enjoyed the intern programme and the intern programme and there is nothing that I would change*. J16 offered: *None, I find that the intern programme runs smoothly and effectively*. S5 felt that *more funding [was needed] in order to help those [of us] who are struggling financially*. K8 wanted to have a *better possibility of promotion* and also indicated that he would have liked to have seen *more involvement from interns who shy away from responsibility*. L10, JS12 and A3 agreed in their comments: L10: *Interns should be placed according to their level of practical teaching, for example first and second year intern teachers should be placed in the Preschool*. JS12 went on to say that intern teachers need to be placed *where the practicals apply*. A3's words were: *I feel it necessary to be placed in the age [foundation or intermediate phase] that corresponds with the year of [the ODL] practical*. M11 mentioned that she *would like to see more involvement in the term planning*. A3 added a point that she numbered point 2 in which she wanted *no sport for interns, it is far too time-consuming – time is vital for study hours*.

The questionnaire also determined what the student-teacher intern considered to be the most beneficial aspect during their time of internship at PS. All 16 respondents replied with one or more positive comments. Most agreed that the practical exposure to everyday teaching and the observing of various teachers and their teaching styles was what they considered to be most beneficial. JS12 said that *exposure to the classroom of three amazing teachers, being able to observe their [teaching] styles, methods and management first hand* was most valuable. TM7 added *I was able to interact and learn good teaching methods and classroom management, especially in a school that doesn't use my mother-tongue [as the language of instruction]. I've also improved my fluency and knowledge in the language [English] used at PS*. C14 recorded that *being able to watch how to teach a class and how to*

handle different or difficult situations and having the mentor teacher guide me and give me some ideas made the programme a beneficial one.

TR4 noted that she *discovered [her own] style of teaching*. She was then able to recognise her style and understand that her teaching style would not engage all learners in the learning process. She realised she would have to adopt other teaching styles from time to time in order to appeal to all the different learning styles in the class for example auditory learners, visual learners, tactile or kinaesthetic learners.

It was important and in line with this research to discover what benefit the student-teacher intern derived, from a personal point of view, by being part of the internship programme. Most reported an increase in self-confidence and sense of responsibility. The response also indicated that learning to deal with learners in an age-appropriate manner also rated high as a benefit. Z9 answered that she had *learned that time is in [her] hands and it depends on [her] – how [she] will use it*. TH15 commented on her learning experience in saying that she had *learned that [preschool] children don't play all day, they do work [as in] building blocks – a skill that leads to learning of other things*. A benefit for S5 was as follows: *[Internship] taught me how to deal with certain situations whether it be with an individual [child] or a group of children*. K8 felt that the benefits he derived included: *patience, respect and self-control*.

The student-teacher interns were also asked to comment on any situation that arose that they felt was worth a mention. Eleven out of 16 responded that there was no situation to report on. Five student-teacher interns did report various situations they felt needed mentioning. J16 described her added responsibility she felt on a particular day in this comment *my teacher was absent once and I had the responsibility to take the class for the day*. TR4 shared her personal upset she experienced on a particular day when *a boy in my class caused me to become really upset and cry in front of the class*. L10 helped us understand her frustration she felt when *there was an issue of having to stay late to perform tasks which the teacher wanted done – [this] was not previously discussed [with me] in this case it was last minute laminating*. Another frustration was felt by ME2, a PGCE student when she *felt overwhelmed trying to fit [her] pracs [formal assessments] in around [her] physical education timetable and [this lead to a] lack of time and experience in the classroom*.

There were mixed responses when interns were asked about mentoring relationships that were developed during their time of internship. There was also a direct relationship between the development of personal relationships and professional development. The interns defined their relationship with their mentor teacher as formal or informal or both. Informal

meant a caring, comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in which they felt motivated and cared for. Most of the interns had had positive and open communication lines with their mentor teachers. They enjoyed the informal places in the school such as the staff tea room, sport field and walking along the corridors back to the classroom. The informality of these areas relaxed the interns and lead to collaboration and positive mentoring relationships.

Overall, the interns believed that an informal, friendly environment of collaboration created positive mentoring relationships. Formal interactions which lacked these qualities were viewed as unsatisfactory.

The general consensus was that the formal relationships in mentoring played a vital role, especially when built on solid communication, as serious discussions and reflective sessions were seen as being constructive and conducive to positive professional development.

The interns pointed out that other possible constraints on relationship-building were possibly age differences, lack of communication, lack of effort of both the intern and the mentor to make an effort to communicate and at times the negative attitudes of both parties.

4.5 DATA PRESENTATION OF THE MENTOR TEACHERS

The ethical considerations as pertaining to the collection of data, was adhered to. No mentor teacher was made to feel obliged to complete the questionnaire. The researcher enjoyed the advantage of being based at the school and so this afforded her the opportunity to clarify any ambiguous or unclear statements that may have been recorded. The confidentiality of the mentor teacher was not breached and pseudonyms were used when personal data was captured. A total number of 15 mentor teachers responded and completed the questionnaire.

The mentor teachers commented on the advantages of hosting an intern teacher in their classroom (Table 4.5). Eight of the 15 mentor teachers agreed that having an extra pair of hands and eyes in the classroom is a great advantage. K expounded on this answer and added that she loved building this relationship and saw it as an opportunity to help *someone else*. S agreed with K saying that she felt *it a privilege to pass on knowledge that [she had taken] for granted*. Her years of teaching meant that she could draw on her experiences and often took her knowledge and expertise for granted. S also felt that the *enthusiasm of the [intern teacher] kept [her] enthused and encouraged*.

J and V enjoyed *watching the student grow in confidence and ability*, J added that she enjoyed the advantage of learning *a few new ideas [when using] the smart board whilst*

teaching. C and V both agreed that an advantage towards the end of the year was feeling confident to leave the class with the intern teacher in charge and attend a meeting.

P and B saw an advantage in that *children requiring extra attention can be helped* [by the intern teacher]. B also felt that more work was covered in a shorter period of time and that her administration and *book marking load* was eased by eliciting the help of the intern teacher. V and B saw an advantage in being able to discuss the children’s behaviour with the intern teacher and so be exposed to a different perspective. V, B and A also enjoyed being able to divide their class into smaller groups and having the intern teacher assist the group with readiness activities.

O enjoyed the advantage of having a 4th year student-teacher intern in her classroom and commented: *she had initiative and I felt very confident to leave my class with her; she was more of an assistant than an intern* [student teacher]; *it was great to form a friendship* [with her].

N expounded that she was *hopefully making a difference in someone’s teaching career*. L agreed with N adding that she enjoyed the input into the life of another. P enjoyed *sharing the* [teaching] *load*.

R viewed it as an advantage to *see the students* [intern teachers] *learn and grow on a daily basis – keeps us on our toes*. K said the *pupils love[d]* [having a] *younger teacher* [student-teacher intern] *and they related well to him*. K also enjoyed the lessons that the student-teacher intern presented.

