IMPLEMENTING A SUPPORT MECHANISM THROUGH MENTORING FOR TEACHING PRACTICE BY ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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By
Lesley K Petersen

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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature of Student:

Date: 8 August 2011

ABSTRACT

A growing body of literature on mentoring in higher education is espousing mentoring as an influential mechanism for supporting a teacher‟s academic practice, simultaneously acknowledging that mentoring as a concept and practice is an inherently multi-dimensional phenomenon open to interpretation and critique. Few scholars provide a stipulated definition of mentoring, increasing the likelihood that mentoring will continue to be a topical debate in the educational domain.

This study had the dual purpose of investigating the effects of mentoring on an academic teacher‟s practice in the higher education context and the determinants of a mentoring system being implemented within an organisational environment. An extensive literature review exploring mentoring across three disciplines of higher education, health and business highlights a number of significant elements attributed to the transformation of mentoring as a concept into a legitimate mechanism for supporting academic teaching practice.

An action research approach guided the collection of data about the influences of mentoring within an organisational context and encompassed four action research cycles of data collection, analysis and reflection. Three distinct participant groups were involved in the study, including five academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role twelve years prior to commencement of the investigation; four mentoring programme coordinators based in higher education institutions within New Zealand and Australia and eighteen practising academic teachers who engaged in dyad mentoring partnerships over a one year period.

The findings of the investigation identified a significant link between mentoring and a teacher‟s academic development, influenced by inter-connecting variables at an individual and organisational level. The study culminates in the development of a model for mentoring that proposes a definitive approach for mentoring as a professional development mechanism that supports the teaching practice of teachers in the higher education organisational context, within which the concept, practice and evaluation of mentoring are vehicles for teachers to explore, challenge and change existing paradigms of teaching and learning in higher education.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

> *"Mentoring can greatly enhance the process of making tacit knowledge explicit. Through the mentoring process, individuals are allowed to interrogate their practice, reflect, then reappraise the values, theories and aspirations attached to their individual theories of learning and teaching" (Nicholls, 2002, p. 139).*

Mentoring has been identified as a mechanism for supporting teaching practice, in the compulsory school and higher education contexts (Elliot, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Informal dialogue instigated by the researcher with higher education institutions across New Zealand and Australia has identified numerous professional development systems for supporting the teaching practices of academic staff, with mentoring as one such mechanism. At the Eastern Institute of Technology, New Zealand, the principal institution in this research investigation, past mentoring processes have involved senior teaching staff volunteering their time and assistance for less experienced staff, with no procedural guidelines, no policy directing this activity and no collection of statistical data as to the mentoring effectiveness. This type of approach to mentoring creates a reactive, „adhoc" system of academic teacher support.

In response to this situation, the researcher commenced an action research study to investigate whether mentoring provided a support mechanism for an academic teacher"s teaching practice. The investigation explored variables such as the influence of a formal mentoring system on a teacher"s engagement in mentoring; the range of models that can underpin the process and practice decisions of mentoring at the dyad partnership and organisational levels; the process for effective mentor selection and evaluation approaches required to ascertain the impact of mentoring on a teacher"s academic practice.

1.1 Significance of the Research

The commencement of this exploratory research study arose from a professional need to understand whether teachers in the higher education environment would gain any benefits or improve their practice as a consequence of actively engaging

in mentoring. As a consequence, the major research question became, "How does mentoring provide a support mechanism for teaching practice by academic teaching staff in the higher education context?" Key variables involved in this study include academic teaching staff, the mentoring process and teaching effectiveness. At the commencement of the study, there was an unproven connection or relationship between these variables. That is, if teachers received mentoring, would this support their teaching and influence their teaching effectiveness?

Historically and from a contemporary point of view, mentoring is considered a powerful tool for critical reflective practice by teachers, as a process for professional development and teaching best practice. Establishing the meaning and purpose of mentoring is an essential first step in any consequent suggestion that mentoring supports a teacher"s academic practice. Identifying the many variables inherent in the process of mentoring then helps to create a framework for the implementation of a mentoring system within an organisation.

Gibb (1999) alludes to the number of texts on mentoring that tend to be prescriptive „how to" guides for setting up formal mentoring programmes, rather than "Substantive theoretical analyses of formal mentoring" (p. 1) as a support mechanism within an organisation. The purpose of this study was to explore mentoring as it supports teaching practice in the higher education context, resulting in the development of a model to substantiate mentoring as a legitimate professional development mechanism in the organisation. To reach this level of substantiation, the study focused on identifying and evaluating the practice of mentoring and its impact on teaching, based on a theoretical and reflective analysis. A significant element of this evaluation was to determine what outcomes on teaching practice resulted from academic teachers engaging in mentoring over a specified period of time.

The investigation commenced with an extensive review of the mentoring literature across three distinct disciplines of higher education, health and business to examine the developments in mentoring and determine the location of mentoring within a multidisciplinary perspective. Whilst the term „mentoring" is widely used across these disciplines, there appears to be little consensus about its meaning, further confused by the interchangeable use of terms such as coaching, supervision,

facilitation and apprenticeship. The mentoring literature suggests that the definition and concept of mentoring is fraught with confusion (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; D‟Abate, Eddy & Tannenbaum, 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Gibson, 2004; Mills, Francis & Bonner, 2005; Sweeney, 2003). Further, Walker, Kelly, and Hume (2002) claim that there is conflicting research on mentoring due to the lack of consideration given to the effect an organisation can have on the provision of mentoring as a professional development support mechanism. In the higher education context, mentoring is evolving as a legitimate concept and practice for supporting an academic teacher‟s practice.

Prevalent themes in the literature include an examination of how mentoring supports and inculcates teachers as leaders, explores how institute-wide mentoring processes can empower faculty and highlights key considerations for the development of formal mentoring programmes within an organisational context. The effectiveness of formal versus informal mentoring models is also a common debate (Chao, Walz & Gardiner, 1999; Gibb, 1994b; Harper & Sawicka, 2001; Hezlett, 2005; Parise & Forret, 2007; Underhill, 2006). However, there is minimal reference to evidence-based research which substantiates mentoring as a process and practice that has an impact on the development of or change in a teacher‟s academic practice.

This leads to a number of questions about mentoring in the higher education context, which provides the foundation for this research study. Does mentoring affect change in a teacher‟s academic practice? Which teachers are helped most by mentoring? How are the right people selected as mentors? What are effective mentoring models? What institutional systems are required to support mentoring?

1.2 Focus of the Study

Identified gaps in the mentoring literature provided a focus for the investigation, to explore the systems, models and processes of mentoring that support an academic teacher‟s practice and enable the establishment of a mentoring system within an organisational context. As the study progressed, it became apparent that there was a gap in the concept and practice of mentoring being supported by research and theory. Therefore, the study seeks to extend the boundaries of theoretical underpinnings and justification of mentoring through an epistemological

elaboration and integration of two theoretical perspectives/paradigms, constructivism and humanism. The development of a model for mentoring in the higher education context, to support teaching practice, further aims to reduce this gap.

This study focuses on how teaching knowledge and skills are formed and transformed within the context of mentoring, based in the higher education context. In particular, how a teacher"s knowledge and practice is shaped and expressed through engagement in a mentoring partnership and how these are processed in different people"s minds. The study also explores the effects of mentoring on the teaching practices of academic teachers in the higher education context and the implications of an organisation implementing a mentoring system as a support mechanism within their existing professional development infrastructure to influence this. Nicholls (2002) believes that professional learning about teaching becomes understanding in a conscious way when "The individual interprets and transforms that knowledge into practice" (p. 139). The results of this study substantiate that mentoring provides a mechanism, an environment, multiple processes and an opportunity for this transformation to occur.

1.3 Action Research Methodology

> *"Action research not only advances knowledge but also improves practice in higher education by developing people as professionals and organisations as „learning organisations"" (Zuber-Skeritt, 1993, p. 45).*

The use of action research in the higher education context is varied and diverse within the literature on action research. However, some authors are in agreement about this approach taking on the dimensional qualities of collaborative inquiry and being fundamentally employed as a methodological strategy for improving educational practice, in turn producing relevant, practical and useful knowledge and for instituting educational reform (Catelli, Padovano & Costello, 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Hollingsworth, 1997; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009).

Using an action research methodology in the current study to investigate the viability of mentoring as a mechanism to support academic teaching staff, a triangulation approach to the data collection was employed, including structured

interviews with five past mentors at the principal institution and four mentoring programme coordinators at higher education institutions in New Zealand and Australia; focus group meetings with eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution representative of a cross-section of new and experienced teachers who engaged in dyad mentoring partnerships over a one year period; and semi-structured summative interviews with the academic teachers at the conclusion of the one-year partnership programme. The summative interviews with the academic teachers were based on reflective journals which the academic teachers had been requested to maintain during their mentoring partnership.

Four action research cycles underpin the methodological approach taken by this researcher and provide the framework for the data collection phase. The first cycle of the study commenced with secondary level data collection via an extensive literature review undertaken by the researcher. This review informed the remaining three cycles, each of these cycles of data collection producing data that guided and informed the consequent data generation method.

Applying the action research cycle of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation in response to data collected from the research participants enabled continual review and refinement of the research question and associated research objectives. This continual review also encouraged the eighteen academic teachers to reflect on their own practice and the practice of teaching within their institution. Loftus (1999) believes that a teacher who becomes more aware of their practice through analysis and reflection "Leads to a better standard of education for students in their class and is most definitely one that should be considered by any educationalist ranging from student-teacher to university academic" (p. 34).

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is an in-depth investigation into the influence of mentoring as a mechanism for supporting teaching practice in higher education contexts. The study is underpinned by a dualistic theoretical framework, using action research methodology. The study culminates in the development of a model for mentoring that can be contextualised to meet the strategic and cultural needs of an organisation.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, reviews the literature on mentoring in higher education and provides a comparison of the concept and practice of mentoring in this context with the disciplines of health and business. Chapter Three presents the researcher‟s conceptual framework for mentoring within an organisational context and a proposed dualistic theoretical framework to underpin the study and legitimise mentoring as a valid practice and teacher support mechanism. Chapter Four describes the methodological approach of action research as guiding the data collection phase of the study, including the triangulation of methods employed.

Chapters Five and Six present a summary of the key findings identified from the data collected from the three participant groups during three of four action research cycles, whilst Chapter Seven provides an analysis of the findings and discusses their significance in relation to the effects of mentoring on academic teachers‟ teaching practice occurring within an organisational mentoring system that is multi-dimensional in nature. A final synthesis of the research culminates in the proposal of a model for mentoring in Chapter Eight. The „High Impact Mentoring‟ model (*HIMM*) evolved as a result of consolidation of the four cycles of research findings in this investigation and builds on the researcher‟s initial conceptual framework. The final chapter, Chapter Nine, concludes this thesis, discussing implications of the research results for the higher education context and recommending areas for future research on mentoring within this educational domain. A list of references and appendices complete this document.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The concept of mentoring is complicated. There are many different definitions and the entire phenomenon seems to be unorganised. The question needs to be asked - Is mentoring a special kind of phenomenon that can be separated from other supporting phenomena, such as coaching, tutoring and counselling? In Bozeman and Feeney"s (2007) critique of mentoring theory and research, they found that few scholars actually provide a stipulated definition of mentoring, adding further that important studies of mentoring do not provide a careful definition of the phenomenon. In their opinion, the definition of mentoring "Should be useful in providing boundaries for mentoring and separating mentoring from related varieties of knowledge transmission" (p. 731).

In Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the concept of mentoring is used consistently across multiple disciplines; yet there remains a lack of agreement regarding the definition, the role and the function of mentoring. Whilst the term „mentoring" is widely used across disciplines, there appears to be little consensus about its meaning, further confused by the interchangeable use of terms such as coaching, supervision, facilitation and apprenticeship. If, as the literature suggests, the definition and concept of mentoring is fraught with confusion (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; D"Abate et al., 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Gibson, 2004; Mills et al., 2005; Sweeney, 2003), contextually articulating the purpose, process, responsibilities and desired benefits of mentoring and ensuring effective evaluation methods are in place to enable measurement of the outcomes of mentoring could reduce this confusion. Furthermore, creating a model that encapsulates the interconnectedness of these multiple elements could contribute to the clarification and legitimisation of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism in higher education contexts.

This chapter examines the developments in mentoring as identified in the literature. Firstly, as a concept and evolving practice in the higher education context and secondly, as mentoring emerges as a concept and practice in other

professional contexts of business and health, with a particular emphasis on literature from the field of nursing. The comparisons of these different contexts increases the robustness of this research, as the argument that mentoring in higher education influences teaching practice is located within a multidisciplinary perspective and reality. There is a greater emphasis on some attributes of the concept of mentoring as opposed to others. In Mills et al."s (2005) opinion, this is, "Dependent on the context to which it is being adapted" (p.4).

Within health and business in particular, mentoring features as a predominant mechanism for staff professional development, career management, induction and retention. As well, attention is drawn to the endorsement of mentoring as a valid mechanism for supporting teachers" pedagogical practice in the higher education context (Cannon & Boswell, 2011; Chi-kin Lee & Feng, 2007; Fabian & Simpson, 2002; Huling & Resta, 2001; Orland-Barak, 2005; Rowley, 1999; Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003). Mentoring as a support mechanism is explained in this chapter as an evolving substantiation within the nursing profession (Madison, 1994; Mills et al., 2005; Shaffer, Tallarica & Walsh, 2000), whilst examples from business are included to corroborate the uses of mentoring within the larger organisational structure.

Traditionally associated with professions such as medicine, law and business, the term mentoring started to appear in nursing literature in the early 1980s (Andrews & Wallis, 1999). Hezlett (2005) points out that research on mentoring in the business context is limited and research on learning and mentoring is still in its infancy. She adds that in the business context, organisations have become increasingly interested in developing their human resources and one tool that has been explored in this quest is mentoring. Hezlett (2005) believes that this has subsequently led to a surge in mentoring research and an increase in the number of formal mentoring programmes implemented in organisations.

Mentoring in the higher education context has been awarded a variety of descriptions to explain its purpose for teachers, among them induction, supervision, staff retention, inculcating organisational culture, and personal and professional development (Bullard, 1998; New York State Education Department, 2005; Sweeney, 1994). Although the language of mentoring has largely been

dominated by popular psychology or human resource development, the presence of an adult learner and a teacher clearly locates mentoring in an ideology of adult education (Darwin, 2000).

How the organisation influences the perceived value of mentoring by staff is also explored (Gibb, 1994b; Parise & Forret, 2007; Walker, Kelly & Hume, 2002). Gibb (1994b), in his study of formal mentoring schemes in the corporate environment, found that visible and sincere support by management serves as a message to the entire organisation of the importance of a mentoring programme. Reflective of Gibb‟s (1994b) view, Parise and Forret (2007) talk about how the level of management support is expected to impact on the benefits perceived by mentors and mentees, however very little research has examined this issue. This finding is mirrored by Walker et al. (2002), as they claim that there is conflicting research regarding mentoring and its benefits due in part to not considering the effect of an organisation on the mentoring that is occurring there.

In her study examining mentoring in relation to socialising and supporting new leaders in schools, Ricciardi (2005) focuses on mentoring as becoming a formalised process for helping new leaders succeed in challenging circumstances, with the overall aim to reduce high attrition rates. Empowerment of faculty through mentoring is a focus of Luna and Cullen‟s (1995) report which examines mentoring processes across the institution. As they state,

> "In academe, empowerment is fundamental to quality improvement in terms of productivity and effectiveness, and mentoring within an institution provides an avenue to empower educators" (p. 1).

The debate regarding the effectiveness of formal versus informal mentoring models is prevalent in earlier and more recent literature (Chao et al., 1992; Gibb, 1994b; Harper & Sawicka, 2001; Hezlett, 2005; Parise & Forret, 2007; Underhill, 2006). This chapter examines the available mentoring models in the literature, outlining both formal and informal examples, including the expert-novice model (Dagenais, 1995; McGuire & Reger, 2003); buddy systems (Bush, 2003; Klug & Salzman, 1991; Moir, 2006; Wahl, 2003) and peer mentoring, which is advocated by several authors as a new approach to creating reciprocity and mutual benefit in the mentoring partnership (McGuire & Reger, 2003; Regev, 2000; Vance & Olsen,

1997; Woodd, 1997), and group mentoring is explored as an alternative structure, collaborative in nature (Polilo & Knight, 2005; Ritchie, 1999). More recently, the literature has identified mentoring circles (Darwin & Palmer, 2009) in the offerings of mentoring models available for consideration. Given the descriptions of each of these models, a sense of mentoring as a „developmental continuum" emerges. The concept of mentoring as a continuum is expanded in this chapter.