Table 4.5 Advantages to a mentor teacher of accommodating a student-teacher intern

Extra set of eyes/hands	7
Administration help	4
Observing improvement/growth	5
Being instrumental in growth	2
Building a friendship/relationship	2
Can leave classroom	4
Bring new ideas to old lessons	3
Enjoys valuable support	3
4 th year student confidence	2

There were disadvantages which were encountered whilst mentoring a student-teacher intern (Table 4.6). Four of the 15 respondents viewed the mentoring role as time-consuming. P wrote that *a great amount of effort and time goes into mentoring another*. KC noted that it can take many hours after the school day has finished to help the intern teacher with ideas for their practicum lessons. VB had the following to say...*finding time in a busy, activity-filled morning to mentor completely* [is a disadvantage].

M had an intern teacher that *did not speak or understand English very well and* [as a result] *had to re-do tasks and often had to re-teach a lesson*. M went on to say that it was *time-consuming to teach a first year teacher to teach – even more so with* [there being] *a language barrier*.

Seven of the 15 mentor teachers mentioned that the practical lesson presentation format that the intern teacher is required to present by the ODL institution, is a disadvantage. J made three points along these lines:

- *Disruption of the syllabi to accommodate students' pracs*
- *Children who battle academically really battle with a change of teacher* [referring here to intern teachers presenting lessons]
- *A lesson that needs to be re-taught if children have not understood* [or grasped the concept]

So J viewed the intern teacher as having a negative impact on the learners when it came to the disruptions that may be caused academically. KC agreed with this viewpoint adding that the many practical lessons presented by the ODL students were *very disruptive to the children and took away teaching time with our kids* [own class].

S felt that it was not helpful having an intern teacher in her classroom who was required by university regulations to present her practicum lessons in a grade (class) other than the one in which she was placed. This tended to make S feel *frustrated that I could not help her more in preparation and ideas for her prac lessons*.

O commented in the following manner:

Not many disadvantages at all. With having so many interns [in the school] *there were quite a lot of prac lessons that are quite specific* [university requirements] *and didn't always fit into our theme or curriculum*.

R agreed that there was a *large number of pracs that have to be accommodated*. She expounded saying that the way [the ODL university] *requires lessons to be done [presented] in the preschool is not the way we [at PS] teach, for example our art lessons are never taught with an introduction, etc!*. So R was specifically referring to the [university] practical workbooks that she perhaps felt had unrealistic expectations in certain learning areas.

VB saw finding time in a busy schedule to accommodate practical lesson presentations as a disadvantage.

B saw it necessary to explain most of what was taking place in the classroom, to the student-teacher intern. She felt this *on-going explanation* and lack of initiative on the intern teacher's behalf was a disadvantage of having a student-teacher intern in her classroom.

C commented that the disadvantage of hosting a student-teacher intern is *having an intern who does not show initiative or is not willing to do anything different*. L commented that *sometimes the lack of initiative and commitment frustrated [her]*.

Two mentor teachers B and N felt that their private classroom space was being invaded and that they missed just having the children to themselves without another adult present. B put it this way [the] *most difficult [aspect] is sharing your children*.

P mentioned that the student-teacher intern can be inclined to treat the *children as friends rather than students* and she understood this to mean that the intern teacher did not understand the *fine line* between being a teacher and being a friend to the children in the classroom.

K and V saw no negatives - only positives - in accommodating a student-teacher intern in the classroom for the year.

Table 4.6 Disadvantages of accommodating a student-teacher intern

Lack of time	4
Lack of initiative	3
Invasion of space	2
Lesson presentations	7
Disruption to learners	1
No disadvantage	2

It was investigated whether or not conflict arose between the mentor teacher and the mentee (student-teacher intern). Whether any conflict did arise or not had to be indicated with a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This made it easy to present the results:

YES – 2 (B and P)

NO – 13

The researcher was provided with two answers with regard to how the conflict was dealt with or the situation was resolved:

B explained that it was more about validation and affirmation of the student-teacher intern and how grateful she [B] was to have the extra help in the classroom. B also felt that once expectations, boundaries and responsibilities were discussed and agreed upon, the potential conflict and misunderstanding was resolved without further issue.

P noted that conflict did arise between herself and the student-teacher intern a number of times. This, she explained, was as a result of a lack of clear communication channels and a lack of setting definite boundaries. Once these issues had been clearly addressed all source of conflict was diffused. The intern manager encouraged open, continuous and clear communication at all times as then any potential for misunderstandings can be resolved immediately.

4.6 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

The data was analysed to identify broad themes that emerged from the questionnaires. These themes were clarified, where necessary, by conducting unstructured interviews to gain greater understanding of the subjective views of the participants.

4.6.1 Establishing mentoring relationships

4.6.1.1 Student-teacher interns

All the student-teacher interns expressed the desire for careful steering and guidance during the move from the period in the classroom of initial observation of lessons being taught, to a greater teaching responsibility. Careful direction from the mentor teacher would also circumvent any misunderstandings of expectations that either party may have of the other.

Fifteen student-teacher interns described their relationship with their mentor teacher as being one of guidance and a blend of formal and informal, depending on the situations they were in. For example, interactions outside the classrooms were considered informal in nature as they were sometimes spontaneous and not planned. J16 stated that a lot of mentoring took place in the *casual environment of the staff room, walking along the corridors*

or whilst chatting during the extra-curricular activities and these times she felt to be an invaluable time of sharing knowledge, thoughts and ideas.

The majority of the student-teacher interns in the focus group discussions preferred a mix of formal and informal relationships. Formal contact as T1 commented, *led to serious in-depth discussions and normally a face-to-face and one-on-one meeting* and these times were regarded as valuable and necessary to keep relationships healthy and promoted collaboration and collegiality creating positive mentoring relationships.

On the other hand the student-teacher interns also agreed that an *informal, friendly environment of collegiality was more conducive to effective communication* and JA13 was of the opinion that an informal environment *added to the emotional and professional support leading to a more effective professional mentoring relationship*. This opinion was also shared by the other student-teacher interns.

4.6.1.2 Mentor teachers

Specialised training for mentors, not only with regard to what is required by the ODL institution, but also to familiarise the mentor teacher with the learning material of the student teacher is an issue that was agreed upon by all of the participants. Suggestions included more detailed information being made available by the ODL institution and that the available instructions be simple to follow and understand with definite directives and the expected outcomes.

P commented that *she found it difficult to understand what lessons and how much teaching time her student teacher was required to experience* and this she added, had at times *led to her using the student teacher as a helper to photostat worksheets for long periods during the school day, to babysit the learners and at times just to complete routine administration tasks without actually giving her structured teaching time*. P added that she felt that she needed to *keep the student teacher busy during the school day*.

Constraints on establishing a mentoring relationship were identified by the mentor teachers as possibly being the age differences at times, a lack of communication, student-teacher interns who did not make the effort to approach, communicate or ask advice of their mentor teacher and also sometimes the lack of initiative and the negative attitude of both the student-teacher interns and the mentor teachers.

N had a student teacher that was of a similar age to her and she shared that *the student teacher didn't always take kindly to correction or to being told to try to present the lessons in a different way.*

Four of the 15 mentor teachers were upset by the lack of initiative shown by their respective student-teacher interns. B felt that *her student showed no desire to learn anything and just did the absolute bare minimum to get through her prac (practicum) training.* M felt the lack of initiative from her student teacher stemmed from a cultural difference where *the student almost seemed intimidated by the learners in the classroom and this led to poor interaction with the learners and poor classroom management;* she often had to *re-teach the lessons that had been given by the student teacher.*

Both the mentor teachers and the student-teacher interns agreed that the early stages of this mentoring partnership needed careful direction from the mentor. It must be noted that the mentoring teachers give of their time, effort and availability voluntarily and receive no recognition of their efforts to mentor these student-teacher interns. It emerged from the discussions that this mentor-mentee relationship developed over time with personality traits often coming in to play and the first few weeks of the year were a period of adjustment both professionally and personally for both parties involved in the intern programme.

4.6.2 Availability of the mentor teacher

4.6.2.1 Student-teacher interns

The availability of the mentor teacher was an important component of the success of the intern programme. The student-teacher interns indicated that meeting on a one-to-one basis with the mentor teacher was an important factor in establishing the mentoring relationship.

There was a concern raised by the intern teachers about the frequency with which they were able to find time to discuss lesson plans and classroom management skills with their mentor teacher; 15 of the 16 student-teacher interns indicated that the infrequency with which they met with their mentor teacher did at times lead to a strained relationship. JS12 often felt that *there was hardly ever an appropriate time to discuss any issues arising* with her mentor teacher who always *seemed to be too preoccupied with personal and professional hassles.*

Some student-teacher interns reported that their mentor teachers had gone the *extra mile to communicate with them, encourage them, even using text messages and cell phone calls after school hours to inform them of school happenings or to thank them for their input and support in the classroom.* S5 shared that his mentor teacher *made an effort to support and*

guide [him] to be available and encouraging and to give detailed feedback after each lesson [he] presented.

4.6.2.2 Mentor teachers

The mentor teachers confirmed that they were not always available to their student-teacher interns and 11 of the 15 mentor teachers agreed that the infrequency of these meeting times should not be seen as a problem but rather they are to be seen as a compliment to the student-teacher intern who was seen to be coping well.

Some mentor teachers indicated that they had not fully anticipated the amount of work which the mentoring role would require. Having a student teacher join my class for a few weeks [of the year] from a full-time university is a very different experience from the commitment required in mentoring a student teacher in your classroom every day for a full year (KC)

It was clear that some mentor teachers had not fully anticipated the amount of work which the mentoring role would require and they mentioned that it was more time-consuming than the more traditional teaching practice requirements.

4.6.3 Concerns about classroom management

4.6.3.1 Student-teacher interns

Intern teachers expressed their concerns about managing the learners in a classroom situation and recognised that classroom management is a significant issue especially during the times planned for lesson delivery. C14 felt that *to maintain a teaching environment it is essential to be strict. I do not want to come across as being too friendly and then find it difficult to keep control as the children will see me as their equal (L10). I battle to get the children to be quiet and listen to me when I speak....I think this is just plain bad manners.....when I speak I want them to be quiet (Z9).*

TM7 felt that being an English second language speaker made her more vulnerable to being criticised as the learners would *make fun of (my) pronunciation of the words* and at times they did just simply *not understand what she was trying to say*. TM7 went on to say that because the classroom is made up of predominantly white, English-speaking learners, she felt *out of (my) depth at times and battled with the difference in cultures*.

4.6.3.2 Mentor teachers

The mentor teachers expressed their concern regarding classroom management by the student-teacher intern, but also agreed that this was an area of teaching that definitely

developed over a period of time. They regarded it as one area that could *not be taught to the students but rather was discussed and learned during times of reflective practice after a lesson had been presented.*

An area of particular concern to 8 of the mentor teachers was the *familiarity* that seemed to develop between the learner and the student-teacher intern – *especially where the student was quite young having just recently completed their own school career.*

This familiarity was often a point of discussion during the weekly mentor meetings chaired by the mentor manager of the group of student-teacher interns. The students were encouraged to be firm, fair and friendly but also to always keep definite boundaries in place with regard to how the learner may address and approach the student teacher.

P explained that *re-establishing control in the classroom after the student teacher had been teaching* caused her concern – she clarified this comment by adding that *the learners did not always all respond positively to being taught by a student teacher who was in their first year with very little experience of how to manage a class of learners.*

Classroom management is an area that is enhanced by personal confidence in teaching and in lesson delivery together with teaching skills. It is an area that can be improved upon and often does as time goes by and the student teacher develops their own teaching style and mannerisms in managing the learners in his or her care.

4.6.4 Teaching observation and assessment

4.6.4.1 Student-teacher interns

The main purpose of student-teacher interns observing the mentor teachers is to give the students the opportunity to see teaching in context, to gain knowledge and ideas on teaching and to allow them time to observe the workings of that particular classroom. The time of observation is not intended as a time for the student teacher to assess or evaluate the mentor teacher in any way whatsoever.

In PS the learners change classrooms when attending specialist lessons, for example, music or Zulu lessons. The student-teacher intern is encouraged to move with the class and so be exposed to different teaching styles. Most student-teacher interns took advantage of this opportunity. K8 commented that *observing lessons in this school became quite boring as I sat and did nothing and the extra-ordinary never happened.* S5 on the other hand, enjoyed the times of observing lessons and felt confident to put into practice what he had observed:

I became more confident in trying out different teaching techniques and styles. I watched how my mentor teacher dealt with disruptive children who needed extra input. It also gave me an opportunity to observe the children in the class and see which of them may have presented a challenge when I was ready to teach the class.

All the student-teacher interns agreed that passive observation over a lengthy period of time became very boring and that they preferred being engaged with lessons even those that they were not presenting but where they were given a *job by their mentor teacher*. Examples given were sourcing information on the topic to be presented or facilitating learners during group work.

All 16 student-teacher interns agreed that their practicum teaching time is a time of great stress and a lot of hard work. They also agreed that being in the classroom as an intern and getting to know the learners by name assisted greatly in the success of their lesson delivery.

T1 found the weighting of the practical element of her BEd Degree (Foundation Phase) in her second year was *overwhelming and the [ODL institution] was very prescriptive in what they required me to teach and to which class I had to present that particular lesson*. Th15 commented that teaching practice *required me to sit with my mentor teacher and to plan the lesson together and then I would make time to proactively gather information, make worksheets and use a variety of sources to make my lesson a fun learning experience*.

4.6.4.2 Mentor teachers

Some mentor teachers initially resisted the idea of being observed by their student-teacher intern for fear of being judged. The other concern, as voiced by K, was that he had been teaching for so many years that to change his style to accommodate the prescriptions given to a student involved in initial teacher education would cause him great anxiety. In other words, he explained, he did not want to be made to feel that he did not comply with the latest education documents (CAPS).

Another group of mentor teachers did not mind being observed whilst teaching and felt that it made no difference to their method of delivering a lesson whether another adult was present in the classroom or not. S shared that she felt excited to share her knowledge and expertise in teaching and all that she had learned through the years with a student teacher.