Wanberg et al. (2003), in their review of formal mentoring programmes implemented in business organisations, suggest a conceptual mentoring model focused on formal mentoring relationships. The development of an emerging model resulting from this current research project draws on Wanberg et al."s (2003) research as well as being informed by the research findings and the diverse body of literature exploring the different models of mentoring. The structure of this researcher"s emerging model draws from a selection of models in the literature and expands on these to produce a multi-dimensional, theoretically based framework for mentoring to be used in the higher education environment.

The selection of the mentor is highlighted in the chapter, with a focus on how this process can significantly determine the success of the mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck, 2004; Rose, 2003; Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough Jr, 2008; Stromei, 1999). Recent literature suggests the use of personality and psychometric tests as a means to investigate the influence of personality traits on the mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Niehoff, 2006) and to help pre-determine successful matching of mentor and mentee (Darwin, 2004; Rose, 2003; Stromei, 1999). The absence of a rigorous, theoretically-based selection process (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; Milton, 2004) is explored.

The concept of the mentee in a mentoring relationship is clearly defined in the literature across the three contexts explored in this review. The majority of references in the higher education literature identify the mentee as the new teacher, described as the protégé or novice teacher. Only a few authors refer to the experienced teacher as the mentee (Cobb et al., 2006; Elliott, 2000; Gibson, 2004; Hezlett, 2005). Cobb et al. (2006) for example, espouses that a teacher at any stage in their professional career can benefit from receiving mentoring support. The concept of mentoring as being applicable as a professional development support

mechanism for teachers at different stages in their career is explored in more depth in this chapter.

Mentoring training is investigated, as an integral aspect when considering the establishment of a formal mentoring system (Allen, Lentz & Eby, 2006; Gibb, 1994b; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Mullinix, 2002; Parise & Forret, 2007; Rowley, 1999). The literature highlights a range of issues in this area, including the consideration of training as essential prior to the commencement of the mentoring partnership (Allen et al., 2006), and ongoing mentor training for the duration of the partnership as a necessary support mechanism (Mullinix, 2002). Attention is drawn to the minimal reference in the literature regarding training for the mentee.

Evaluation of mentoring is a common theme in the literature. Gray and McNaught (2001) advise that the choice of evaluation strategy should be contingent on an organisation‟s strategic goals and objectives for teachers‟ professional development. However, the literature focuses predominantly on evaluating the effectiveness of different mentoring processes such as the adequacy of mentoring training (Johnson, 2002; Youens & Bailey, 2004); mentoring participant satisfaction (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) or staff retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). There is minimal citing of studies which have investigated evaluation of the impact and outcomes of mentoring, either at the individual participant or organisational level (Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Ross & Yeo, 2005; Gibb, 1994a; Odell, 1992). This apparent gap in the literature is discussed.

An additional focus becoming more prevalent in the mentoring literature is the investigation into the negative aspects of mentoring. Long (1994) identifies a number of factors likely to influence negative mentoring outcomes, in particular insufficient time for the mentoring relationship to develop. Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000) build on Long‟s (1994) findings as they propose a taxonomy of different types of negative mentoring experiences. These authors emphasise how negative events can occur in healthy mentoring relationships. The identification of the causes and effects of negative mentoring is explored further in this chapter.

Finally, the chapter will discuss the issue of ongoing research needed on mentoring, identifying a consensus attitude across the contexts of health, business

and higher education literature that mentoring as a concept and a practice needs to be more explicitly articulated based on theoretically framed, research-based findings.

2.2 The Definition, Purpose and Benefits of Mentoring

There is general consensus in the mentoring literature that a common definition and purpose of mentoring has yet to be agreed upon. Over time there has been a plethora of definitions on mentoring (Clarke, 2005) with no single definition or model being able to address every aspect of mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2007; Bozeman & Feeney, 2008; Gibb, 1994b; Healy & Welchert, 1990; Walker et al., 2002). Research-based evidence regarding the benefits and consequences of mentoring, however, is not extensive in the literature (Hezlett, 2005; Perren, 2003; Sweeney, 1994; Wanberg et al, 2003). In the discussion regarding benefits for the mentor and mentee, numerous authors across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business offer a variety of examples from their own perspective and the anecdotal perspectives of mentors and mentees.

2.2.1 The definition of mentoring

In their article offering a definition of mentoring that highlights critical elements of the mentoring process, Healy and Welchert (1990) contend that many educators have investigated mentoring as a vehicle of career development, yet no widely accepted definition of mentoring has been articulated. This view is continued by Poulsen (2006), as her paper regarding the implementation of corporate mentoring programmes discusses the challenges posed when key stakeholders hold different assumptions about what mentoring is and what career development is.

In their handbook of mentoring, Allen et al. (2007) talk of scholars from various disciplines studying the phenomenon of mentoring initiatives across educational, community and business contexts. They point out that the application of mentoring to these diverse settings and its scope of potential influence has created definitional and conceptual confusion about what is mentoring. Adding to this, Bozeman and Feeney (2008) state, “The mentoring literature is rife with multiple meanings and undefined terms. Often the concepts presented are suggestive, identifying the attributes of mentoring rather than stipulating the meaning of the concept itself” (p. 466). Articles regarding the role of e-mentoring in entrepreneurial education, as

reviewed by Perren (2003), provide a range of definitions of mentoring, concluding that there is considerable agreement about the core meanings. Some of these include,

> Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship; the mentor is more experienced than the mentee; mentoring is an extended relationship; there is a focus on the growth and development of the individual rather than just performance and, mentoring is a confidential and protected relationship. (p. 519)

Angelini (1995) in her study of how mentoring influences the career development of hospital staff nurses, offers the following definition, "Mentoring is multi-dimensional and relational, occurring in an environment perceived to be influential" (p. 97). This focus on the influence of the environment within which the mentoring takes place is reflected in Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, and Niles‟s (1992) study of university teachers undertaking the role of lead mentors, as they believe it is a mistake to develop any external definition or conception of mentoring and impose it by means of political pressures or high powered staff development activity. In their view, "Mentoring, like good teaching, should be defined by those who will carry it out" (p. 212). Healy and Welchert (1990) add to this as they state,

> Many educators have investigated the promise of mentoring as a vehicle for career development, yet no widely accepted definition of mentoring has been articulated. Without such definitional consensus, efforts to develop a knowledge base relevant to mentorships in education have been haphazard. (p. 17)

Viewing mentoring as a vehicle to create a more professional culture, Sweeney (2003) talks about expanding the definition of purpose, where staff are continually learning on the job and where collaboration and openness to feedback are the norm. He makes a link between the purpose of mentoring and the resulting benefits for teachers, asking questions such as "What is the greatest potential benefit of mentoring?" and "How can we capture that benefit for all our staff?" (p. 1). Sweeney (2003) believes that an organisation needs to be clear in deciding who will be involved and therefore benefit from mentoring, before establishing a mentoring system with the aim to support practice.

2.2.2 The purpose of mentoring

Mentoring as a mechanism for induction and orientation of the new staff member is prevalent in the business, nursing and higher education contexts. Systemic teacher induction is a system in which all new teachers receive orientation, support and mentoring during their beginning years (Ganser, 1997; Klug & Salzman, 1991; Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe, 2002). An earlier perspective offered by Sweeney (1994) is that mentoring can also be a tool for retaining excellent experienced staff, acting as mentors, as they are involved in an environment where their contributions are valued and responded to. The more altruistic goal of teachers feeling valued and supported in their practice can be congruent with the economic goal of retention.

In the business context, Singh et al. (2002) describe mentoring as a process that "Speeds the development of talented staff and helps develop a wider pool of talented managers" (p. 506). Shaffer et al. (2000) identify similar themes, believing that mentors gain leadership and teaching skills, whilst Stewart and Krueger (1996) observed the development of new investigations, empowerment and an expansion of project knowledge and practice base through mentoring. They describe mentoring as a process for the socialisation of staff and the proliferation of a body of professional knowledge.

Young and Perrewe (2004) focus on the perceived value of mentoring in the organisation as needing to be made clear through all types of communication mechanisms, including formal policy, reward systems and recognition for participation. They describe how "An organisation"s culture that fosters perceptions that mentoring is accessible perhaps creates a feeling about possible openness, acceptance and a sense of social support" (p. 120). Short (2002) complements this thinking, as she states,

> Using a multiple mentor approach in which mentoring relationships change with career development, placement and needs, rather than a traditional approach where one mentoring relationship is established early in the career and lasts throughout the career, may be most beneficial. (p. 144)

2.2.3 The benefits of mentoring

The benefits of mentoring highlighted in the literature provide a dual focus on the individual and the organisation. There is a commonality of perspective across the three disciplines regarding benefits for the mentor, including the view that the mentee can be a catalyst for the mentor"s professional development (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; Huling & Resta, 2001; Mills et al., 2005) and for stimulating the mentor"s personal development and self-reflection (Butler & Chao, 2001; Mills et al., 2005; National Education Association, 2004; Perren, 2003; Short, 2002). In their empirical study on the international career moves of female managers, Linehan and Walsh (1999) emphasise increased job satisfaction for both the mentee and mentor as a key consequence of mentoring.

The organisation benefitting from mentoring is a theme prevalent in the literature across the higher education, health and business disciplines, emphasising the impact of mentoring on organisational culture, formal policy and the general health of the organisation (Milton, 2005; Short, 2002; Young & Perrewe, 2004). Retention of new and experienced employees is highlighted (Mills et al., 2005; Short, 2002) as well as improved organisational socialization and increased personal and career satisfaction (Short, 2002). Potential career advancement for the mentor is discussed (Ritchie & Genoni, 2002; Singh et al., 2002), whilst other authors focus on the creation of well-defined leadership roles (Fabian & Simpson, 2002; Milton, 2004; Short, 2002).

Empowering faculty as a benefit of mentoring is the theme of Luna and Cullen"s (1995) report, which examines mentoring processes in the higher education context. They describe how mentoring can invigorate senior faculty, help junior staff „learn the ropes" and assist faculty members in understanding organisational culture. In her review of the nursing literature regarding mentoring, Short (2002) additionally talks of access to enhanced power and the development of the constructive use of power, differentiating power for personal gain from power used for the good of the organisation. She contends that, "The constructive use of power is essential for leadership and mentoring relationships. Mentoring is said to enhance a person"s ability to use power constructively" (p. 140).

Organisational benefits in the higher education context are also emphasised by Kanuka (2005), including the creation of a tangible mechanism for the institution to be actively involved in supporting their staff, helping develop more collegial departments and encouraging a culture of collaboration and sharing of ideas, passion, and new ways of teaching. She adds to this list by affirming that mentoring helps teachers to establish, confirm and build on their theoretical underpinnings for practice, reflecting on and supporting the goals of the institution, and offers a working model for other higher education institutions to consider for their own contexts.

The success or demise of an institute-wide mentoring programme to support professional development is discussed by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) who suggest a number of antecedent, mediating and moderating variables as influencing this success, such as effective processes for mentor selection; establishing the purpose of mentoring; duration of a mentoring programme; training provided for the mentor; intensity of the programme and the number of new teachers who will receive mentoring. This thinking is reflected by Elliott (2000) as he states, "Effective programs are characterised by strong leadership and management. Programs that are not well planned can be counter-productive" (p. 7).

In her book regarding the facilitation of effective learning relationships via mentoring, Zachary (2000) talks of grounding the mentoring relationship consciously and conscientiously in learning, believing this will likely lead to a dramatic improvement in the learning relationship for both mentoring partners. She emphasises that the benefits for both participants must be integral in an institute-wide programme, whether formal or informal in nature, if buy-in and meaning are to be achieved.

A study undertaken by Ganser (1997) explored the design and purpose of mentoring programmes for beginning teachers, where the teacher-mentors reported that the benefits of mentoring included forcing them to be reflective about their own beliefs about teaching, students" learning and teaching as a career. The mentors also found that mentoring provided them with opportunities to validate the experience they had gained over the years. Boreen, Johnson, Niday, and Potts

(2000) also offer positive reports from teacher mentors, quoting "Continued contact with mentees provides some of my richest collegial interactions" (p. 2).

These thoughts are reflected by Rowley (1999). Having helped school districts design mentor-based, entry-year programmes, Rowley believes that the teacher-mentor benefits significantly by developing multiple methods of classroom observation and employing research-based frameworks as the basis for reflection and refining their feedback skills.

The benefits for the mentee has not been extensively evidenced in the literature until recently, but rather perceptions and assumed outcomes as a result of being involved in the mentoring process (Dagenais, 1995; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008; National Education Association, 2004; Sweeney, 2003). There is an implicit assumption that by explaining the activities a mentee engages in with a mentor, such as classroom observation, career development and induction to the organisational culture, the mentee naturally benefits from such advice and guidance (Sweeney, 2003).

In summary, a consensus across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business is that a common definition of mentoring that addresses all aspects of the mentoring process and practice has yet to be agreed upon. Additionally, Allen and Eby (2007) refer to definitional and conceptual confusion about what mentoring is. Some agreement on the core meanings identify mentoring as a multi-dimensional process, a relationship that is confidential and protected and a mechanism which supports the growth and development of the individual.

Agreement on the purpose of mentoring is more evident, as the literature highlights the purpose as being contextually bound and philosophically grounded. Common purposes of mentoring include induction, career development, orientation of new staff and more generally, support of an individual‟s personal and professional development. Organisational culture and the value placed on mentoring as a support mechanism is perceived as a significant influence on the individual‟s willingness to engage in a mentoring programme.

The benefits of mentoring are multiple, the literature discussing benefits for the individual and the organisation. A wide range of benefits are identified at the individual level, such as mentoring provides an opportunity for increased self-

reflection, increased job satisfaction and professional development of the mentor. Implicit in the literature is an assumption of mentee benefits. This aspect of mentoring appears to have minimal focus in the research, instead an emphasis on how the mentor can benefit as a result of engaging in a mentoring relationship. Benefits for the organisation are emphasised as improved organisational socialisation and the development of research and leadership capabilities. Zachary (2000) emphasises the need to ground mentoring in learning if the benefits for the teacher and the organisation are to be realised.

2.3 Mentoring Models

Various mentoring models and their underpinning conceptual frameworks are suggested within the literature across the three disciplines explored in this review, including the expert-novice model, peer mentoring and group mentoring models. Some authors suggest that there is no one model for mentoring whilst other authors refer to the application of specific models to guide the process and practice of mentoring. For example, in their reviews of the mentoring literature in nursing, Andrews and Wallis (1999) summarised that no one model is seen as more appropriate than another and choice usually depends on the mentor‟s familiarity with a particular framework. They emphasise that, “The framework chosen needs to substantiate and therefore support the purpose of the mentoring scheme within the context it is situated” (p. 201).

The organisational context and an individual‟s familiarity with mentoring practices are highlighted in the literature as two key factors that influence the decision regarding which mentoring model is adopted. In her article exploring the concept of mentoring within an organisational structure and culture, Regev (2000) refers to the need for promoting the concept and developing models of mentoring that reflect the organisational context.

An additional discussion in this area is the debate regarding whether a mentoring model should be formal or informal in its application as a support mechanism for an individual‟s professional development.

2.3.1 The expert-novice model

The traditional expert-novice model is discussed extensively in the mentoring literature (Angelini, 1995; Andrews & Wallis, 199; Chi-Kin Lee & Feng, 2007; Collins, 1983; Gaskin, Lumpkin & Tennant, 2003; Kerka, 1998; Kram, 1985; Mills et al., 2005; Short, 2002; Smith, Howard & Harrington, 2005). Implicit in traditional mentoring practices are unchallenged assumptions about knowledge and power. For example, as Darwin (2000) states,

> "Thus the mentoring relationship has traditionally been framed in a language of paternalism and dependency, and stems from a power-dependent, hierarchical relationship" (p. 198).

In the higher education context, mentoring is described as a relationship between a new teacher (protégé) being mentored by an experienced teacher (veteran) and is a common thread in the higher education literature (Cannon & Boswell, 2011; Clement, 2000; Ganser & Koskela, 1997; Gaskin et al., 2003; McKinley, 2004; Kram, 1985). McKinley (2004), for example, defines the mentoring role as "Encompassing active leadership in addition to confirmation of classroom skills and academic responsibilities" (p. 1). Cannon and Boswell (2011) reflect this in their description of mentoring as a one-on-one process directed towards a primary goal, where the mentor assists the mentee to define their professional aspirations and cultivate a plan for achieving these goals. Cannon and Boswell (2011) believe that this leads to empowering the mentee to "Chart their own professional path and take responsibility for that journey" (p. 281). In the Chinese higher education context, the mentor is the senior colleague and expert and the mentee is not supposed to question the authority of the mentor (Chi-Kin Lee & Feng, 2007).