The assessment of practicum lessons presented by the student-teacher intern had the mentor teachers agreeing that the students needed to be proactive and enthusiastic and gather all the information they needed to achieve their stated competencies in the practicum assessment. Three of the mentor teachers (L, C, J) added that *it felt as though the student*

teacher was waiting to be spoon-fed and to be given the lesson plan and the corresponding worksheet...there was no initiative or ideas forthcoming...nothing like when we studied all those years ago and we had to do all the planning and preparation for every lesson we presented.

Eight mentor teachers (VB, P, B, A, O, S, V, K) had this to say:

The students were excited to present their practicum lessons; they had some wonderful ideas and some ideas that had to be toned down as they were too elaborate and time-consuming; the lessons presented on the smart board were amazing and I learned so much about how to use that board more effectively.

It would seem that the time of teaching observation, teaching practice lesson presentation and assessment of lessons is a time of stress and anxiety for both the mentor teacher and the student-teacher intern. Time constraints, self-confidence, classroom management and lesson presentation all feature high on the agenda.

4.6.5 Learning whilst being in the school (PS) for a year

4.6.5.1 Student-teacher interns

It was agreed by all 16 intern teachers that the internship route of ODL education was an excellent way to study to become a teacher. They all agreed that the daily exposure to the workings of a good school prepared them for excellent teaching. Another point that the intern teachers placed a lot of value upon was the fact that once they were qualified they would have the confidence to accept a full-time position at a school and confidently add value to that school bringing with them all they had learnt.

Understandings emerging from this point (4.6.5) of the discussion were gradually identified and developed and the following bulleted points indicate what the student-teacher interns found valuable about being immersed into the learning culture of PS:

- Observing lessons – both by their particular mentor teacher and other teachers
- Discussing teaching strategies with teachers
- Observing teachers deal with managing learners and problems related to learning

- Being exposed to the extra lessons given to learners who needed extra academic input (the mentor manager arranged for the student-teacher interns to spend a period of time in the centre designed to help learners overcome various barriers to learning)
- Being part of the curriculum planning meetings and observing how the curriculum is presented practically and in compliance with OBE and the CAPS documents
- Experiencing an environment in which the student teacher can comfortably try out new teaching strategies, experiment and possibly falter in delivery; permission to practice teaching without the fear of failing and to be guided and given encouragement; to have practical feedback on their teaching style and their management of the class
- Times of reflecting on their lesson presentation and the discussion thereof with their mentor teacher and gaining insight into possible improvements in lesson delivery that could be made
- Being exposed to a variety of teaching styles, strategies and resources and lessons that included group work, role play, investigation, inquiry and discussion
- Bringing together theory and practice, enhancing professionalism and giving greater opportunities for reflective practice
- Experiencing the sustained support of the staff of PS – be that in the cultural or sporting arena or academically

4.6.5.2 Mentor teachers

The mentor teachers also learned much by having a student teacher in their class for a year and this was evident in the comments that were made. These teachers particularly appreciated having an extra pair of hands and eyes in the classroom, especially in the Preschool and Foundation Phase classes. Another asset to having extra help in the classroom was being able to create two reading groups and have supervision for both simultaneously saving time and creating a forum to allow each learner to read aloud and be heard individually. Another positive to hosting a student teacher was being able to team the student teacher with a particular learner who needed individual input on an on-going basis and in so doing relieving the teacher to attend to matters concerning the whole class. Having the extra staff available on sport days, gala days, inter-school sport days and for afternoon extra curricula activities served the school well. Student-teacher interns were also used

together with the full-time staff for break duties and before and after school times for duties at the various entrances to the school.

Teachers perceived their own professional development as having been influenced positively as a result of supervising a student-teacher intern in the learning of new teaching techniques and methods, particularly being exposed to the latest teaching trends and what was required in theory by the OBE and CAPS documents. Observing technology (the smart board in particular) being used to its full capacity by youngsters who are far more technologically inclined in this day and age was also seen as an asset.

Teachers felt a sense of professional validation and personal satisfaction in watching their student-teacher intern grow and learn as a result of their expertise and they enjoyed the energy, enthusiasm and youthful vibrancy that were generally created by hosting student-teacher interns.

The general consensus amongst the mentors and their mentees was that the intern programme added value to the school, the classroom, sport field and staffroom.

4.7 SUB-THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

4.7.1 Training requirements and specific tasks of the mentor teacher

The research findings suggest that teachers want to be prepared to mentor a student-teacher intern and the lack of training to successfully fulfil this role proved to be frustrating for some. Some data also indicates that what the role of a mentor teacher encompasses is unclear. P commented that *she found it difficult to understand what lessons and how much teaching time her student teacher was required to experience*. KC mentioned that *he wished there were more specific guidelines on the exact amount of teaching time the student teacher is required to teach* (this is dependent on which year of study the student is completing).

The mentoring of student-teacher interns should be done by experienced classroom teachers who are innovative and have a passion for education. The words *mentor* and *role model* should be interchangeable as the mentor teacher endeavours to guide, reflect upon and coach the student teacher as part of the mentoring role. Suggestions for criteria include experience, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and the process and content of

mentoring training should be determined by the goals of the mentoring programme and the context within which it operates (Ganser 2002:380-385).

In South Africa there is no mandate that requires teachers who are interested in supervising student-teacher interns to receive specific training or specific detailing of the tasks to be undertaken by the mentoring teacher. UNISA open and distance learning (ODL) offers the following mentor training course - '*Short Course in Mentoring, Guidance and Support of Teachers and Trainers (71013)*' (UNISA) to be completed over the period of a year and most other ODL institutions offer a mentor training course. The practicum booklets given to student teachers also contain information directed at the mentor teacher regarding the way in which a lesson, presented by the student teacher, should be observed and assessed. A well-structured mentoring programme should facilitate professional development, personal development and empowerment, promote diversity and provide on-going support.

As seen in this study, a team approach was used in the administering of the internship programme, which included the student-teacher intern, the mentor teacher and the mentor manager who headed up the programme.

The data reveals the specific roles that the mentor teacher is required to fulfil, encompassing the following:

- Friend
- Counsellor
- Encourager
- Guide
- Supervisor and assessor
- Role model

The specific tasks of the mentor teacher [4.2.1.8 The professional team] encompasses the following broad aspects:

- Orientation of the student teacher into the school environment
- Lesson planning and instruction and the implementation thereof
- Evaluation and reflection upon teaching time
- Investing into the professional development of the student-teacher intern.

4.7.2 Time allocated to mentoring

To provide optimum mentoring support, mentors need to be readily accessible to their student-teacher interns throughout the programme. The findings show that the degree of availability of the teacher mentors had an impact on the development of the mentoring relationship. During informal group discussions the student-teacher interns indicated that meeting face-to-face with their mentor teachers frequently was an almost *impossible task*.

In theory, the once-a-week meeting between the student-teacher intern and the mentor teacher did not materialise on a regular basis. These meetings were intended to create opportunities to plan together and discuss problems together and to provide regular consultation and assistance. They did seem to take place but on an *ad hoc* basis as they were needed.

Various reasons were given for this lack of time including *heavy workloads, parent-teacher meetings, sport commitments and learners requiring extra academic input*. The mentor teacher received no regular release from their timetabled teaching times to be able to allocate time to be available to their student intern. This time had to be *made* or *found* in-between lessons, during break or after school hours.