Emphasis is also commonly placed on the expert-novice model for mentoring in the nursing literature, focusing on developing nursing managers to be mentors (Angelini, 1995; Andrews & Wallis, 1999) and assisting new nurses in their first year of employment (Short, 2002). This model is also applied to studies examining the outcomes of mentoring partnerships between academic mentors and beginning rural nurse practitioners (Mills et al., 2005).

Prominent in the business literature is the focus on the new employee as the protégé in the mentoring relationship, again emphasising the expert-novice model.

The mentor is defined as a higher ranking, influential senior organizational member with advanced experience and knowledge, who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to a protégé‟s professional career (Collins, 1983; Kram, 1985; Friday & Friday, 2002). The concept of mentoring as requiring unequal knowledge is noted by Bozeman and Feeney (2008) in their development of a three-tier model for mentoring in the business context, however they add that this inequality should only be in the knowledge domain of the mentoring, as there is no stipulation regarding the status or hierarchical relationship among the parties to the relationship.

Moving away from the traditional model of expert-novice is, however, becoming more prominent in the mentoring literature. This shift is a necessity if a power balance is to be achieved (Darwin, 2004; McGuire & Reger, 2003; Regev, 2000; Walker et al., 2002). As McGuire and Reger (2003) state,

> Traditional mentoring relationships reinforce power imbalances between participants because one person in the relationship has a monopoly of knowledge, skills and resources, making it difficult for the mentee to find their own intellectual niche as they have a reluctance to challenge their mentors because of the unequal power. (p. 54)

Discussions regarding the expert-novice model also bring into question who should receive mentoring (Cannon & Boswell, 2011; Chi-Kin Lee & Feng, 2007; Clement, 2000; Cobb et al., 2006; Elliot, 2000; Fabian & Simpson, 2002; Gibson, 2004; Zachary, 2000). Zachary (2000) claims that there is a place for alternative approaches to the traditional expert-novice model which can substantiate and legitimise mentoring as a valid mechanism and practice. An organisation that has a mentoring culture supports multiple types of mentoring opportunities, such as group mentoring coupled with dyad mentoring relationships. Zachary (2000) believes that the learning from one of these reinforces the other.

2.3.2 Peer and group mentoring models

The ideal mentoring model is one that incorporates interdependence and emphasises relationships and connections as well as power and influence (Kaplan & Owings, 2002; Short, 2002). Short (2002) explored mentoring as a mechanism for career enhancement for occupational and environmental health nurses, in which

she suggested a mentoring model that consists of a network of relationships rather than one mentor to assist throughout a career. She identified a sequential progression of mentors with changes in mentors occurring with changes in careers. Short believes that this concept of a network differs from the traditional expert-novice model, as it incorporates peer relationships and circles of mentors inside and outside the discipline and inside and outside the organisation. Darwin (2000) reflects this thinking as she too advocates that different mentors are required as different needs are identified by the mentee‟s professional and personal development over time. Also mirroring this thinking, McGuire and Reger (2003) comment that no one person can provide the guidance on teaching, research, academic culture and networking that the protégé needs. The concept of a developmental continuum model for mentoring is further suggested by Byrne and Keefe (2002), as they comment,

> "Within nursing, the experience of mentoring has sometimes been perceived as a learning continuum which extends from peer support and role modelling, through instructive preceptorship, self-initiated and guided networking and finally the intense and personal occurrence of focused mentorship" (p. 395).

Clarke (2005), in her paper on reconceptualising mentoring in higher education, developed a „Layered Relationship Mentoring Model‟, depicting the progressive nature of a collegial friendship through to a co-mentoring relationship. She describes the first layer as focusing on the development of an interdependent relationship between the mentor and mentee, whereas the co-mentoring layer focuses on an equal partnership and equal status of each participant. English and Sutton (2000) reflect this to some degree, as they describe the developmental benefits of mentoring for National Health Service managers in the United Kingdom as promoting cognitive development and intentional learning. They describe mentoring as complex but add that mentoring is also an informal system of learning, initiation and support.

The focus on relationships and connections as core elements of the ideal mentoring model (Short, 2002) is expanded in the literature across the three disciplines in the form of a collaborative approach to mentoring (Bush, 2003; Cox, 2004; Gibb, 1999; Short, 2002; Winter, 2000; Wolfe, 1992). For example, Cox (2004) explains

his „Learning Community" model as giving a framework for a faculty cohort to focus on their teaching and learning needs, whilst Wolfe (1992) speaks of mentoring the mentors through collegial support groups, describing this approach as the essence of collaboration. Gibb (1999) also talks of reciprocity and an emphasis on mutual benefits as key aspects of the mentoring relationship. Bush (2003) provides a summative description of collaboration in her work examining the benefits of collaboration within the school system, as she states,

> Collaboration is goal-oriented talk, discourse, conversation and communication between two or more educators to search for self-knowledge as professionals by engaging in dialogue with colleagues who share a goal for their students. It is in the process of this search that we come to know ourselves as teachers in a way that is not possible when the journey towards wisdom is not shared. (p. 2)

The co-mentoring model offered by Mullen (2005) continues this theme of collaboration. In her paper which explores the development of a co-mentoring programme for teachers in a Melbourne-based secondary school, Mullen (2005) views this model as „development-beyond-induction" mentoring, which is suitable for all teachers at any stage in their career. She contends that collaborative mentoring is not a compensatory practice for those less capable but rather an opportunity for professionals to become directly involved in each other"s learning. In an earlier article, Mullen (2000) described collaborative mentoring as a powerful force for professional development and institutional change.

Research undertaken by Polilo and Knight (2005) at the National Centre of Leadership in Academic Medicine explores an alternative structure and a broader vision for mentoring of medical faculty. They assert that a group peer, collaborative mentoring model founded on principles of adult education is one that is likely to be an effective and predictably reliable form of mentoring. Joyce-Erueti, Poutu-Shaw, and Mitchell (2002) support the place of a group peer mentoring model in the nursing context, describing it as “A process of sharing stories, experiences and consulting together for the development of professional practice” (p. 311).

Group mentoring as an alternative to the traditional dyad model is emphasised by a number of other authors, viewed as more egalitarian and less structured learning partnerships between multiple learners, having more potential for fostering workplace learning than the more traditional mentoring dyad (Dansky, 1996; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Joyce-Erueti et al., 2002; McCormack & West, 2006; McGuire & Reger, 2003; Ritchie, 1999; Ritchie & Genoni, 2002). Ritchie (1999) suggests that group mentoring has the potential for practising three forms of mentoring relationships: individual, peer and co-mentoring. She views this model as being able to encourage collaboration and co-learning across the institution in comparison to the dyad relationship which can be problematic in terms of male/female dynamics, lack of available mentors and possibly losing the mentor a mentee may be relying on. Dansky (1996) also questions, “Should a useful mentoring concept be limited to dyads or should it include groups?” (p. 729).

The comparison of a group mentoring model to the dyad relationship is also central to Darwin and Palmer‟s (2009) article regarding mentoring in higher education institutions, as they contend that “Mentoring dyads do little to enhance a more collaborative atmosphere in higher education settings” (p. 125). They offer a method that they believe provides an advantage to the traditional approach. Mentoring circles use an innovative group mentoring model, where many different perspectives can be generated, with group members combining energies and experiences. Building on this earlier work, Darwin (2007) discusses the extended benefits of mentoring circles as having the potential to develop and transform the culture of workplaces while assisting employees with their personal development and career enhancement.

An alternative structure for mentoring is also offered by Bozeman and Feeney (2007) in their review of mentoring theory and research. They question whether mentoring is best viewed as a relationship between two people or among a group of people, and suggest team mentoring, where teams help individuals develop within or across teams. This approach builds on Eby‟s (1997) typology, which expands mentoring to include alternative forms of group mentoring such as inter-team, intra-team and professional association mentoring in the business context.

Interestingly, in their investigation into ideal mentor-mentee matching, Bozeman and Feeney (2008) present a contrasting ideology to their earlier support of a team mentoring model. Focusing on a dyadic conceptualisation of mentoring, the authors agree that it is possible to envisage a mentor imparting knowledge to two or more protégés simultaneously, but question that if this relationship is always multiple in nature, then it is difficult to think of the relationship as sufficiently tailored to individual needs to qualify as mentoring. They propose a "„Goodness of Fit" model" (p. 465) which views the mentoring relationship as a social exchange based on the fit among mentor and protégé preferences, endowments and the content of knowledge transmitted.

In the education and health contexts, peer or co-mentoring is viewed as valuable both in the absence of traditional mentoring and as an adjunct to it, with the emphasis on peer mentoring offering a horizontal mentoring model that might supplement traditional, vertical and hierarchical models (Bennion, 2003; Byrne & Keefe, 2002; McGuire & Reger, 2003; Santucci et al., 2008; Woodd, 1997). One of the main benefits of the peer mentoring model is identified as a lack of hierarchy which in turn facilitates communication, mutual support and the collaboration necessary for effective learning. From McGuire and Reger"s (2003) point of view, co-mentoring allows all scholars to have access to the support and guidance they need for their academic and personal development. They view this model as creating an egalitarian relationship that challenges the power differential of traditional mentoring.

Vance and Olson (1998) and Regev (2000) contrast the „expert-to-novice" model with „peer-collegial" mentor relationships, where the emphasis is on peers giving psychological support, career advice and feedback. Vance and Olson (1998) believe that, "Peers are pivotal mentors throughout our lives" (p. 46). Also advocating the peer mentoring model within the university environment, Bennion (2003) views this approach to mentoring as benefitting people at all stages of their career. However, in addition, Bennion (2003) believes that peer mentoring is not intended to replace traditional mentoring relationships and that high status mentors can provide mentees with resources that peers cannot. Her thinking provides a mentoring model that combines more than one approach, increasing the scope for both the mentee and the mentor to benefit from the mentoring experience.

2.3.3 Formal and informal mentoring models

There is much debate in the education, health and business literature as to the value for organisations establishing a formal model of mentoring as opposed to relying on informal, voluntary interactions between staff (Chao et al. 1992; Darwin, 2000; Harper & Sawicka, 2001; Hezlett, 2005; Underhill, 2006; Wanberg et al., 2003). The differing definitions of mentoring reflect the various characteristics that seem to define informal and formal mentoring relationships (Hansman, 2002). Informal mentoring relationships are psychosocial relationships that are built on mutual discovery of common interests and relationship building. Formal mentoring relationships, in contrast, are generally organised and sponsored by the organisation, involving a formal process of matching mentors and protégés for the purpose of building careers. According to Bozeman and Feeney (2008), a significant number of mentoring relationships originate as part of formal programmes, with mentors‟ and protégés‟ choices playing little or no role.

In Harper and Sawicka‟s (2001) research project at Victoria University, New Zealand, the aim was to formalise mentoring so that “All academic staff could benefit from it, not just the fortunate few who found mentors informally” (p. 3). Their preliminary research results indicate that a structured mentoring programme offers real benefits for individuals and the institution. As they state, “Formal mentoring can help to ameliorate the difficulties that early career academics experience in an isolating workplace” (p. 26). Based on their findings, Harper and Sawicka (2001) believe that a mentoring scheme needs to be formalised and institutionally integrated.

In Darwin‟s (2000) reflections on career mentoring in work settings, she describes informal mentoring as possibly “Leaving many people waiting patiently and powerlessly for a person to materialise”, adding, “Moreover, it appears that not everyone is fortunate to be standing in the right place” (p. 205). Conversely, Underhill (2006) identified in her research investigating the effectiveness of mentoring programmes in corporate settings that informal mentoring had a more significant effect on career outcomes than formal mentoring. She recommends further research to determine if the resultant career success was from the receipt of mentoring or individual characteristics of the mentor and mentee.

This differing of opinion is further illustrated by Hezlett (2005), as she highlights the research of Chao et al. (1992), which contrasted formal and informal nursing mentorships. They identified that the learning of protégés with formal mentors did not differ significantly from their peers who had informal mentors. However, in a third scenario, Chao et al. (1992) did find that protégés in informal mentoring relationships learned more about how to perform job-related tasks and the organisation"s goals and values than their counterparts without mentors. Hezlett (2005) emphasises the importance of studies in the nursing context to explore what and how protégés learn in informal mentoring relationships as much as in formal programmes, before any substantive conclusions can be made.

The usefulness of the debate regarding whether informal or formal mentoring is more effective in determining effective mentoring outcomes is questioned by some authors, given that much of the debate is non-research based and lacks any theoretical substantiation (Friday & Friday, 2002; Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). For example, Ragins et al. (2000) suggest that comparing informal and formal mentoring without controlling for quality or satisfaction with the mentoring relationship may present a simplistic and erroneous picture. Interestingly, despite the growth of formal mentoring programmes in the business sector, few empirical studies have examined them (Ellinger, 2002; Orpen, 1997).

2.3.3.1 The buddy system

In their study to determine which system for induction of new teachers in the higher education context would be most effective, Klug and Salzman (1991) compared a formal induction programme with an informal buddy system approach. The buddy system used was based on the expert-novice model, where there were minimal formal parameters, such as no set hours for meeting and no guidelines for the mentor. Teachers who participated in the buddy system reported that because the programme lacked structure, it was confusing for both the mentee and the mentor. They expressed a need for mutually established goals and definite meeting times. In comparison, the teachers involved in the formal induction approach reported positively on aspects of observations, regular meetings and a commitment to the number of hours the mentor and mentee spent in the partnership.

Although not research-based, Moir (2006) describes the buddy system as an informal mentoring mechanism in addition to formally assigned mentors for the mentee. In the education context, she explains this as a model involving a senior teacher with little or no mentor training pairing up with a new teacher within the same department. She emphasises an inherent danger in this model, of having a mentor introducing the new teacher to the norms and expectations of the institution with no training or resources to link mentoring to the norms and expectations inherent in excellent teaching. Moir (2006) believes that mentoring moves beyond a buddy system in depth of meaning and purpose but definitely requires training to do so.

2.3.4 Models of mentor functions

Kram (1985) is commonly cited in the business mentoring literature, as authors refer to her description of a mentorship model validating two predominant classifications of mentor functions - career and psychosocial. Kram (1985) describes these functions as two key developmental categories of the mentoring relationship and its purpose, claiming that both forms of mentoring provide access to power structures and an understanding of culture in the settings of importance to the mentee. Kram (1985) also proposed a four-phase model of the mentoring relationship which included initiation, cultivation, separation and re-definition.

The developmental focus of Kram‟s (1985) model is reflected in Cohen‟s (1995) work, in his identification of six behavioural functions of the mentor role and how these significantly influence mentoring relationships with adult learners, in both the education and business sectors. Cohen‟s (1995) focus on the development of the mentee includes cognitive, psychosocial or emotional, which are influenced by the mentor‟s enthusiasm, communication, modelling and challenging of assumptions. Darwin, (2000) however, comments that it is probable that Kram‟s (1985) work on career stages has lost relevance because mentoring relationships are more likely to be shorter than in the past.

A mentoring functions scale to assess the extent to which mentors provide career and psychosocial outcomes to mentees was developed by Noe (1988), synthesising the mentoring literature to inform this. In his study examining the influence of the mentoring relationship on personal and career development of educators, Noe

(1988) claimed that preliminary studies had focused on identifying mentee benefits whilst the mentoring construct remained unclear. Results of his study suggested that mentors do provide two functions, a career function and a psychosocial function, a finding that is continually reflected in the mentoring literature (Cohen, 1995; Kram, 1985; Friday & Friday, 2002).

2.3.5 Models and the organisational context

The influence of the organisational context in determining which mentoring model or framework is used presents a key thread in Kerka‟s (1998) article that looks at perspectives on mentoring and the kinds of learning that can result from mentoring relationships. She views mentoring as a personalised and systematic way to be socialised into an organisation‟s culture, where such cultural competence is important in both work and academic settings.