4.7.3 Official mentoring recognition or incentive

The data revealed that the mentor teachers received no incentive to mentor student teachers. Incentives in this scenario might include a lessening of the teaching load, less sport commitments, increased recognition on staff, or a monetary incentive. The general consensus at PS was that the mentor teacher should be grateful to have an extra pair of hands and eyes in the classroom and that should be seen as incentive enough.

The only official recognition that was obvious in PS, was that of the mentor manager as she undertook all the responsibilities of the mentoring programme – these included interviewing prospective student-teacher interns wanting to be a part of the intern programme, the placing of these students and all the logistics concerning exam time-off, practicum assessments and any other elements pertaining to the management of the programme.

4.8 SUB-CONCLUSION

Both the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers perceived that mentoring support is crucial in the mentoring programme. Mentoring support includes all aspects of mentoring functions: classroom practice including teaching techniques, strategies, content, lesson planning and familiarity with school culture and policies; teaching resources; classroom management skills; observing mentors teaching and collaborative teaching (team teaching) and peer-mentoring among the teacher trainees.

Student-teacher interns reported that those mentors demonstrating positive attitudes, commitment and dedication in their roles and responsibilities, were very willing to provide assistance and mentoring support when asked.

Interestingly most of the student-teacher interns in this study, wanted to be fully involved in all aspects of school life. This involvement included school staff meetings, phase meetings, sport events in which the school was involved or hosted, planning sessions and discussions around curriculum development. Only two of the student-teacher interns (L10 and TR4) expressed the opinion that there *was plenty of time* to become fully involved in school life once they were qualified. They argued that the time of internship was *not a time to become stressed or overcommitted*.

Most of the mentees and the mentors claim to have gained significantly from this mentoring programme, both professionally and personally. In the process of this development, the intern teachers were able to utilise their mentor's knowledge of content and pedagogical experiences and most mentees and mentors learned to work collaboratively and collegially. Intern teachers were generally welcomed and made to feel comfortable and were integrated into the school environment.

The major constraints identified during the implementation of the intern mentoring programme were factors such as limited time, over-commitment to school activities, negative personal qualities and attitudes of both the mentees and mentors. Availability of the mentor teachers was mentioned across all categories of the intern programme and was an important factor in the overall success of this year of internship at PS. It was recorded that mentor teachers were often not available because of other commitments and time constraints. This meant that the frequency and length of discussions in planning and reflection were reduced with negative consequences, for example, resulting in misunderstandings as a result of miscommunication.

Most of the student-teacher interns and their mentors were able to achieve effective communication and build relationships during this intern programme. They believed that communicative interpersonal skills were crucial to effective relationships. Along with such skills, positive attitudes, mutual respect and trust, and acknowledgement of each other's contributions were aspects mentioned here. Initiative and considerable effort by both the intern teachers and their mentors are important in building and sustaining rapport. A favourable environment was also instrumental here and most of the mentoring relationships in the intern programme were effective.

Peer support is seen as a positive experience for most of the student-teacher interns in this intern programme. It was found that peer mentoring was effective in providing extra mentoring support and that peer mentoring allowed them to express their feelings and opinions to one another.

The mentor teachers encouraged the intern teachers to maximise their strengths, improve on their weaknesses, up-grade their teaching ability, to use their intuition to anticipate situations in the classroom and their analytical abilities to solve problems in their teaching. Joint reflection encouraged both the mentor teachers and their mentees to self-reflect on teaching practices and classroom management.

4.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the data analysis was presented. The discussion engaged in from 4.4 to 4.5 highlighted issues of data presentation and the discourse on its analysis. The data collected from the instruments were presented and subsequently discussed with reference to the original research question.

Chapter 5 that follows gives the summary of findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations as generated by the empirical investigation conducted in chapter four.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Learning to teach, as we all know but often fail to remember, is a complex, bewildering and sometimes painful task. It involves developing a practical knowledge base, changes in cognition, developing interpersonal skills and also incorporates an affective aspect (Maynard and Furlong 1994:69)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the results and the findings of the empirical investigation. This chapter includes an introduction, followed by the problem statement, the conclusions, limitations, recommendations and contributions.

The background to this study has as its foundation an investigation into the student-teacher intern and mentoring programme and its implementation within a school context (PS) in Kwa-Zulu Natal, during the course of internship. Of particular interest to the researcher, is exploring what impact the experience had on the intern teachers and what might have facilitated or impeded their professional development.

It was the intention of this study to gain a better understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of student-teacher interns spending their time in a school whilst studying towards their BEd or PGCE through ODL. The responsibilities they are given and their involvement in the everyday functioning of a school should efficiently prepare the student teacher in a practical way for their first year of teaching their own class.

The strength of this student-teacher intern programme lies in the relationship developed between the school and the student-teacher interns and the learning gained by participating in such a venture. On the whole the student-teacher interns appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the internship programme and learnt much from the experience. It would be interesting in the following years to investigate the effect this programme has had on these students as they move into the world of the qualified teacher with their own class of learners.

The subjective analysis and interpretation are a means to present to the reader, after vast amounts of data were reduced and themes identified, a holistic picture guided by a conceptual framework of what the findings mean, given the purpose of this study as understood by the researcher and based on the consulted literature.

The problem statement investigated in this case study was divided into a number of sub-problems and therefore the conclusion will be drawn from these diverse perspectives. The findings related to the main aim of this study, indicate both positive and negative experiences for the student-teacher interns and for the mentor teachers. The study was guided by the following problem statement:

5.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Can ODL teacher education be improved upon with an internship programme whereby student teachers are placed in the school environment and mentored by experienced school-based mentor teachers?

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research methodology had a wide range of limitations. An obvious limitation of this study is that it is very specific in its geographical location, is site specific and the student teacher participants are those that are part of the student-teacher intern programme for the year during which this research was conducted and is based at a local school (PS). There is also a possibility that the researcher's potential bias could affect the collection of data and analysis thereof. The researcher has worked with student-teacher interns for over 8 years and there is the possibility that this might have led to being too involved with the process and the people concerned to be able to interpret the findings and make recommendations objectively. Care was taken to reduce any bias during collection of the data and the analysis process by conducting follow-up interviews with the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers in cases where there was any doubt about the meaning of what they said in the recorded answers to their questions. Triangulation was used for the purpose of cross-validation between the open-ended questionnaires, the informal discussion times and observation of the intern teachers and their mentor teachers as they went about their day-to-day business in the school. This case study was also conducted at a private school serving an affluent and predominantly English-speaking, upmarket population. Choosing the student-

teacher interns of a specific year also determined the limited duration of the case study and posed various time constraints upon the research. The research sample was relatively small and all of the participants are known to the researcher. The researcher does not believe that this familiarity precluded any of the participants from responding in an honest and not necessarily expected manner.

Keeping in mind that the researcher is the operating instrument in this study, the ethics and credibility of the qualitative methods used relied primarily on the ability and the competence of the researcher. The skills and ethics of the researcher helped to ensure the quality and meaningfulness of the data collection, and an accurate interpretation of the results. The purposeful selection of the participants assisted the researcher in providing a range of responses from the chosen student-teacher interns. The open-ended questionnaire results and the informal group discussions produced rich, in-depth data that informed the research questions and added positively to the literature. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:211) point out that data collection by means of questionnaires also pose a number of possible limitations namely that there could be biased or ambiguous items, the rate of response by the participants may be slow, it could prove difficult to score open-ended items and there may be the inability to probe and clarify any responses that were recorded.

5.4 AIMS OF CHAPTER 5

The following questions which directed this study have drawn conclusions:

- Through a literature review the main and various other aspects of internships and teacher training, both locally and abroad, were investigated
- An investigation was conducted in a local school (PS) to determine what had already been achieved by the existing intern programme
- Whether there were any benefits to the mentor teachers and to the student-teacher interns embarking upon an internship at the selected school (PS)

5.5 THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The literature reviewed revealed the diversity of meanings attached to and the importance of an *internship*, especially in education. Perraton (2000:58-63) and Pimm and Selinger (1995:47-56) agree that ODL plays an important role in the training of teachers, mainly in the provision of further teacher education as a means of addressing the shortage of highly qualified teachers.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature referring to countries where student teachers were integrated in pre-service teaching programmes. This was found to be common practice in the teaching profession and thus mentor teachers mentoring student teachers is a common phenomenon practiced in a number of other countries. The question is whether this mentoring and internship programme can be successfully implemented in South Africa with local schools becoming fully involved in providing facilities to host student teachers for a year or more.

5.6 IMPACT OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME ON A LOCAL SCHOOL (PS)

The overall impact of the intern programme was varied but generally positive for both the student-teacher interns and the mentor teachers. The student-teacher interns extended the range of their instructional strategies and skills, their lesson planning skills and their classroom management skills. Most student-teacher interns agreed that their positive development in these professional areas was due to the support and advice provided by the mentor teachers in their roles as guide and advisor, and their pedagogical experience. The student-teacher interns also gained in their ability to use resources as aids to instruction and in their knowledge and understanding of the school's culture and policies. Intern teachers showed an ability to be more self-reliant, self-critical, and reflective, and acted in a more autonomous way as they gained confidence during their year of internship.

There were, however, some negative experiences that were reported, namely varying degrees of frustration and anxiety, particularly in the initial part of their year of internship. Communication with their mentor teachers also proved unsatisfactory in certain instances.

Professionally, the mentor teachers also gained from the programme in development of insights into their own teaching and classroom management style, their use of questioning and becoming aware of different types of learner, for example a visual learner or an auditory learner. They also gained in self-awareness, communication skills, the use of positive reinforcement, relationship building, interpersonal skills and in specific skills and techniques in approaching and working with individual student-teacher interns.

5.7 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPACT OF THE INTERN PROGRAMME

A number of factors contributed to or constrained the effectiveness of the student-teacher intern programme and its impact on the teaching profession. These factors emerged as the

programme proceeded and the complexity of these factors will become apparent as they are discussed under the following headings:

5.7.1 Time constraints

The availability of mentor teachers for planning discussions, teaching observation and reflective practice was a major factor in the internship programme. Half of the student-teacher interns spoke of limitations in this area: of lack of time for such activities, limited availability in the mentoring process and school activities and other demands on the mentor's time were given as reasons for their limited availability in the mentoring process.

5.7.2 Collaboration

One of the major factors contributing to the success of this programme is the collaboration between the qualified mentor teacher and the student-teacher interns. In this study the provision of teaching resources varied, with most of the mentor teachers sharing their resources with the student-teacher intern. Most of the student-teacher interns were able to develop their teaching knowledge and skills and improve their performance while teaching and collaborating with their mentors. One of the great strengths of most mentoring programmes, according to Gay (1994:6) is the *voluntary commitment of dedicated individuals; expertise and experience in teaching and mentoring and effective communication.*

Not all mentor teachers practiced collaborative teaching as most teachers are accustomed to teaching alone. This is consistent with the study done by Hall, Draper, Smith and Bullough (2008:238) where collaborative teaching (team teaching) was only viewed by a few mentor teachers to be important. Through the collaboration, both the mentor teachers and student-teacher interns seemed to have gained both personally and professionally.

5.7.3 Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring became an important part of the programme as it provided much needed support. Peer mentoring extended beyond mere sharing of resources to include collaboration in planning and reflection, in counselling and psychological support through motivation and positive reinforcement. A study by Britton (2006:115) indicates that peer mentoring support provides more 'powerful comfort' to mentees than the support offered by mentors.

5.7.4 Recognition

A number of mentor teachers indicated that more formal recognition of their time and effort should be acknowledged by either the ODL institution or the host school, PS. This could take the form of a document (certificate) or remuneration or academic accreditation. This process would make the mentor teachers feel more acknowledged, honoured and valued as professionals thereby increasing and reinforcing their commitment to the intern programme.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are aimed at contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of teachers-in-training placed in good schools where they can be immersed in the teaching culture and develop a passion for generating life-long learning in the school children of South Africa.

5.8.1 General recommendations and a model for a student-teacher intern programme and the development of mentoring schools

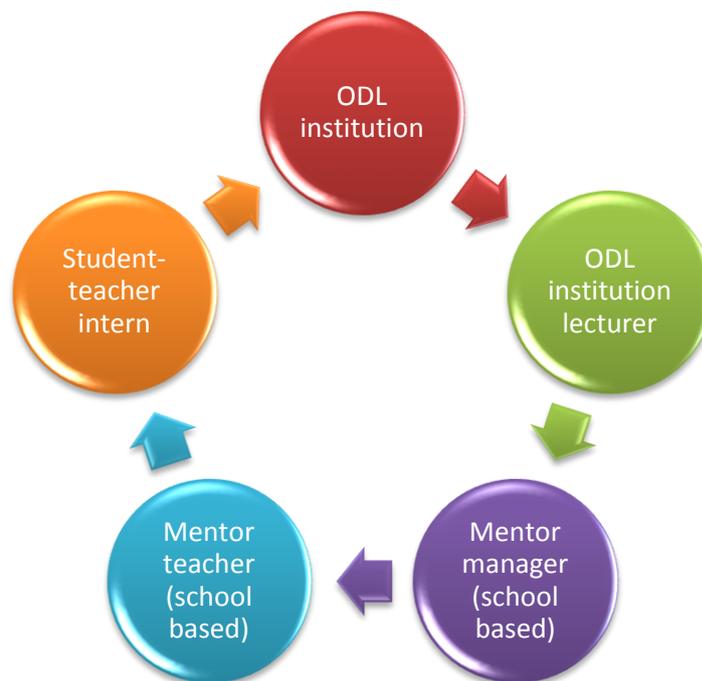
Thus upon much reflection and appraisal of the system of obtaining a degree in education through ODL, and the advantage of school-based internships, it has become increasingly clear to the researcher and the management team at PS that there is a need for a well-developed and attainable model of internship. An appropriate internship model could be expanded to include all schools and would be of huge practical benefit to all student teachers fulfilling their compulsory practicum requirements.