In the business context, Bleach (1999) views the mentoring relationship as essentially a partnership and suggests two different models an organisation can choose to adopt to provide mentoring for new employees: the organisation-centred model, which helps transform the new employee into a full member of the organisation, and an individual-centred approach that aims to help the new employee develop according to their strengths and needs. However, Bleach (1999) reflects the thinking of Andrews and Wallis (1999) as he states, "There is no one single model that meets the variety of individual circumstances and to impose one would be a mistake" (p. 120). This statement is further echoed by Gibb (1994b) as he advocates the need for conceptualising mentoring to account for its diversity in practice.

A number of authors make a connection between the organisation as a „community‟ and how mentoring contributes to this by the benefits gained in the mentoring partnerships (Clarke, 2005; Gibb, 1999; Heller, 1989; McGloughlin, Brady, Lee & Russell, 2007; Zachary, 2000). Describing workplaces as relational communities, Clarke (2005) asserts that people develop mutually supportive relationships which create a context within which individuals define and negotiate issues that concern them. From Gibb‟s (1999) point of view, rather than characterising and transforming organisational cultures, a more effective approach is to evaluate the challenges of making workplaces better communities. He states,

"If there was a toolkit for developing „community", then formal mentoring would be a part of it" (p. 1073).

In their article arguing for the need for a multi-dimensional model for mentoring in the business context, Friday and Friday (2002) focus on the organisation as being a pivotal element in the success of any mentoring scheme introduced for staff. In their view, "Many organisations have implemented varied formal mentoring programmes within recent years, but most have not strategically aligned these programmes with their long-term objectives and strategic positioning of the organisation" (p. 1). A company that seeks to maximise the potential benefits of mentoring should create a corporate level mentoring strategy prior to implementing a formal mentoring programme. This thinking is supported by Gibb (1994b) as he emphasises how visible and sincere support by management serves as a message to the organisation of the importance of the mentoring programme and that mentoring serves a valuable role within the organisation.

To summarise, the expert-novice, peer and group mentoring models feature predominantly in the literature across the three disciplines. Whilst the expert-novice model is referred to as a traditional approach to mentoring, peer and group mentoring models are becoming more prevalent frameworks in the organisational context. Prolific in the literature is the debate regarding whether a formal model for mentoring is more effective than an informal approach and which model is likely to determine the success or demise of an organisation"s mentoring system.

Whilst some authors in the higher education literature advocate formal models as ensuring sponsorship from the organisation and support for the early career academic, other studies indicate that mentees in informal, voluntary mentoring relationships have positive experiences and increased job-related learning. Additionally, several studies cited in the literature across the three disciplines have found that there is no significant difference between formal and informal models of mentoring having an influence on the mentee"s learning.

Models describing the functions of a mentor in a mentoring relationship are offered by authors in earlier mentoring literature. The mentorship models of Kram (1985) and Noe (1988) are frequently cited as they provide a classification of key mentor functions as encompassing career and psychosocial domains. The concept of the

organisation as a community is a recurrent theme, a number of authors believing that mentoring contributes to this aspect of an organisation"s culture.

2.4 Mentor Selection

Determining who makes an effective mentor, therefore how mentors are selected, has been predominantly opinion-based across the disciplines highlighted in this review (Andrews and Wallis, 1999; Goran, 2001; Hayes, 1998; Wanberg et al., 2003; Zey, 1984). The selection criteria for mentors vary from being based on organisational positions that the potential mentor occupies to the potential mentors being intuitively considered a good mentor (Smith et al., 2005). In his case study evaluating formal mentoring schemes, Gibb (1999) advocates an expert-novice structure as he comments, "Individual action and building relationships between people promote the involvement of wiser, experienced senior people in the development of inexperienced junior people" (p. 1072).

Whichever model for mentor selection is advocated, many of the authors in the mentoring literature emphasise the need for a consensus definition of the role and function of the mentor (Phillips, Davies & Neary, 1996; Wolfe, 1992). As Wolfe (1992) states, "Mentoring is related to fulfilling a role with little concrete definition and must be adjusted to the shifting needs of the protégé" (p. 106). She believes that the mentor requires attributes in the personal and psychological domains as well as the professional domain. Andrews and Wallis (1999) found in their review of the nursing literature on mentoring that identifying who should act as a mentor and what constitutes adequate preparation for undertaking the mentor role is not well addressed. They talk of effective mentoring as being the result of personal characteristics of the mentor and claim that the majority of the literature is concerned with defining the concept and determining the nature of the mentoring role and that a lack of agreement regarding the role and functions of mentors is a common feature.

Numerous lists of ideal and desired mentor attributes are offered by many authors within the literature across the three disciplines (Andrica, 1995; Clutterbuck, 2004; Hezlett, 2005; Madison, 1994; Milton, 2004; Shaffer et al., 2000). Prevalent attributes identified in such lists include effective communication skills, empathy, problem-solving abilities, good listening skills and a desire to help others. These

authors highlight how mentor selection processes either rely on voluntary involvement, superiority within the organisation, or a list of skills and attributes as the criteria against which the person is judged to be „fit for purpose", rather than any rigorous, research-based process.

Milton (2004) points out how the current selection process of mentors in nursing education and practice is often based on technological skills rather than a demonstration of their abilities to perform the art and science of nursing based on an articulation of a theoretical belief system or philosophy. She raises the issue as to how nurse leaders are selected to be mentors, stating her opinion that,

> "Carrying out the obligations and responsibilities of a mentorship relationship requires careful selection procedures which begin with a careful, thoughtful articulation of beliefs regarding theoretical views of the phenomenon of interest in the discipline" (p. 119).

The importance of careful attention being paid to mentor selection and training and new teachers being paired with mentors who are already reformers in their institution is emphasised by Feiman-Nemser (1996) who criticises mentoring for its potential to promote conventional norms and practices, with new teachers running the risk of picking up less effective approaches. Within the educational context, Zey (1984) exemplifies these findings as he states,

> "The literature on mentoring in education usually concentrates on an assumption that mentors assume the sponsor role because they are fulfilling some deep-seated need to teach, assume a parental role or indulge in some altruistic yearning in their career" (p. 116).

In their review of the mentoring literature within the education and business contexts, Wanberg et al. (2003) advocate the need to clearly identify characteristics of the effective mentor. They suggest a comprehensive understanding of the role of mentor characteristics in the mentoring relationship would help to inform organisations on how to select and train mentors. The authors emphasise how the mentor"s demographic characteristics – specifically education and age – have been more extensively studied than other mentor attributes, for example commitment to the mentoring relationship, openness to the mentee"s perspective, taking the initiative to schedule mentoring meetings and "Bringing their own perspective to

share with the mentee" (p. 420). Empirical research on the cognitive attributes of mentors is lacking.

The literature review undertaken by Wanberg et al. (2003) also highlights how the knowledge of mentee characteristics may be useful in "Identifying employees who will flourish in a mentoring partnership or in assisting employees who may find it challenging to establish and maintain productive mentoring relationships" (p. 62). They question how mentee characteristics are related to the mentoring they receive, commenting that this is an integral question to be asked, as an evaluative source to help determine why a mentoring partnership is not always successful and falls over during the term of the mentoring.

Clutterbuck (2004) adds to this, as he talks of reciprocity of behaviours, that is, the behaviour of the effective mentor needs to be reflected to some degree by the mentee, for a mentoring partnership to be successful. Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) recommend that compatibility in personality is taken into consideration as a variable when mentoring relationships are created, seeing this as most relevant in a formally arranged relationship.

Other authors have researched the use of additional resources, such as personality profiles and psychometric tests, as a means of mentor selection and to investigate the influence of personality traits of both the mentor and the mentee on the mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Goran, 2001; Hayes, 1998; Niehoff, 2006; Rose, 2003; Seong-Kook & Min-Jeong, 2007; Stromei, 1999; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Exploration into this area of mentor selection options has resulted in the development of different tools that can be used by the mentee and the organisation.

Darwin‟s (2000) survey of 2000 mentees in the business context regarding what they believed were important mentor traits resulted in the development of her „Dimensions of Mentoring Profiler‟ tool. Designed to identify core characteristics of the mentor that will lead to successful partnership matching, the Profiler tool is a systematic framework for defining the competences that mentors need to possess, providing prospective mentors with information about their own profile and the implications for being a mentor. The framework comprises eight core „dimensions‟ which describe a cluster of mentor characteristics and involves standardised scale

scores used to examine the extent to which people differ to the mentor characteristics identified in the Profiler. Some examples of these dimensions include The Authentic Dimension, The Nurturing Dimension, The Inspirational Dimension and The Competent Dimension. In Darwin‟s (2000)opinion, "Mentors will exhibit behaviours from all eight of the mentoring dimensions" (p. 2). A key benefit of the tool is its contribution to increasing the likelihood of successful mentor-mentee matching, emphasising that mentoring relationships have a greater chance of success when both parties are clear about the purpose and expectations of the relationship, hence being aware of each other‟s characteristics and differences.

Similar profiling, particularly of the mentor, is offered by authors advocating personality tests and assessments. For example, Simmons (1999), in her article regarding the creation of a formal mentoring programme in the business context, believes that a firm foundation needs to be set between the mentor and the mentee, so that they understand what each brings to the relationship. She sees this being accomplished with testing, and suggests individual personality profiles as one such mechanism.

In her research regarding the effectiveness of mentoring as a support mechanism for business managers, Stromei (1999) also examined the aspect of how to achieve successful matching of mentor and mentee. One data collection method she used was to administer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™ (MBTI) to both the mentor and protégé to test personality types of both. Her approach was based on her belief that "Much can be done to facilitate a good match – pre-programme interviews and questionnaires, as well as assessment instruments such as Myers Briggs and personality profiles" (p. 9). Similarly, in her exploration of the history and use of mentoring in the business organisation context, Kahle-Piasecki (2011) identifies that the most common negative factor of mentoring programmes is the unsuccessful matching of mentors and mentees. She advocates the use of the MBTI as a tool to achieve compatibility of personality types in the matching process.

Rose (2003) developed „The Ideal Mentor Scale‟ (IMS), a psychometric measure designed to help graduate students consider the qualities they as individuals most value in a potential mentor. Her study involved PhD students from three different

universities whose definition of an ideal mentor identified three key mentor attributes, i) integrity; ii) guidance and iii) relationship. Rose (2003) describes the IMS as an assessment tool that could individualise the initiation and maintenance of mentoring relationships, enhance communication, and ultimately improve the satisfaction of students with their doctoral education. By completing the IMS, students are assisted in clarifying what they want from a mentoring relationship and choosing a mentor from the available options. In Rose‟s (2003) opinion, "Measures of satisfaction and other desired outcomes of mentoring are important indexes of the utility and function of the mentoring relationship, for example, greater confidence and greater self-actualisation of the mentee (p. 490). She also sees the IMS as a tool for open dialogue between the mentee and potential mentor.

From a more general standpoint regarding psychometric tests and personality profiles as tools for identifying the mentor, Clutterbuck (2004) asks, "Which personality traits and skills positively correlate to participant variables?" (p. 2). He points out that personality testing produces causal inferences only, until implemented methodologically. Whichever tool is used for selecting the mentor and mentee, there is common agreement in the literature regarding evaluating psychometric and personality testing against the specific context within which they are administered (Rose, 2003; Stromei, 1999; Stromei, 2000).

In summary, a range of opinions regarding the most effective approach to identifying the mentor is offered in the literature, with minimal research-evidence basis. Extensive lists of desirable mentor attributes can be located in the literature with a common focus on personal, professional and cognitive domains of mentor characteristics. The need for a consensus definition of the mentor‟s role and function is emphasised, with several authors across the three disciplines claiming that this area is not well addressed and has ramifications for the mentee‟s needs.

Personality profiling and psychometric testing are referred to as alternative mechanisms for mentor selection. For example, Stromei (1999) administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™ to test personality types of both mentors and mentees to assist with facilitating a good mentoring partnership match. Other models include Rose‟s (2003) „The Ideal Mentor Scale‟ and Darwin‟s (2004) „Dimensions of Mentoring Profiler‟. These tools also aim to identify mentor

characteristics to lead to effective mentor-mentee matching. Whichever profiling tool or personality test is used, there appears to be consensus in the literature that they should be evaluated against the specific context in which they will be applied.

2.5 Identifying the Mentee

> *"The protégé may be "a student, new employee, new graduate, aspiring professional administrator, researcher or educator" (Milton, 2004, p. 117).*

There are multiple references in the literature to the new teacher as the mentee in a mentoring relationship however minimal attention is given to mentoring for the experienced teacher. Additionally, the consideration of who mentors the mentor has become a significant question in the more recent mentoring literature. A few authors specifically mention the need of experienced teachers to receive mentoring (Gibson, 2004; Elliott, 2000; Fabian & Simpson, 2002; Rymer, 2002; Shrewsbury Mentoring Programme, 2005). Gibson (2004) for example believes that the type of mentoring that is needed varies according to different points in a faculty member"s career, based on that person"s needs at the time.

Gibson"s (2004) view is reflected by Cobb et al. (2006) as they highlight in their article on mentoring involving literacy teacher educators that scholars who have successfully passed through tenure and promotion are involved in mentoring as mentors rather than as mentees. As Cobb et al. (2006) comment, these scholars experience different phases through their career and have a need for continued development during these progressions. Hezlett (2005) admits that a limitation of the studies she investigated in her case study research exploring what and how mentees learn from their mentors was that all of the mentees were early in their careers. As she states,

> "Studies involving research participants at different career stages have come to different conclusions regarding what protégés learn, suggesting that the content and process of a protégé"s learning are not static but change across the course of individuals" careers" (p. 523).

An emphasis in the higher education literature on the experienced teacher as the mentor indicates strongly that the personal or professional development of the

teacher is dependent on this expert-novice structure. For those teachers who choose not to be mentors, this suggests there is less opportunity for professional development. There appears to be minimal recognition of the experienced teacher who requests mentoring because they identify this as an integral aspect of their ongoing professional development, career enhancement and/or interpersonal needs in their job. Instead, Elliott (2000) suggests that this type of mentoring would be on a more informal basis, that is, dependent on the experienced teacher requesting mentoring help to "Improve their performance level" (p. 18).

In her article on co-mentoring for business communication, Rymer (2002) emphasises the significance of each individual having equal roles in peer mentoring, indicating that both the new and the experienced teacher can benefit from receiving mentoring support. Rymer (2002) believes that it is a myth that only elders or organisational superiors can be mentors. Fabian and Simpson (2002) identify a number of reasons for, and the benefits of, mentoring the experienced teacher, focusing on mentoring as a mechanism to support the teacher to function at a high level and recognizing the teacher‟s potential skills and knowledge. They acknowledge that experienced teachers have different needs from those of newly qualified teachers, and that individualising the induction process is required to take this into account. The authors identify the experienced teacher‟s needs as including enhancement of research capabilities, transitioning job roles and commencing a new job in a new organisation.

Le Maistre (2000) suggests a move away from a hierarchical model where the mentoring relationship is more collegial in nature, indicating a peer mentoring structure which acknowledges an absence of power imbalance. Le Maistre‟s (2000) suggestion therefore acknowledges that the experienced teacher can benefit from mentoring as much as the new teacher, reflecting Rymer‟s (2002) thinking. This collegial relationship sees the mentee and the mentor learning from each other, by sharing stories and reflecting on their practice. It is a scenario that provides an opportunity to envisage the mentee as either a new teacher or a more experienced teacher.

In support of Le Maistre‟s (2000) view, Lanser (2000) believes that the goal of a mentoring relationship is for the mentoring participants to contribute to each

others‟ professional development. Lanser‟s (2000) perspective offers a more general, perhaps global opportunity for the mentoring relationship to encompass the experienced teacher as mentee as well as the traditional expert-novice model where the new teacher is inevitably the mentee. If we are to concur with the literature that identifies multiple purpose and meaning of mentoring for the new teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Kanuka, 2005; Rowley, 1999), this multiplicity is surely as relevant and significant for the experienced teacher.

2.5.1 Who mentors the mentor?

In her article regarding the challenges for staff developers involved in coordinating mentoring programmes, Janas (1996) describes these staff developers as "Mentors of other mentors" (p. 4), acting as guides on the mentor‟s journey of discovery. Janas (1996) suggests several considerations for the staff developer in this mentoring role such as awareness of the cognitive, emotional and social factors when selecting mentors, training mentors and matching the mentors with mentees. She stresses the need to recognise that "Mentoring mentors is both a product and a process" (p. 5).

Chi-Kin Lee and Feng (2007), in their study investigating the types of support provided by mentoring dyad relationships, raise the question regarding whether "The professional development of the mentors themselves could benefit from mentor-protégé interactions" (p. 258). Indicating that the mentors in their study were experienced teachers, the authors comment, "Mentoring is often not seen as a professional development activity or approach for experienced teachers who receive relatively little recognition and resource support" (p. 258).

Examining the effects of a support course for student teachers who had assumed a mentor role with school children, Michael (2008) discusses the added value of individual and group guidance for the mentor. He refers to different models of guided mentoring, highlighting programmes that provide mentors with opportunities for reflective meetings, help mentors define their role and assist mentors in learning how to successfully manage the mentoring process.

In summary, early and recent literature on mentoring in the three disciplines included in this review make multiple references to the new teacher as the mentee in the mentoring relationship. A few authors mention the need for the experienced

teacher to also receive mentoring support, relating this teacher cohort�= s needs as often related to career progression and building research and/or leadership capabilities.

Le Maistre (2000) is one author who believes that a shift away from the expert-novice model underpinning the mentoring partnership provides the opportunity for both the new and the experienced teacher to benefit from mentoring and develop professionally. The issue of who mentors the mentor is becoming a prevalent question in the literature but remains largely unanswered.

2.6 Mentoring Training

One of the conditions to maintain an effective mentoring programme is the organisation establishing clear criteria for mentor selection that includes a commitment to initial and ongoing mentor training. Although training seems to come in various guises, that is, to varying degrees of formality, it is recognised as being highly important (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). The integration of mentor training as a key element in the success of a mentoring programme is supported by authors across the three disciplines (Arevalo, Boggan & West, 2004; Barrett, 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Ganser, 1997; Ganser & Koskela, 1997; Gardiner, 1999; Harper & Sawicka, 2001; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Rowley, 1999; Sweeney, 2003).

From Rowley�= s (1999) point of view, the criteria for effective mentoring includes a commitment to initial and ongoing mentor training, viewing this also as an important mechanism for retaining mentors. In her article regarding considerations for selecting and retaining teacher mentors, Mullinix (2002) also views ongoing training and support as serving an important mechanism for retaining mentors.

Barrett (2002) believes research needs to be allocated to help understand why mentor development training is not seen as important as the role the mentor plays in the professional development of others. He talks of mentor training and supervision as a key benefit for the experienced teacher�= s professional development, indicating that this opportunity for development hinges on being a mentor. Barrett (2002) describes the purpose of training as "Helping the mentor to explore their hidden behaviours and patterns of action" (p. 279) in order to examine the processes that can occur with the mentee during an interaction. He

adds that as well as initial mentor training, it should provide ongoing opportunities for mentors to interact with each other and develop supportive relationships.

Wolfe (1992) and Mullinix (2002) also believe that mentoring the mentors through collegial support groups is the essence of collaboration. Mullinix (2002) talks of establishing ongoing dialogue groups for mentors, as they can serve as excellent support mechanisms for collaborative reflection and shared learning regarding the mentoring process. These views are echoed by Feiman-Nemser (1996) and Sweeney (2003). For example, Sweeney (2003) believes that this ongoing nature of formed relationships helps mentors to shift their focus from helping the new teacher learn the curriculum to supporting the new teacher‟s professional development, particularly in the use of strategies for improving individual and student group learning, and assessment. He states, "The careful design of a mentor training programme is critical to the development of mentors and new teachers alike" (p. 1).

Advocating the provision of training and ongoing support for the mentors through the mentoring process, Feiman-Nemser (1996) views training as providing an experiential orientation to techniques of observation, coaching and theories of adult learning that helps acquaint mentors with their new roles. She believes that successful mentoring programmes are dependent upon the quality of training afforded the mentors and is supported in this thinking by Ganser (1997). Overall, effective training is likely to help improve the perception of benefits that mentors can derive because they should have an increased awareness of benefits, a more rewarding and fulfilling experience and improved performance and commitment as a mentor (Allen et al., 2006). In their research on mentor training in initial teacher education, Youens and Bailey (2004) provide an additional consideration for the focus of mentoring training, as they state,

> When seen in the context of a changing profession, with lesson observation and mentoring skills being expected of teachers as part of their normal work, it may just be that there is now less of a need for general training in mentoring skills and strategies as compared to 10 years ago. (p. 10)

A perspective offered by Gibb (1999) builds on this statement, as he considers the place of mentor training in the formal mentoring programme context. In his view,

it should be possible to train and develop staff to act as mentors, though differentiated training is needed rather than a “Sheep-dip approach” (p. 1071). Formal mentoring could be more successful if the pool of mentors is limited to those best able to play the role, recognising that even with training for mentors, there are variations in the competencies people can bring to relationships in the workplace.

A necessary relationship between mentor training and the goals of the organisation is stressed by Wolfe (1992) if the mentoring programme established in the organisation is to be effective. She describes mentor training as multi-faceted, where mentors in training should be given the opportunity to collaborate with other mentors and the focus on training should be to enhance the mentor"s self-reliance, linking back to the personal and psychological skills required in mentoring. Allen et al. (2006) continue this discussion, as they emphasise the need for investment in the mentoring programme through the provision of training, as this can signal to participants that the organisation supports the programme and is committed to its success.

Arevalo et al. (2004), in their project advising best practice mentoring programmes for organisations, also focus on the interdependence between mentor training and the organisation, emphasising that before mentors are trained, it is critical for the organisation to set down the infrastructure necessary to effectively create, nurture and support safe and positive mentoring relationships. They provide a list of benefits of mentor training, such as providing mentors with a comprehensive understanding of mentoring, and clarifying the specific mentoring programme"s goals, requirements and guidelines as aligned with the organisation"s objectives and goals. The authors also suggest a number of questions an organisation needs to ask itself in order to determine the purpose of mentoring and ensure the mentor training reflects strategic objectives. These questions help to identify to whom the mentoring is being provided, clarifying why these people need mentoring, and what outcomes are hoped to be achieved as a result of the mentoring efforts.

Within the literature in the area of mentor training, there is considerable reference made regarding mentors receiving training, but minimal references regarding the need for mentee training (Allen et al., 2006; Dagenais, 1995; Sweeney, 2003). In

their research study examining the effects of mandated training for mentees on mentoring outcomes involving university students and business professionals in the United States of America, Kasprisin, Single, Single, Ferrier, and Muller (2008) found that mentoring and e-mentoring programmes have traditionally focused on training mentors rather than the mentees. Kaspirin et al. (2008) found that mentoring relationships in which the protégé had received training were more successful in terms of engagement and satisfaction with the experience. The authors comment that the findings suggest protégé training may be more appropriate for mentoring dyads. From Allen et al.‟s (2006) point of view, both mentors and mentees benefit from receiving training, particularly when participants in formal programmes may be new to the mentoring process.

Other authors across the three disciplines who support training for both mentors and mentees suggest that the continuum of support and training for the mentor is as important for the mentee, to address ongoing needs and sustain continuous professional development of both partners (Arevalo et al., 2004; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002; Simmons, 1999). As Simmons (1999) states, "It is vital that protégés be trained not to take a passive role in the mentoring process" (p. 3).

In a survey of 34 business organisations, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) found that 96% rated the provision of training as important for both the mentor and mentee. The term „training‟ referred to both skills and knowledge, that is, what is important in a successful mentoring partnership and how to do mentoring. As they state, "Training helps to direct, support and enhance the potential for positive mentoring experiences" (p. 257). This thinking is reflected by Simmons (1999), as she highlights that mentoring training provides a mechanism for communicating to both the mentor and the mentee how mentoring fits into the organisation‟s goals and existing programmes of professional development. She does question whether separate training for the mentors and mentees is the best approach.

In summary, the inclusion of mentor training within an organisation‟s mentoring system is advocated by a number of authors in the literature across the three disciplines. There is however minimal reference made to the need or provision of mentee training. The purpose of training mentors is purported to provide the

mentor with a range of strategies and tools in order to mentor others and is also perceived as an important mechanism for retaining mentors. Additionally, training provides mentors with opportunities to interact with each other, consequently creating an internal support network and promoting collaboration across the organisation. Arevalo et al. (2004) emphasise a connection between mentor training and the organisation providing the necessary infrastructure to nurture and support positive mentoring relationships.

Research that advocates training for both the mentor and the mentee identifies that the mentoring relationship is more successful and likely to address the professional development needs of the mentoring participants. The question regarding whether training should be separate for mentors and mentees or combined continues to be debated in the literature. Authors advocating separate training claim that there are definite advantages for the mentoring participants to share issues specific to their respective roles. In comparison, combined training is viewed as providing the opportunity for discussing mutual expectations and clarifying each others‟ roles and responsibilities. Identifying effective mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring training is an area of research requiring further investigation.

2.7 Evaluation of Mentoring

The review of literature on evaluation of mentoring across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business highlights a focus on a number of factors integral to mentoring that warrant evaluation, including the role and responsibilities of the mentor (Elliott & Calderhead, 1995; Gibb, 1994a) or whether the training provided for mentors and mentees was sufficient to enable engagement in a mentoring partnership (Johnson, 2002; Youens & Bailey, 2004). The literature also highlights the purpose of evaluating mentoring as identifying participant satisfaction rates as reported by the mentee or teacher retention (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Stromei, 2000).

However, there appears to be minimal reference made to evaluation approaches that aim to identify specific mentoring outcomes, for example evidence of the mentee‟s professional development in their teaching or the impact of mentoring on student learning outcomes. Berk et al. (2005) assert that although much has been

written about mentoring in the healthcare context, research to date has not addressed the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship in the academic setting or the tools to measure this effectiveness. The authors comment,

> Faculty mentoring relationships in academia, and medical schools in particular, over the past twenty-five years have produced lists of definitions, functions and programmes, but miniscule evidence of effectiveness. The concept of mentoring remains unclear and imprecise, based more on assumption than on demonstrated empirical evidence. (p. 68)

The prevalence, quality and outcomes of mentoring training programmes as additional mentoring features that should be evaluated is advocated by Johnson (2002). In his guidelines for the practice of mentoring in professional psychology faculty, Johnson (2002) suggests that accrediting bodies should incorporate explicit evaluation of mentoring training and how it impacts on the quality of mentoring practice. He also proposes that evaluation in the area of desired functions of the mentor would be a useful focus for future research.

The subject of why a mentoring programme should be evaluated is explored by Odell (1992), who claims that programme evaluation should be an integral component of mentoring programmes. Odell (1992) believes that what and how a mentoring programme is evaluated is largely contingent on the purpose of the evaluation and that almost any aspect of a programme could be evaluated depending on the evaluation purpose. Odell (1992) focuses on evaluation to establish the merit and worth of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism in the organisation. She defines merit as “The degree to which beginning teachers intrinsically value the processes of mentoring” (p. 95). Her definition of worth focuses on evaluating the retention rates and growth of beginning teachers. There is no mention of evaluating for identification of changes in teaching practice as a result of mentoring.

Odell (1992) also suggests that formative evaluation processes should be an ongoing component of programme evaluation. She explains how formative methods provide information about the mentoring process and enables any necessary revision or adaptation of the programme in order to meet its intended goals. Summative evaluation, in Odell‟s (1992) opinion, is product-oriented and

retrospective to the programme. Summative methods to gather this product-evaluation data are not suggested.

In their review of studies on the impact of mentoring on teacher retention, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) identified several areas of evaluation focus across ten mentoring programmes, including teacher retention rates, effects on job satisfaction, a teacher‟s intention to continue teaching and the assistance a mentee received from the mentor. A number of the studies they explored also emphasised evaluation of mentoring process features, such as the number of hours spent with a mentor and duration of a mentoring programme. The authors point out that these studies were generally not stringent or research-strong in method of evaluation and in their opinion this limited the validity of the reported results.

As well as a lack of findings indicating evaluation of measurable outcomes from mentoring, further exploration of studies on mentoring by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) found that the majority of these studies did not or could not clarify the criteria for mentor and mentee selection. In response to their findings, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) ask a series of questions which remain open to many variable answers. For example, they question whether training and selection of mentors makes a difference to the effectiveness of a mentoring programme. Also, they ask what the best components of a mentoring programme are in order to have positive outcomes for the teacher. What their study appeared to exclude or did not discover was an investigation of studies which identified strategies for evaluating whether mentoring supported and resulted in teachers making real changes and improvements in their teaching practice and if this in turn made a real difference to student learning outcomes.

In a broader study of structural and process features of four different professional development programmes that could impact on teachers‟ practice, efficacy and student outcomes, Ingvarson, Meiers, and Beavis‟s (2005) analysis identified mentoring as one of the professional development delivery modes. Teachers across the four programmes were surveyed to evaluate their perception of the gains they had made in their knowledge, practice, efficacy and student outcomes. The results of this evaluation were based on the teachers‟ responses on a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Without stipulating whether mentoring was

specifically evaluated in their analysis findings, only tentative assumptions can be made from the authors‟ findings regarding the influence of mentoring on the teachers‟ knowledge, practice and efficacy.

In an earlier study of evaluating mentoring as a teacher development mechanism for student teachers, Elliott and Calderhead (1995) investigated the professional development growth process of student teachers as a result of receiving mentoring. In comparison to Ingvarson et al.‟s (2005) study, their investigation involved interviewing the mentors and paid particular attention to the research participants‟ perceptions of the mentor‟s role and responsibilities in this context. The authors propose several conclusions regarding the potential contribution the mentor makes to a student teacher‟s development, particularly in areas of cognitive and emotional development.

Holahan, Jurkat, and Friedman (2000) designed a three-phase "Mentor Teacher Model" (p. 341), where mentoring begins with training the trainer, supports the diffusion of mentoring across different cohort groups involved in the mentoring scheme, and concludes with a goal of institutionalisation, where mentoring has become an integral mechanism of the organisation. In their study, Holahan et al.‟s (2000) evaluation focused on the extent to which mentee teachers had integrated computer technology into their curricula. Their study did not appear to include an evaluation of the extent to which the mentee teacher had integrated the technology or changed their teaching practice as a consequence of this.

In comparison, Gray and McNaught‟s (2001) case study analysis to evaluate the benefits and outcomes of a Learning Technology Mentoring (LTM) programme on core online teaching activities provide one of the few studies in the mentoring literature to implement outcome-evaluation of mentoring as opposed to a process-focused evaluation. Their findings identified a number of practical outcomes in the teachers‟ online teaching practices, for example an increase in course content development, an increase in student use of the course sites and elements of personal gain such as increased teacher confidence with using online technology. These outcomes were based on reflections by the LTM programme manager, which were in turn "Based partly on formal reports completed by the mentor teacher participants" (p. 220).

It is apparent in the mentoring literature regarding the evaluation of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism that the choice of an evaluation process is contingent on an organisation"s strategic goals and objectives for teachers" professional development. Gray and McNaught (2001) question the feasibility of an organisation-wide adoption of a mentoring programme to build a culture of excellence in online teaching and learning, concluding that mentoring is not a "Quick fix" (p. 223). The authors suggest that an organisation-wide mentoring programme could, however, lead the organisation ultimately to greater competitive advantage. They advise that "Policy, infrastructure and support are absolutely essential and working across all faculties and departments is essential to develop local ownership, build capability and maintain productivity in a shared context" (p. 223).

In his proposal of a framework for evaluating mentoring in the organisation, Gibb (1994a) suggests that evaluation is threefold. As well as evaluating mentoring outcomes for the mentees, evaluation is also about identifying the contribution mentoring makes to the achievement of broader organisational initiatives of which mentoring is normally a part and consideration of the costs of mentoring. In his view, the overriding role of evaluation is to account for the overall value of mentoring. Gibb (1994a) believes that mentoring is not a "Stand-alone system" (p. 32) and that evaluating mentoring should consider the mentor as an integral part of the organisational systems in which teachers work and engage in professional development activities. As Odell (1992) suggests, "Evaluation isn"t just for "the edification of external authorities" (p. 95).

In summary, for an organisation to justify the provision of mentoring as one of their professional development mechanisms, there is a need for evaluation of the impact and outcomes of mentoring. The literature identifies common areas of evaluating mentoring effectiveness including participant satisfaction, staff retention and process-oriented aspects of mentoring such as how often the partnerships met and whether the training was sufficient to enable staff engagement in the mentoring process. An apparent gap in the literature is the application of evaluation strategies which determine the impact of mentoring on the individual and the organisation and provide measurable outcomes from mentoring such as change and development in an individual"s practice.