The following general recommendations should be considered to bring about an improvement in the management of student teachers studying through ODL. A local model for an internship programme hosted by a local school is also highlighted. As depicted in the figure 5.1, a proposed model of distance teacher education for ODL institutions, a closer liaison should be maintained between all the parties involved in the initial education and training of student teachers. The mutual accountability of the school, the ODL institution and the student teacher should ensure that distance education and training for teachers remains meaningful and adds value to their experience. Also developing teaching practice guidelines which have been co-constructed by representatives from the schools, the student teachers, mentor teachers, and the ODL Institution would be in line with the notion of a community of practice and potentially serve as a basis for ensuring that a critical conversation takes place.

The enormous contribution that mentoring teachers make to the teaching profession and teacher education programmes each year, needs greater public attention and recognition.

An internship programme that is co-developed by all the role players, is one in which the participants see themselves as an integral part in contributing to the guidance and development of excellent teachers.

Figure 5.1 A proposed model of distance teacher education for ODL institutions



In view of the literature study, the analysis of the interviews and observation, and the conclusion of this study, the researcher wishes to suggest a workable model that would be suitable for ODL institutions that offer distance teacher education in South Africa. This model would include university supervisors, from the ODL institution, working closely with mentor teachers, and together supporting the student teachers and visiting the school sites often (Beck and Kosnik 2000:207-224). Such a partnership may offer and function as *a form of shared purpose and commitment, joint inquiry, expanded guidance in professional development, shared power and may generate closer ties between schools and universities* (Mullen and Lick 1999:271). Bradbury and Koballa (2008:2143) also indicate that university lecturers or supervisors can serve as *mediators who help facilitate discussions that promote clear articulations of the expectations* to foster mentoring relationships and communication, to strengthen and expand the ODL institution-school partnerships.

The mentor teacher is also seen to play a pivotal role in developing an enabling environment which will encourage imaginative and critical conversation. The mentor teacher holds the key to establishing conditions in which the student teacher can learn and is seen as the collaborative partner in the development of the internship programme and needs to be acknowledged as being pivotal. Roberts (2000:145-170) in his phenomenological reading of the literature on mentoring, points out that the *initiative lies with the mentor in making the relationship work*.

There is a duality in the relationship – it is mentor (teacher) driven yet learner (student teacher) centred. Barab, Barnett and Squire (2002:489-542) are of the opinion that *the crux of learning is actualized in the process of creation itself* and so can be explored by examining the learning accrued by the participants who play a major role in the co-development of the internship programme – something this study has endeavoured to do.

5.8.2 Recommendations for current student-teacher interns studying through ODL

The results of this case study indicate that the intern teachers who were part of the year of internship, learned much, enjoyed the hands-on experience and would recommend this experience to others. It would be a major undertaking and not a workable one to ensure that all student teachers studying towards their BEd or PGCE through ODL spend at least one year of their degree in a local school completing a year of internship. This is not entirely conceivable as South Africa is desperately short of well-functioning schools serving the community at large.

The South African educational system does not make an internship a viable option as there is no funding available to offer schools should they choose to house a student-teacher intern. Most former model C schools do not have sufficient funding to employ the correct number of full-time staff members, let alone pay for intern teachers still needing to complete their degree. The ETDP SETA could provide funding for a properly administered and functioning department that would serve schools and make funds available to enable schools to host an internship programme.

The current student teachers should enjoy a whole school experience rather than just an individual classroom or two for a five-week time of practicum a year. Observing teaching and presenting the required practicum lessons in a number of different classrooms would expose the student teacher to various teaching and learning styles and thus encourage the student to experiment and develop a critical, progressive philosophy of teaching and learning.

5.8.3 Recommendations to the Education Department

This study could assist in addressing the challenges of managing distance teacher education in South Africa from a more holistic perspective giving special attention to placing student teachers in well-functioning schools for the duration of their studies.

The year of internship should take place in innovative schools, perhaps schools partnered with the ODL institution in a joint programme of research and teacher development. These schools could be earmarked as mentoring schools and they could be involved in the process of encouraging, nurturing, role-modelling and inspiring our student teachers to continue with their studies until they are fully qualified.

The Education Department could earmark mentor teachers who willingly undertake to complete a mentoring programme and thus monitor and manage the ODL student teachers placed in their school. Zeichner (1996:215-219) supports the view that mentor teachers should not be coerced into their role and that they should be given adequate preparation. These same mentor teachers should *be experienced teachers displaying a critical stance toward their own teaching and that of the student teachers* (Maynard 1996:101).

In partnering with well-functioning schools, a further recommendation is to provide these schools with funding so that the student teachers can be accommodated without the programme becoming a financial liability to the school concerned. This funding together with an additional amount being earmarked for the mentor teacher would be the incentive needed for more schools to become part of the internship teacher-training programme in South Africa.

It might be useful to develop a data base of:

- Ex-student teachers from the intern programme who are willing to serve as mentors to future student teachers-in-training;
- Teachers who have participated in any form of mentoring in the classroom or who might have had professional training in mentoring; and
- Teachers in local schools who are willing to be trained as mentor teachers and to take on the responsibility of mentoring a student teacher.

5.8.4 Recommendations for further research

Despite this study's comprehensive nature, the findings have resulted in further questions concerning the management of ODL teacher education in South Africa as student-teacher interns endeavour to complete their BEd or PGCE Degree.

The following bulleted points highlight considerations for further research:

- A closer liaison between the host school and the higher education ODL institution in initial teacher training
- Government funding of the internship programme – how this would be administered
- Other teacher preparation programmes could be invited to participate in a study thus allowing for comparisons to be drawn, not only across student-teacher groups, but also between the ODL institutions and full-time universities
- Identifying schools that can be earmarked as '*mentoring schools*'
- This study did not address the way(s) classroom learners might have been affected academically as a result of their teachers having mentored and supervised a student-teacher intern for the year

The process of appointing mentor teachers in schools could lead to a whole new arena of study as the following questions would need to be addressed:

- What teaching experience (years of teaching and management experience) would the mentor teacher be required to have?
- What educational qualification should the mentor teacher possess in order to make application to mentor student teachers?
- Where and how would this training be offered to those teachers interested in mentoring student teachers?
- What incentives would be offered to existing teachers to encourage them to be a part of the student teacher mentoring initiative?

5.9 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher has highlighted and described what is being done in a local school to accommodate student teachers studying through an ODL institution. The data shows that the positive experience enjoyed by both the student-teacher interns and the mentor teachers, far outweighs the negatives of the programme.

This study contributes in terms of creating an awareness of what can be implemented in schools so as to enhance the training and development of teachers in training. The study seeks to highlight the many role players that can offer support, the cross-pollination of ideas which takes place and the experiential learning that is enjoyed by the student teacher. This study creates an awareness of the intern programme and may spark a renewal of interest in the initial preparation of teachers in South Africa. Student teachers, who are struggling to study their degree through ODL whilst earning a living by working in an unrelated field, may see the intern programme as an opportunity to become fully immersed in the life of a local school. Financial backing by the ETDP SETA would of course make this option even more attractive to the student.