2.8 The Negative Aspects of Mentoring

Several authors in the mentoring literature highlight the paucity of studies investigating the negative aspects of mentoring (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby et al., 2000; Long, 1994; Scandura, 1998). Review of the literature on the topic of negative mentoring by Long (1994) identified a number of concerns about mentoring in terms of factors that could potentially have "Disastrous consequences" (p. 3) on a mentoring relationship. Insufficient time allowed for the development of the mentoring relationship was a particular issue emphasised in Long"s (1994) review. Additionally, minimal conceptual understanding of mentoring, poor mentor-mentee matching and unrealistic expectations of mentoring outcomes by the mentee and/or the mentor were highlighted by Long (1994) as leading to "Contrived collegiality" (p.4) and a breakdown in the mentoring relationship.

In his review of the mentoring literature, Scandura (1998) proposed a typology of negative mentoring styles and developed a model of outcomes that may be associated with dysfunctional mentoring relationships. Scandura (1998) premised these models on the need for the progression of investigation into the causes and effects of negative mentoring experiences.

Building on Scandura"s (1998) research, Eby et al. (2000) developed a taxonomy of fifteen different types of negative mentoring experiences based on three predominant circumstances in which these experiences were likely to occur, including: i) dissimilar backgrounds of the mentor and mentee; ii) dissimilar attitudes, values and beliefs between the mentor and mentee and iii) the mentee having a direct reporting relationship with the mentor (p. 6). The purpose of Eby et al."s (2000) taxonomy was to highlight and confirm mentees" perceptions of negative mentoring experiences and provide a broader scope of experiences likely to occur in a mentoring relationship. As they emphasise in the discussion of their findings,

> "The almost exclusive focus on the positive aspects of mentoring relationships paints a distorted and unrealistic picture of relational patterns and fosters the perception that any negative experience is pathological and aberrant rather than a normal aspect of relationships" (p. 13).

Eby et al. (2000) point out however that mentoring relationships cannot easily be classified as “Positive” or “Negative” (p. 2), acknowledging that negative events can occur in healthy mentoring relationships. They conclude their discussion by emphasising the need for the creation of measurement systems to assess negative mentoring experiences in order to develop effective strategies to circumvent or alleviate the outcomes of these.

Broadening the focus of mentoring research to encompass studies on the effects of negative mentoring experiences is also espoused by Eby and Allen (2002). In their examination of a mentee"s experience of mentoring in the business context, the authors categorised negative mentoring into two main areas, including “Distancing/Manipulative Behaviour” and “Poor Dyadic Fit” (p. 1). The predominant negative experiences reported by the mentees included questioning their intentions to remain in their job and stress. Interestingly, their study indicated that mentees in formal mentoring relationships reported the most negative experience and outcomes of their mentoring partnership compared with mentees in informal relationships. The authors compare how formal mentoring partnerships are often made more visible by the organisation which may make it difficult for a mentee to terminate a mentoring relationship that isn"t functioning. Also, mentees in a formal partnership may have unrealistic expectations of the mentoring and the outcomes. As Eby et al. (2000) comment, it is common practice for mentees in formal partnerships to have set goals to be achieved through mentoring. If these goals are not met due to negative experiences, the mentee may experience more pronounced negative outcomes.

In summary, a number of causes and effects of negative mentoring experiences is identified in the mentoring literature, including poor matching, dissimilar backgrounds and attitudes between the mentor and mentee and minimal conceptual understanding of mentoring as it impacts on the individual. Acknowledging that a mentoring relationship can experience both positive and negative outcomes is emphasised by Eby et al. (2000) if an enhanced understanding and application of mentoring is to be achieved. Identifying factors that can lead to dysfunctional mentoring and negative mentoring experiences is an important area for further research to assist in the development of strategies to counteract or alleviate the effects of negative mentoring processes and outcomes.

2.9 Further Research

A fundamental salient question in the mentoring literature has been whether mentoring relationships lead to positive outcomes for the mentee, a question posed by a number of authors across the three contexts. In Wanberg et al.‟s (2003) view, additional clarity about the construct of mentoring can be achieved through further research on how best to represent the construct space of mentoring functions and by carefully distinguishing between formal and informal mentoring relationships. This thinking is summarised by Hezlett (2005) as she states,

> Research to date tentatively supports the proposition that mentoring enhances the protégé‟s cognitive skill-based and affective learning. More systematic research explicitly directed toward understanding what protégés learn from their mentors is needed to develop a more comprehensive taxonomy of the content of protégé learning. (p. 511)

Wanberg et al. (2003) also propose that an important next step for the literature on mentoring is to attend more closely to internal validity issues in order to determine to what extent positive outcomes for the protégé can be uniquely attributed to mentoring as opposed to other factors. This further exploration is supported by Wang (2002). In his opinion, the research on the relationship between mentoring practices, what mentees claim they learn and what they are actually able to do in their teaching is still an important area of teacher mentoring that is worthy of further exploration. Providing a broadened view of the need to inform mentoring policy and practice by having more direct studies of mentoring and its effect on the teacher, Feiman-Nemser (1996) comments,

> "We need to know more about how mentors work with mentees in productive ways, what structures and resources enable that mentoring work and how mentoring fits in the wider framework of professional development and accountability" (p. 3).

Selecting a mentoring model that provides a structure for successful mentoring relationships and learning outcomes is prominent in Darwin‟s (2000) thinking. She highlights how research that explores heterogeneous relationships is relatively thin, due to the unchallenged assumption that mentoring is a one-to-one developmental relationship between an older and younger person. Although this assumption is

being superseded to an extent by the growing support and use of alternative models, the expert-novice conception of mentoring remains a common theme in the literature, as authors continue to explain mentoring as a mechanism predominantly for the new employee.

Many research studies on mentoring lack methodological rigour and need to stress the importance and validity of studies that collect similar outcome data from both participants and non-participants in a mentoring programme (Aryee & Chay, 2005; Chao, 1997; Eby et al., 2008; Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004; Woodd, 1997). These authors emphasise the relevance of such studies in establishing whether participants perform differently from non-participants, claiming this type of investigation will provide the necessary methodological rigour. Chao"s (1997) exploration of the relationship between having a mentor and gaining organisational knowledge found that over a five year period, current and former mentees continued to be better socialised than employees without mentors. Chao"s (1997) conclusion was that there is a small body of evidence that protégés learn about their organizations from mentors throughout their careers. This body of evidence, however, focuses only on the aspect of a person"s socialisation within an organisation context and does not appear to touch on any other perceived or evidenced benefits of mentoring.

Results from Aryee and Chay"s (2005) study examining the impact of career-oriented mentoring in the business context indicated that mentored employees achieved significantly higher levels of outcome variables, such as career satisfaction and work commitment attitudes, than non-mentored employees. However, Wanberg et al. (2003) counter this view, as they state, "Highly controlled experimental research design where individuals are allowed versus not allowed to have mentors is improbable, making this area of examination difficult" (p. 49).

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) and Eby et al. (2000) offer another observation that has had minimal reference made in the literature, when they highlight the lack of research investigating the negative effects of mentoring. They believe there can be an inherent danger in relying on mentors to pass on their teaching practices regardless of whether they are effective or not. In this area, Wanberg et al. (2003)

are in agreement, also believing that research is needed to examine the antecedents and consequences of dysfunctional experiences in mentoring relationships as they state, "Empirical studies that examine the negative experiences of mentoring can provide other sources of data to determine what mechanisms impact outcomes" (p. 511). The assumption that a dysfunctional mentoring relationship is the mentor‟s fault because mentors are more powerful and dominant than their protégés is explored by Feldman (1999). His article presents an alternative view, suggesting that protégés contribute to the interpersonal dynamics of the mentoring relationship as much as the mentors. Feldman concludes with suggestions that research needs to examine dysfunctional mentoring in the future.

A number of other areas in need of further research can be found throughout the mentoring literature, across the three contexts of education, health and business. Hezlett (2005), for example, focuses on the need for additional research to determine what and how protégés learn later in their careers, enabling the organization to determine what objectives mentoring can support at different stages in employees‟ careers. Orland-Barak (2005) believes that research on mentoring and learning to mentor needs to extend its focus from the acquisition of skills to how the contexts within which mentors work shape the character of their work, the skills they develop and the nature of the passage from teaching to mentoring.

This focus on the mentor is reflected in Barrett‟s (2002) belief that research needs to be allocated to help understand why mentor development training is not seen as important as the role the mentor plays in the professional development of others. In their investigation of the relationship between a formal mentoring programme and management support to the benefits and costs perceived by formal mentors, Parise and Forret (2007) believe that continuing studies of formal mentoring programmes are important in view of their pervasiveness and the potential they hold for becoming a significant developmental tool in the workplace and in other contexts.

2.10 Summary

In summary, several areas for ongoing research on mentoring are identified in the literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business. Particular emphasis is placed on the following areas: i) establishing whether mentoring leads to positive outcomes for the mentee; ii) selecting a model that

provides structure for successful mentoring relationships; iii) studies on mentoring that are supported by methodological rigour; vi) studies comparing the outcomes from mentored versus non-mentored individuals and v) investigation into the effects of negative mentoring experiences and identification of strategies to mitigate these. Additionally, understanding the influence of the context on the functions of the mentor, including the need to focus on the mentor‟s professional development, are highlighted as important areas for further research.

The literature on mentoring across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business espouse mentoring as a phenomenon that can support the professional development of practitioners across multiple disciplines. There is consensus in the literature that a stipulated definition of mentoring has yet to be agreed on. This review has highlighted a number of key variables which need to be considered as integral to the mentoring process. These variables include a determination of the purpose, benefits and definition of mentoring; a consideration of different mentoring models; the process of mentor selection; identification of the mentee; provision of mentoring training; strategies for evaluation the impact and effectiveness of mentoring on a teacher‟s academic practice; and identification of areas for ongoing research in the domain of mentoring in higher education contexts. Each of these factors has been examined from an individual and organisational perspective.

The following chapter, Chapter Three, describes the researcher‟s conceptual framework for mentoring based on an integration of the findings from the literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business. The conceptual framework provides the foundation for the development of the researcher‟s proposed theoretical framework which explicates the underpinning constructs of mentoring as a process and a practice for supporting a teacher‟s academic practice in the higher education context. This theoretical model is expanded in the methodology chapter, Chapter Four (refer p. 72), as it underpins and guides the research design for this investigation.

CHAPTER THREE
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MENTORING

> *Developing a teacher mentor programme without first thinking carefully about the concept of mentoring is to run the risk of developing a programme that is incomplete, lacks integrity and duplicates programmes that in some form have already been tried. Only when a clear conceptual foundation of mentoring is established can effective mentoring programmes be constructed. (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 33)*

This chapter focuses on the development of a conceptual framework for the mentoring process across three contexts – higher education, health and business, resulting in the formulation of a theoretical framework and separately, a framework to explain the research process and justification for use of an action research methodology to structure the research study.

In order to summarise the focus of this research study and identify the research questions, identification of a theory for mentoring was required. Gibb (1994a) discusses the need to develop a conceptual framework to explain the diversity of mentoring concepts, models and practices, as an important theoretical and practical concern. Hence the progression of a conceptual framework (refer Figure 1, p. 55) to inform and contribute to the development of a theoretical framework (refer Figure 2, p. 62), providing a more robust underpinning to the concept and practice of mentoring.

The following conceptual and theoretical frameworks have emerged through review and synthesis of the literature on mentoring. They depict a construction of knowledge from the bodies of literature surrounding contemporary mentoring concepts and practice, and a transformative progression from the original conceptual framework to the development of a theoretical framework underpinning mentoring, to the construction of a model for framing the research study itself. As Dash (1999) advises, before a conceptual framework is developed, there should be a wide review of the literature pertaining to mentoring and a wide exploration of practice in this field. This approach contributes to gaining a clear and principled

understanding of the rationale for each part of the framework and how it relates to other dimensions of an organisation‟s practices for teacher professional development. The process of developing conceptual and theoretical frameworks for mentoring benefits from any logical, philosophical or research literature that may be suitably identified at this stage in the study. It is one of the characteristics of qualitative research to maintain a degree of conceptual and theoretical openness at the start of a study (Dash, 1999).

The conceptual and theoretical frameworks suggested in this chapter have the potential to act as a meta-analysis tool, providing a multi-level structure supporting the research (Felman, 1999). They give a multi-dimensional picture of mentoring, both in relation to explaining the concept of mentoring and the depiction of an integrated theoretical framework to underpin and position mentoring within a higher education context.

Figure 1 (refer p. 55) illustrates mentoring as a multi-faceted concept and practice, illustrated by the interweaving of core elements identified as integral to mentoring, as highlighted in past and contemporary mentoring literature. The framework also depicts multiple relationships between the organisation, the individual teacher and the mentoring partnership. It represents the idea that mentoring is a partnership, whether between two or more people indicating that mentoring cannot happen in isolation from other people or other systems and processes existing within an organisation‟s infrastructure. Figure 2 (refer p. 62) presents a theoretical framework for mentoring, developed in response to the mentoring literature and building on this researcher‟s conceptual framework. Figure 3 (refer p. 69) develops from these first two frameworks, illustrating how theory provides the researcher with tools to give broad scope to think about the research and conceptualise the problem, as well as providing a means to link ideas and data so that deeper connections can be revealed (Bliss, Monk & Ogborn, 1983).

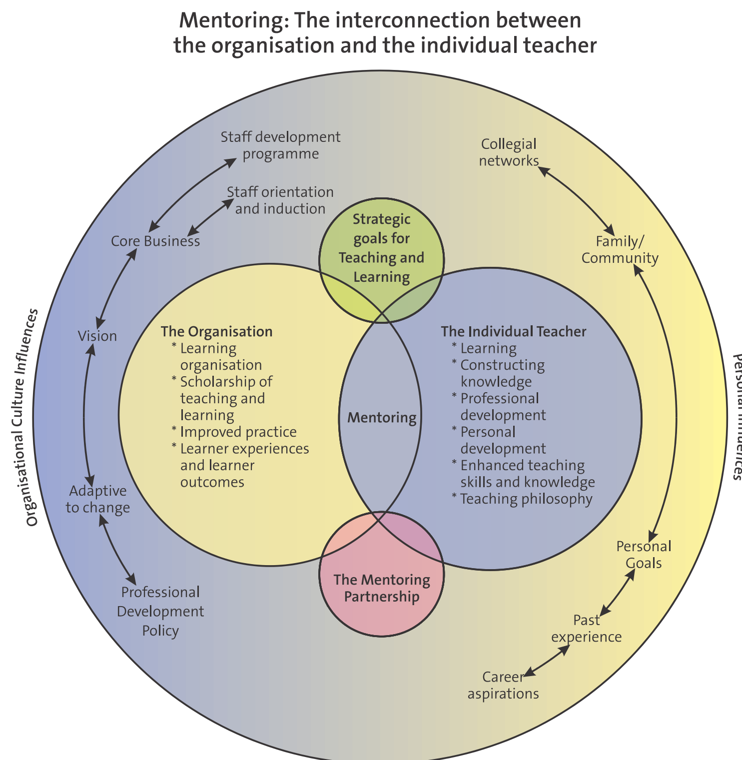
Bliss et al. (1983) suggest that mentoring can provide a core mechanism for achieving a link between the individual teacher‟s practice and professional development and the organisation‟s teaching and learning aspirations and goals. As well as emphasising the influence of connectedness between the individual and the organisation, equally important is the connection achieved in and through the

mentoring partnership. The wider effect of a successful partnership is an organisation where its employees want to connect with and contribute to the strategic goals. The mentoring partnership anchors the individual and provides a pathway for this connection with the organisation. Dutton and Heaphy (2003) refer to the "Degree of connectivity" (p. 266) as a measurement of a relationship"s openness to influences and new ideas. Connectedness is a theme in all three of the frameworks presented here.

3.1 A Conceptual Framework for Mentoring

Issues around mentoring as a mechanism for supporting academic teaching practice located within the literature have been contextualised. The following iteration of the researcher"s conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates this contextualisation as it recognises the place of mentoring as a mechanism for connecting the organisation and the individual teacher. The framework also recognises the internal and external influences that can impact on this connected relationship, including organisational cultural factors and personal factors in relation to the individual teacher.

Figure 1



Central to the conceptual framework is the aspect of learning, both learning of the individual and organisational learning. The mentoring partnership provides the anchor that connects the reciprocal impact of learning between these two entities. As Ackermann (2001) states,

> "Learning is much less about acquiring information or submitting to other people"s ideas or values than it is about putting one"s own words to the world, or finding one"s own voice and exchanging our ideas with others" (p. 2).

Ackermann"s (2001) statement highlights two important points that help to explain the conceptual framework for mentoring as suggested here. Firstly, that learning is a core component of the mentoring process, where both mentor and mentee can be actively constructing new knowledge that builds their professional practice. Secondly, the importance of determining the purpose of the mentoring partnership as it contributes to the organisation. Mentoring provides the link between the social and personal meaning-making for the individual and the goals of the organisation.

Viewing the nature of learning as a social process represents the nature of the mentoring relationship, where both the mentor and mentee are partners in the learning therefore both can benefit and learn from each other. The interactions that happen within the mentoring partnership are inherently social, albeit occurring in a prescribed work environment in this study. As Brockbank and McGill (1998) point out, social processes cannot be isolated phenomena. This is what mentoring can aim for in the higher education context, whether concerning a new or experienced teacher.

The research study took place within a higher education organisational context. For mentoring to support the teaching practice of academic teaching staff, it requires a commitment from the organisation, situating mentoring within the organisation as a key mechanism for professional development. In Figure 1 (refer p. 55), mentoring can be seen as complementing other forms of learning within the organisation. This level of commitment is rooted in the organisation"s culture.

Senge"s (1990) premise of a „learning organisation" which aims to build a shared vision and personal mastery, provides the conceptual framework with a view of the organisation and the individual as a dynamic, connected entity, with mentoring as a

significant mechanism for achieving real learning by the teacher, thus the teacher contributing to the development of the organisation. His Systems Thinking concept helps to comprehend and address the conceptual framework as a whole and to examine the interrelationship between the parts within it. This examination is important to enable viewing the organisation and the individual as a dynamic, connected process. McDonald and Castleton‟s (2001) view that “Learning can be given power as practice, rather than mere rhetoric, if settings and programmes actually enhance successful interactions and outcomes by participants” (p. 29) helps to determine the place of mentoring in the organisation. It can establish the setting in which the mentoring practice occurs, that is, the organisation and its support of mentoring as a professional development tool, as well as the key elements of the mentoring programme itself.

Constructivist leadership is about learning and is a reciprocal process. This statement can be translated in the mentoring context as meaning the leadership of the organisation, which is strategically focused on the learning of their staff, situates mentoring as a teacher support mechanism. Also, it can apply to the mentoring partnership itself, with the partnership‟s focus on learning and the power balance of the mentor and mentee ensuring the partnership is a reciprocal process. Both of these points are illustrated in the conceptual framework.

If a learning organisation provides an environment where people can continually expand their capabilities and engage in a shared vision for the future, mentoring is one mechanism that can support and enhance the likelihood of achieving this vision sharing. An organisation needs to see people not as helpless reactors but as active participants in shaping their reality, therefore the organisation‟s reality (Antonacopoulou, 2006). Antonacopoulou (2006) refers to the individual as being the organisation. Her comment is an assumption that allows for a broader description and illustration of how the individual is connected with the organisation, in terms of communication and dialogue and an acknowledgement of strategic goals as a collective ownership.

For mentoring to support teaching practice in higher education, there are a number of variables to be considered. Being dependent on the mentoring partnership between the mentor and mentee as the only element influencing teaching practice

is problematic; the context in which the mentoring partnership is established and functions is of prime importance. Ragins and Verbos (2007) make the salient point that positive relationships which are created in a mentoring context are shaped by organisational and cultural contexts, which in turn create expectations about what mentoring is and what it can become. Oliver and Aggleton (2002), in their research highlighting the importance of locating mentoring within a strategic framework for professional development, point out that without this framework, organisations are likely to experience difficulties in justifying the choice of mentoring as a professional development mechanism as compared to other professional development options.

Smith and McAllister (2001) believe that to be able to explore the process of one‟s performance, personality and fundamental aims in life, people need considerable support and motivation. They see this process as requiring the integration of different aspects of people‟s lives and experiences. To make sense of these experiences, there needs to be an ability to locate them within some sort of framework of commitment, from the organisation as much as from the individual. Mentoring is a definitive representation of an organisation‟s commitment to supporting this view, illustrated in the conceptual framework, which identifies mentoring and the mentoring partnership as central links, connecting the individual and the organisation and providing the organisation with a mechanism for staff professional development.

As is apparent in the mentoring literature, the success and effectiveness of mentoring as a support mechanism for the teacher‟s practice depends on being clear about what mentoring means and basing the purpose of mentoring contextually. In other words, defining and determining the practice of the mentoring partnership within the organisation. A number of interrelated systems operate at different levels, directly and indirectly influencing this, including i) the individual teacher; ii) the mentoring partnership; iii) the organisation; iv) the variables connected with each of these three entities and v) the communication processes occurring between the organisation and the individual.

Figure 1 (refer p. 55) has a central theme of multi-level connectedness, with, as has previously been described, mentoring being a mechanism for connecting the

individual with the organisation as well as the mentoring partnership providing an environment where individuals are connected; the mentoring partnership therefore becoming an integral link within the whole framework dynamic. As well as emphasising the influence of the connectedness between the individual and the organisation, equally important is the connections achieved in and via the mentoring partnership. The wider effect of a successful mentoring partnership is an organisation where its employees want to connect with and contribute to the organisation‟s goals.

Within the teacher mentoring context, Pask‟s (1975) conversation theory is applicable, as the conversations that take place within the mentoring partnerships focus on subject matter which serves to make knowledge explicit, and enable the mentee to develop professionally. Such development acknowledges the individual as pivotal in contributing to the development of the organisation. Varney (2009) contends that mentoring impacts educational achievement and technical teaching efficacy. It could be assumed that such outcomes are desired by the organisation and therefore help substantiate mentoring as an organisational teaching support mechanism. He continues by stating that these outcomes, however, are not sufficient and that the mentoring partnership should also enhance personal identification, inspiration and affirmation that motivates the individual along their journey. Therefore, mentoring can be a mechanism to support achievement of individual pursuits as well as strategic development for the organisation.

3.2 A Theoretical Framework for Mentoring

Theory underpinning the concept and practice of mentoring helps to explain the learning and development processes that occur during and resulting from the mentoring process. As educationalists, the theories help us to reflect upon our teaching approach and to understand why our approach did or did not work. This view implies that mentoring needs to be theoretically underpinned in order to substantiate teaching practice and the support required for this. From the researcher‟s initial conceptual framework of mentoring (refer Figure 1, p. 55), the development of theory to underpin mentoring practices was essential to argue for the place of mentoring as a support mechanism for academic teachers‟ practice and validate it as such within a higher education organisational context. The need for a

dual theoretical approach was developed in response to the concept of mentoring as encompassing both individual teacher and organisation entities. This approach is supported by recent literature (Dobozy & Pospisil, 2008; Hansen, 2005; Smyth, 2004).

In their paper exploring the principles of humanist learning and teaching for first-year teacher education learners, Dobozy and Pospisil (2008) talk of the challenges university lecturers face in adopting constructivist approaches to learning and teaching, described as conceptual, pedagogical, cultural and political. They contend that "The design of interactive situations between teacher and learner based on a humanist-constructivist model tries to break free from the constraints of old institutional habits and traditional pedagogical practices" (p. 2). This view can be applied to the challenges found in the mentoring context, in particular when attempting to move from the traditional expert-novice model, with a dependence on a senior teacher mentoring a junior protégé, to a model based on constructivism and humanism, where the emphasis is on co-construction of knowledge and skills through dialogue in a power neutral partnership.

According to Varney (2009), humanistic mentoring shows concern for mentees on an interpersonal level and emphasises a commitment to a mentee"s professional and personal growth, incorporating an understanding and appreciation of the individual"s life, culture and goals. The principles of Varney"s (2009) theory of humanistic mentoring can encompass the development of both the mentor and the mentee in the mentoring partnership. Additionally, the mentee could be an experienced teacher assuming this role in the partnership. Such a theory does not need to apply only to the expert-novice mentoring model.

Dobozy and Pospisil (2008) also emphasise a humanist-constructivist learning theory, as a "Learner-centred epistemology" (p. 1) as it strives to help the learner better understand themselves. In the mentoring partnership, this can imply the mentee striving to create their own identity as a teacher, to establish their own philosophy of learning and teaching based on espoused and existing theories. In a co-constructed, dialogic partnership, this discovery can be iterative and reflective, therefore beneficial and a reality for the mentor as well as the mentee.

Teaching and learning is a social practice, as is mentoring, where there is interaction and dialogue between two or more people, a sharing of knowledge and experience, an opportunity to explore and learn together. The social nature of learning offers opportunities for the mentee to reflect upon their learning not only by themselves but with others. Brockbank and McGill (1998) state, "As meaning is created in relation to others, then reflection and the creation of meaning are inevitably a social process" (p. 30). The context within which such reflection occurs is the learning relationship. The social construction of learning is predominant in different aspects of mentoring practice, including the mentoring partnership and any ongoing mentor and mentee support groups established as an integral aspect of the mentoring system.

The constructivist paradigm has multiple purposes in this research. Firstly, it provides the framework and underpinning principles for the research project itself, positioning the researcher and the participants within the research process and outcomes. Secondly, the constructivist paradigm provides assumptions of the mentoring concept and practice that legitimise the roles of the mentor and the mentee, as they co-create realities and understandings within the partnership and within the larger context of the organisation. In this context, the organisation construes the natural world. Thirdly, constructivism underpins the emerging mentoring model in this study.

The scrutiny underpinning this research study originated from the researcher"s experience as a mentor in the higher education context. There was a need to ascertain the impact of and reliance on one person providing mentoring for an entire organisation, and a need to justify the significance of mentoring as an integral component of the organisational system. It was also imperative that the existing mentoring mechanism be theoretically supported, an evident gap in the literature regarding the establishment and maintenance of mentoring practices. As Brockbank and McGill (2006) comment, "The method of mentoring is likely to be influenced by the philosophy that underpins it and in general the theoretical base is implicit and undeclared" (p. 9).

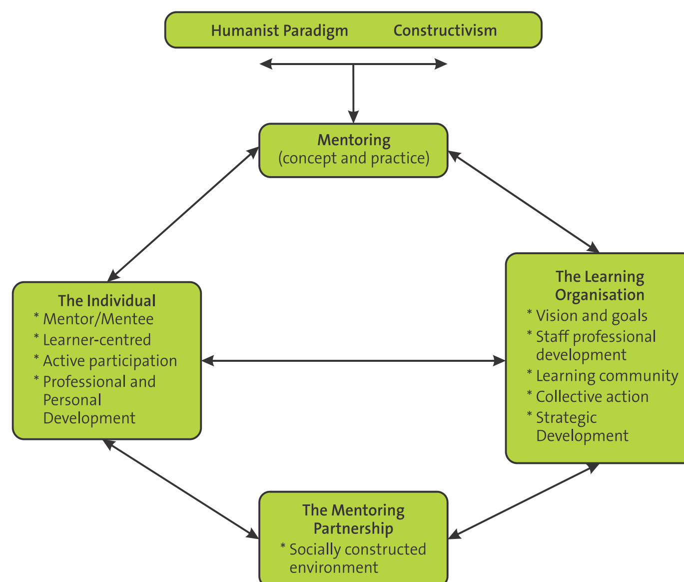
If the theoretical framework to be developed in the study has to overcome the weaknesses or gaps of the presently available conceptualisations of mentoring, this

seems to suggest that a research-then-theory strategy (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) is most applicable and useful. As Dash (1999) explains, a research-then theory strategy allows the researcher to consider a number of facts and arguments before producing a theory. A generative inquiry uses the data itself "In order to arrive at constructs of meaning" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 333). In this study, a generative inquiry allowed the research to develop in response to the data as it emerged from the literature (the preliminary study) and as the data were gathered from the research participants.

Figure 2 illustrates the researcher‟s theoretical framework for mentoring which has expanded in scope, application and meaning as a result of further analysis of the practice of mentoring from the data collection. Based on data collected from the five past mentors in the principal institution, the four programme coordinators in higher education institutions across New Zealand and Australia and the eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution, the theoretical framework has evolved. The literature provided an initial baseline of data with which to compare the data collected from the research participants. The framework has also developed in response to and building on the initial conceptual framework suggested earlier in this chapter as Figure 1 (refer p. 55).

Figure 2

Constructivism and the Humanist Paradigm:
An integrated theoretical framework for mentoring



The framework shows how the humanist and constructivist theories work together and complement each other, so as to strengthen the justification of mentoring in the higher education context, resulting in a co-construction theoretical approach to explaining the concept and practice of mentoring. Whilst constructivism provides an over-arching theory for mentoring as a system and process, humanist theory provides a place for the individual and the mentoring partnership within this system. In Hansen‟s (2005) view, constructivism "Updates humanism to a contemporary epistemological foundation" (p. 2).

Applying an interpretivist approach to Denzin and Lincoln‟s (2005) explanation of the constructivist paradigm, the co-constructive nature of mentoring involves multiple realities. For example, in the mentoring context, there exist multiple participants, including past mentors, the research participants and the organisation, contributing to multiple experiences of learning and professional development, as they collectively bring their unique personalities, values, intentions and expectations to the mentoring system. Multiple realities are also found in three different data sources for this study, derived from three data collection methods. Through focus groups, one to one interviews and reflective journals, the realities of mentoring as a mechanism to support teaching practice came from i) experienced teachers who had assumed the role of mentor previous to the research project; ii) new and experienced teachers located within a particular higher education institution and iii) other national higher education institutions which had established mentoring programmes in place. Each of these groups view the reality of mentoring from their own position and perspective, providing multiple constructs.

Underpinning the relationship and the individuals within these multiple realities is the humanist theory, as its core principles advocate caring, respect and acknowledgement of individual uniqueness. This complements the constructivist theory and subsequently adds strength to the theoretical underpinnings of mentoring as a concept and practice. The purpose of mentoring, for example, focuses on providing the environment and the opportunity for the teacher to conceive and construct their practice, based on their individual uniqueness, knowledge, skills and experience. Also, the mentoring partnership can be defined with constructivist roots. As Darlaston-Jones (2007) states, "It is within these

dynamically constructed relationships that we develop a shared meaning of what we come to understand as reality" (p. 24). The humanist and constructivist theories provide both practical guidance and theoretical support for the mentoring partnership.

Implicit in the term „co-construction" is the involvement of two or more people engaged in a process of learning and constructing reality. This construction of reality and creation of understanding is derived from the emerging theoretical framework, as the mentor, the mentee and the purpose of the mentoring is established. Constructivism is a learning or meaning-making theory. It suggests that individuals create their own new understandings "Based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact" (Richardson, 1997, p. 3). In this research context, this can be translated to mean the mentee coming into contact with and learning from or with the mentor.

The adoption of a theoretical framework that integrates the humanist and constructivist theories establishes the connectedness between the individual, the mentoring partnership and the organisation. The fundamental assumption of this integrated approach is that learning doesn"t occur in isolation but rather through human interaction and conversation. The two theories help to determine the roles of the mentor and the mentee, the process of the mentoring partnership and how these are situated within the organisation. For example, using the core principles of humanism, specific roles of the mentor are determined as "Empathic, caring, approachable and supportive" (Jarvis, 2002, p. 136).

As acknowledged in the mentoring literature, this skill base contributes to creating a safe, power-neutral relationship. Intertwined with this is the constructivist perspective, which "Appreciates the world views and beliefs that teachers bring both to their professional practice and their own learning. It enhances the contribution of the learner in the educational process" (Jofili, Geraldo & Watts, 1999, p. 1), contributing to the creation of a more equal power relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Humanism recognises and places the individual first, in any context; a critical element of successful mentoring as a support mechanism and organisational practice is ensuring the mentor and mentee

roles, skills and responsibilities are clearly defined. Incorporating the constructivist paradigm, with its assertion that experience and meaning only come into being via dialogue, this theory supports the establishment and process of the mentoring partnership itself, whether involving two or more individuals.

Constructivism highlights the importance of meaning construction through dialogue and meaning construction best occurs in a humanistic environment (Hansen, 2005), where the individual learner is valued, respected and acknowledged for their differences, experiential knowledge and uniqueness as an individual. The humanistic approach sees the process of learning as a dialectical one, whereby "The person and social environment are both active in the process; social processes shape the individual identity" (Ashworth, Brennan, Fagan, Hamilton & Saenz, 2004, p. 8).