The consideration may be whether to invest in or place a monetary value on teacher education. In a report submitted to the United Nations Committee on *the Rights of the Child* by the Bernard van Leer Foundation (2004:3) it is proposed that *the test of any investment from an economic perspective is whether the rate of return justifies the expense*. When we consider the cost of teacher education and the fact that many students drop out of the initial teacher education degree due to economic circumstances, we then realise the importance of investing in the future educators of our country and so in turn investing into the lives of our future generations of learners.

5.10 CONCLUDING REMARK

I have discussed the results of the data along with my interpretation of the results, the relevant literature that addresses the topic of research, the implications of an intern programme in a local school and the factors influencing such a programme. This case study concentrated on a student-teacher intern programme based at a particular school (PS). The major components of the study investigated the following aspects: the benefits and disadvantages of the intern programme as experienced by the student-teacher interns, the benefits and disadvantages of such a programme as experienced by the mentor teachers, and the feasibility of studying an education degree through ODL whilst fully involved in the intern programme.

This case study is but a snapshot of how teacher education programmes can prepare effective teachers to teach the current and future learners of our country, South Africa. Teacher education is dictated by the educational system in South Africa, but may fall short in addressing the needs of the student teachers as they endeavour to present their practicum lessons whilst being engaged full-time in a job totally unrelated to teaching.

Should schools offer the student-teacher intern programme together with the support of the ODL institution and the backing of the ETDP SETA, we should attract more students to studying education and should produce more confident, qualified teachers who are well-prepared to enter the classroom and add value to the South African educational process.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR INFORMED CONSENT

I am a Masters student at UNISA and I invite you to participate in my research project. My study focuses on teacher education by means of internship.

For the purposes of my study I will require voluntary participation, by the student-teacher interns and their mentor teachers, in the completing of open-ended questionnaires and to observe informal focus group discussion times. All the information provided by the participants will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity which means that I will not make use of their names anywhere in the course of my fieldwork and writing. You may choose to withdraw from the research process at any stage should you deem this necessary.

If you consent to be part of this research process and agree to allow me to conduct a survey within [PS] please complete the attached form and submit it to me.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Hendrikse



Questionnaire for student-teacher interns involved in school-based teacher education at PS, studying through ODL.

Introduction

This questionnaire is part of a research paper to determine the effectiveness of school-based internships undertaken by undergraduates completing their Bachelor of Education Degree, or PGCE students studying through ODL.

Circle the appropriate answer and give a brief description where it is required.

NB: Your answers will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and your identity will remain anonymous.

Q1. Gender: Male Female

Q2. Title: Mr Mrs Miss Ms

Q3. Age:

Q4. Please indicate which year of study you are in - BEd or PGCE?

 First Second Third Fourth PGCE

Q5. How many years have you been in the intern programme?

Q6. What Grade/Class have you been placed in this year?.....

Q7. Work experience/studies prior to being part of the Intern Programme?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q8. How did you hear about the Intern Programme?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Q9. Why did you choose the Intern Programme and to study through Open Distance Learning in place of attending a contact University/College as a full time student?

Financial constraints

Transport difficulties

Other constraints

Explain.....
.....
.....
.....

Q10. Was there enough time made available by PS for your assignment work?

Yes

No

Explain.....
.....
.....

Q11. Please indicate which of the following list describes your relationship with your mentor teacher:

Role model

Encourager

Friend

Counselor

Mentorship & guidance

Confidant

Interested in your study modules

Lent a listening ear

Helped you reflect upon lessons

Interest in your personal growth was shown

Willingness to exchange ideas

Developer of talent

Sensitive issues were discussed for example your attitude/style

Anything else you wish to add.....

.....
.....
.....

Q12. Please indicate which of the following activities you were involved in:

Knowledge

Term planning

Discussion of barriers to learning evident within that class

Staff meetings

Parent/teacher meetings

Mentoring meetings

Skills

Strategies/planning of classroom management

Staff tea times

Extra curricular activities

Saturday involvement (sport/school functions)

Break duties (once twice thrice) a week?

Anything else you would like to add?.....

.....
.....

.....

Q13. What changes would you like to see take place regarding the Intern Programme?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q14. What has been the most beneficial aspect/s during your time spent completing an internship at PS?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q15. What benefit was derived? (Explain what you learnt/how you grew through these aspects as a training teacher)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Q16. Is there any situation that you would like to tell me about?

.....

.....

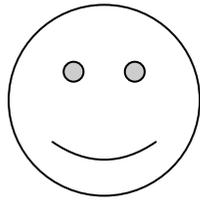
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.....
Q17. How was this resolved?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time and effort



Questionnaire for mentor teachers involved in mentoring student-teacher interns based at PS.

Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and your identity will remain anonymous in this case study.

Q1. What have been the advantage/s of mentoring a student-teacher intern at PS, during their time of internship?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2. What would you consider to have been the disadvantage/s of mentoring a student- teacher intern in your classroom?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Q3. Did conflict arise?

Yes

No

Q4. If it did, please explain how you dealt with the situation.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time and effort.

**APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL BASED TEACHER
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME)**

REMARKS

Please print when completing this form.

Please attach a photo of yourself (ID is fine)

PARTICULARS OF APPLICANT:

1. Surname:
2. First names in full:
3. Cell number:
4. Date of Birth:
5. ID Number:
6. Student Number:
7. E-Mail address:
8. Sex: Male Female

9. Languages:

9.1 Home Language

9.2 Other languages	Speak	Read	Write
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Permanent residential address of parents or guardian:

.....

11. Postal address to which correspondence must be sent:

.....

12. Telephone number (where we will be able to contact you)

.....

13. Banking details: Name:

Account No.:

Branch code:

14. Names of schools that you would like to be considered to be placed at during

your three other years of study

.....

15. (a) Has a study loan or bursary from a State Department, or any institution by the State, formerly been granted to you?

Yes No

(b) If 'yes', give particulars

16. (a) Are you under any obligation to a department responsible for education, in terms of a previous agreement on teacher training?

Yes No

(b) If 'yes', give particulars

17. Have you had any previous intern experience? Yes No

If 'yes', give particulars:

Name of school

When (year/s)

How long?

18. (a) Are you under any obligation to any other employer in terms of any agreement? Yes No

(b) If 'yes', give particulars

.....

19. (a) Have you at any time been refused admission to teacher training, or has your training ever been terminated? Yes No

(b) If 'yes', give particulars

.....

20. Give particulars such as University fees

.....

PLEASE NOTE: NO SCHOOL IS UNDER ANY OBLIGATION TO ASSIST AN INTERN FINANCIALLY.

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING TO THIS APPLICATION FORM:

A. List of references from previous school, universities, religious affiliations:

(a minimum of two references required)

.....

.....

B. Certified copies of qualifications

i) Tertiary Qualifications

ii) Senior Certificate (matriculation)

Intern agenda 13th August

1. A reminder to be punctual in the mornings – revisit times
2. Gifttest – ### & ###
3. Life coaching dates – please check the list for your date
4. School photos sport / cultural – schedules and Intern pic
5. Science expo visits – please check dates
6. Break duty roster is available from ###
7. Saturday sport commitments – please see staff board
8. Creche visits – in 2 groups to visit a valley school and experience how they structure the school day
9. ### assignments to all be signed by mentor teachers as soon as possible
10. All assignments to be signed by the mentor manager
11. General