For meaning to occur within and from the mentoring relationship, under the humanist-constructivist paradigm, certain relational factors need to be in place. In Hansen‟s (2007) view, if a humanistic approach is taken to determine the shape and nature of the relationship, then the relationship needs to be grounded in genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard. Even though Hansen is referring to the counselling context, these premises can be applied to the mentoring partnership, if the purpose and desired outcome of this partnership is to support the personal and professional development of the teacher. "Although humanist perspectives tend to be grounded more in philosophy than research as part of an integrated theoretical whole" (Ormrod, 1999, p. 442), the humanist perspective strongly supports the micro-level of mentoring, that is, the individual participants within the contexts of the mentoring partnership and within the larger organisation. The essential principles of the humanistic theory underpin the essential attributes of nurturing, role modelling, a focus on professional and personal development and a caring relationship (Jarvis, 2002). These in turn can more legitimately underpin many aspects of mentoring.

Integration of the two theories is further qualified by the similarities existing between them, including: i) an emphasis on individual diversity and experiential differences; ii) valuing individual differences; iii) valuing unique realities of individuals and groups; iv) acquisition of knowledge and skills requires active

participation of individual learners and v) experience from dialogue with others. The mentoring partnership provides an environment that integrates these elements, if it is established through application of constructivist and humanist principles. Again, Hansen‟s (2005) views resonate in the mentoring context, as she sees the result of this integration as a richer, potentially more effective theory aimed at cultivating human complexity and individual differences in systems that have and create meaning.

In their book on reflective learning through mentoring and coaching, Brockbank and McGill (1998) highlight the importance of interactive reflections which allow the mentee to "Create their own constructs and meanings as well as recognising that learning and knowledge are created within a social context" (p. 26). The social nature of learning, therefore the social nature of mentoring, offers opportunities for the mentees to reflect upon their learning, not only by themselves but with others. As meaning is created in relation to others, then reflection and the creation of meaning are inevitably a social process. Providing the context in which such reflection occurs is the mentoring partnership.

Mentoring is thus underpinned by a transformative approach to learning that sees the pedagogical process as one of knowledge transformation rather than knowledge transmission (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008; Leonardo, 2004). The mentee and mentor are active participants in improving their own learning and professional practice, which in turn contributes to the professional growth of the organisation. As Mezirow (2006) says, when teachers are provided with opportunities to examine and reflect on their beliefs, philosophies and practices, they are more likely to see themselves as active change agents and lifelong learners within their professions. These attributes are key elements of mentoring.

Having been informed by the constructivist and humanist models, the following principles and assumptions of the researcher in this study underpin this theoretical framework, contributing to the explanation of how mentoring supports teaching practice:

- People want to develop professionally and personally so that they can give back to the „community‟, for example, the community of learners;

- People naturally learn from each other, whether positive or negative in nature or effect;
- When people build skills and knowledge that they willingly pass on to others, they inevitably contribute to the environment within which this transaction occurs;
- If there is little or no commitment to the mentoring process by both the mentor and mentee, the partnership will not survive;
- If the purpose of mentoring is not clear, there is minimal or no interconnections between the mentee and the reason for being mentored;
- Theory helps to substantiate why people „bother" to establish and engage in mentoring;
- If the mentoring model and mentoring activities derived from this are theoretically baseless, then they remain static, that is, there is never any real sense of purpose for engaging in the activity of mentoring; the activity itself is groundless;
- A person cannot help but develop personally from engaging in professional development activities;
- The self-esteem of an individual impacts on the immediate environment (peers, colleagues, students, the organisation) and the larger external environment (community, family);
- Mentoring is a fluid, dynamic activity, susceptible to a number of internal and external influences: commitment; personalities; degree of choice;
- Forced participation likely leads to rebellion and defection (withdrawal). This is connected to the issue of choice;
- Making mentoring a mandatory activity in the organisation runs counter to adult learning theory.

Ragins and Kram (2007) premise that an integration of theories from fields related to mentoring can offer important new theoretical perspectives that explain the how and why of mentoring. This thinking can be transferred to the theoretical framework suggested here, where the integration of the constructivist and humanist theories provide a tool for supporting the mentoring concept in terms of what mentoring is and why mentoring is a useful teacher support mechanism in the higher education context. The two theories provide a strong foundation for placing

mentoring as a legitimate practice for the professional development of people within the organisational context.

Applying an integrated theoretical approach to the organisational context is as imperative as it is to the individual within the organisation; the theory creates and provides a connectedness between the micro and macro elements involved in this scenario. Dutton and Heaphy (2003) make the point that organisations are dependent on individuals to interact and form connections in order to accomplish the work of the organisation.

Darlaston-Jones (2007) believes that each of us has very different and often complex reasons for learning, stating that these decisions are influenced by "The type of person we are, our experiences, our culture, background, social and economic status" (p. 20). Her perspective, plus the aim of mentoring as a mechanism to support teachers‟ practice, needs to be positioned within the larger framework of the organisation and its strategic needs, because the organisation is supporting and providing this developmental opportunity for the staff member. "The organisational context in which learning takes place is seen to have the most significant bearing on the meanings ascribed by individuals to learning, how they go about learning and what they seek to learn" (Antonacopulou, 2007, p. 470).

Critical constructivism (Jofili et al., 1999) is an approach that assumes that the methods and issues of research are always political, so that constructivist teacher education must be both socially and politically contextualised. As explained earlier in this chapter, mentoring is also contextually determined, that is, it occurs within the organisational context and the context of the mentoring partnership, which has its own boundaries and parameters. Mentoring cannot help but be overtly and covertly influenced by the cultural, historical, political and social norms that abound in an organisational context. Brockbank and McGill (1998) echo Jofili et al.‟s (1999) thoughts, as they describe relationships as "All social and personal relationships, including work relationships, have a power element and the mentoring relationship is no exception" (p. 18). Every mentoring relationship has a political dimension, in that it represents interpersonally the sense of power or powerlessness that is found in any pairing within an organisation.

3.3 Theory and the Research Approach

Finally, a third framework is introduced in this chapter, illustrated in Figure 3 below. The development of a theoretical framework for underpinning mentoring has contributed to this third framework, helping to explain the application of theory to underpin the research process in this study, to establish the place of the researcher within this process, and to justify the choice of action research methodology as the central research design. Theory can provide the foundation of the framework. As Smyth (2004) comments, "It can draw on extensive theorising to create common language, guiding principles and reference points from which to structure the research discussion and analysis" (p. 2).

Figure 3

Constructivism, Humanism and Action Research
A synergistic research approach

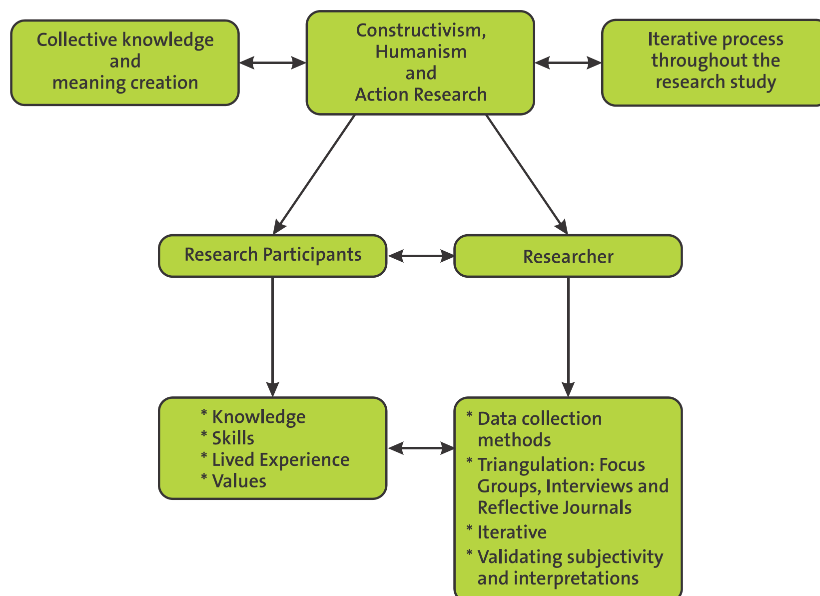


Figure 3 provides the basis for the research design applied by the researcher in this investigation. A concept of mentoring includes a definition, a purpose, the function of the mentoring process, mentoring activities, mentor and mentee characteristics, and the place and purpose of mentoring in the organisation. These elements formed the foundation of a conceptual framework for mentoring within this research study.

From the conceptual framework, a theoretical framework emerged, identifying a dual theoretical approach to underpin mentoring practice and substantiate the significance and relevance of the various elements of mentoring outlined above.

3.4 Summary

The theories of humanism and constructivism provide the foundation for this research and the over-arching framework for the emergent model resulting from the study. From the principles inherent in each of these theories, a research design was formulated that would "Allow the different voices to emerge from the study" (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, p. 22) and demonstrate that the research participants could share similar experiences from their involvement with mentoring, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the meaning attributed to that experience and the effect it had on the individual could be very different.

The „voices‟ in this study represent the people integrally involved and influenced or impacted on by the organisation‟s endeavours to achieve strategic significance in the community and the larger economic and social world. Therefore, the voices belong to all research participants and the researcher. The inclusion of multiple perspectives in this research provides the researcher with "A varied understanding of how the issue appears to different people as a result of their different interpretations of the issue" (Darlaston-Jones, p. 23).

The researcher‟s initial personal worldview dictated the orientation of the current study, prior to undertaking an extensive literature review. In Darlaston-Jones‟ (2007) words, this review of the literature "Enabled a discovery of a language that allowed the research design to be put into a legitimate framework, as well as identifying the specific research methods employed" (p. 22).

The researcher brings to the research their worldviews complete with bias and prejudice; it is not possible to separate the self from the research. The research process then becomes one of co-construction where partnership with the research participants and interpretation of their reality is created. Furthermore, as highlighted earlier in this chapter (refer p. 63), co-construction implicitly signifies a process of learning and constructing reality between two or more people. This research project had to acknowledge the political arena in which the research took place, as well as carrying it out in a socially contextualised environment for the

mentoring partnerships, created by both the researcher and the research participants.

The following chapter, Chapter Four, introduces and describes the research design for this study. The design is underpinned by a qualitative research methodology with an embedded interpretivist perspective. Integral in this methodology is action research, the epistemological framework that informed the choice and application of the research. The research design is theoretically guided by the researcher"s dualistic theory for mentoring which provides a humanist-constructivist lens.

CHAPTER FOUR
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

> *Most qualitative researchers recognise that the relevant reality as far as human experience is concerned is that which takes place in subjective experience, in social context and in historical time. Thus, qualitative researchers are often more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people think and feel about the circumstances in which they find themselves than they are in making judgements about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid. (Thorne, 2000, p. 68)*

As researchers, our goal is to improve our knowledge of some phenomena (Weber, 2004). The premise of this research has been to identify the phenomenon of mentoring and whether this activity provides a support mechanism for teaching staff in a higher education environment. One of the outcomes of the study is to develop a model for implementation of mentoring within this higher education context. Three separate participant groups were involved: five academic teachers who had assumed a previous role as mentor in the research study"s context; four mentoring programme coordinators from higher education institutions in New Zealand and Australia; and a group of eighteen academic teachers who engaged in a mentoring partnership over a period of one year.

This chapter will explain the choice of a qualitative research methodology to guide the study and provide a comparison between the positivist and interpretivist perspectives. The discourse on the opposing spectrums of positivist and interpretivist methodologies provides a platform for the ensuing support of the interpretive methodology guiding and leading this research study. Integral in this methodology, action research as the epistemological framework for the study will be described, as it derives the research methods chosen to investigate the phenomenon of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism. McIntyre (1998) describes methodology as "Something constructed, not given", and "Something that develops hand-in-hand with the theorising of the research problem" (p. 1).

McIntyre (1998) believes that the development of the researcher‟s theoretical perspective is a key element in developing a view of methodological adequacy, implying that theory and method are closely linked. The debate between whether the starting point in qualitative research is the researcher identifying their theoretical framework or whether theory should be generated through the research process is also discussed in this chapter.

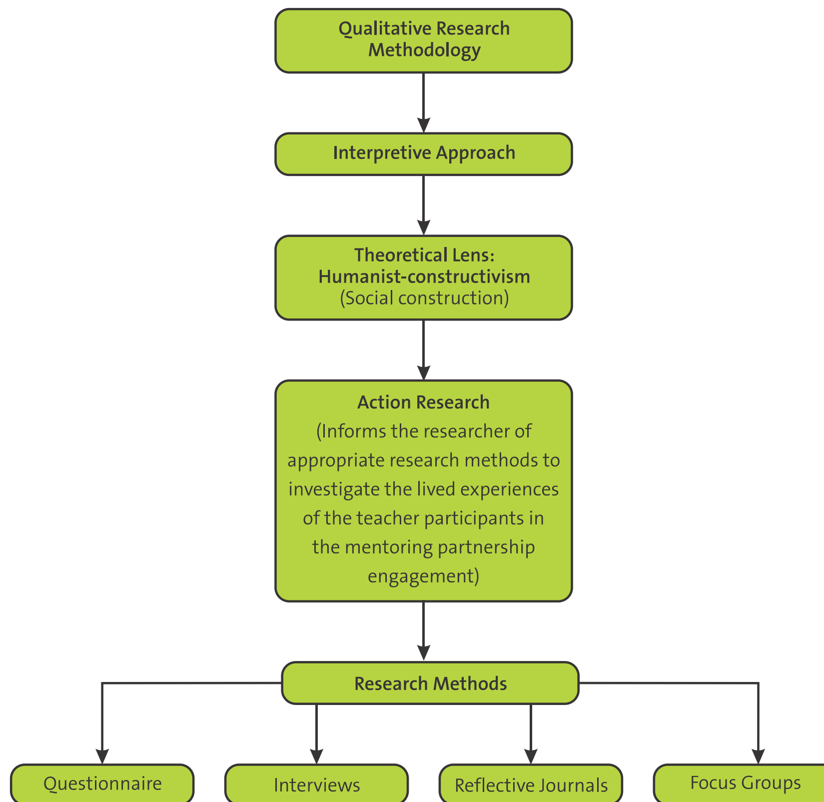
4.1 Qualitative Research Perspectives

The purpose of qualitative research is to interpret, contextualise and understand the research participants‟ perspectives. There are a number of inherent assumptions in the qualitative research domain which are considered in the establishment of the methodological framework for this study. For example, Creswell (1994) highlights how the qualitative researcher is interested in meaning-making and how people make sense of their lives and experiences. He describes the descriptive nature of qualitative research, in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding. Lastly, Creswell (1994) explains that the process of qualitative research is usually inductive, where the researcher builds concepts, hypotheses and theories during the research process.

According to Swandt (2001), qualitative research is a diverse term, involving a range of techniques which seek to describe and translate the meaning of phenomena in the social world. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Name (2005) outline typical characteristics of qualitative research approaches, including "„Describing variation‟, „describing and explaining relationships‟ and „describing individual experiences‟" (p. 8). Also, Mack et al. (2005) identify the study design in a qualitative research approach as being iterative, that the data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned. Methodology is a way of thinking about and studying social reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Figure 4 (refer p. 74) illustrates this researcher‟s methodological approach that guides the study‟s research design:

Figure 4

A qualitative research approach



There is extensive debate in the research literature regarding the necessity and/or ability of the researcher to select one methodology over another, that is, quantitative or qualitative, to determine the research design and process (Bonoma, 1985; Kaplan & Duchon, 1988; McIntyre, 1998; Winter, 2000). For example, Kaplan and Duchon (1988) highlight how there has been a move toward the combining of the two methodologies as this collaboration "Provides a richer contextual basis for interpreting and validating results" and "Introduces both testability and context into the research" (p. 575). Supporting this view, Bonoma (1985) believes that the collection of different kinds of data by different methods from different sources cannot help but provide a wider range of coverage that result in a fuller picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

Both quantitative and qualitative procedures involve data collection, analysis, interpretation and writing up the results of a study. Creswell (2009) compares the two methodological approaches, describing qualitative research as a means for

exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, where the researcher makes interpretations of the meaning of these data. In Creswell"s (2009) opinion, quantitative research in contrast,

> "Is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured on instruments so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures" (p. 4).

Creswell (2009) also proposes the third option of „mixed methods" research, reflecting other authors cited on this topic. In Creswell"s (2009) view, the use of both approaches provides an overall strength to the study, greater than either methodology applied on its own. The qualitative research framework is described in the literature as a set of guiding principles against which judgements can be made by the researcher and the research participants. Qualitative research methods adopt an interpretive approach to data, study „things" within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situations (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002). In the view of Merchant and Willis (2001), the qualitative researcher attempts to capture the world of their research participants by understanding their perceived realities and interpreting them from their own subjective perspectives as researchers and individuals.

The aim in this study is not to argue for an exclusive methodology, but rather explain how the approach taken is justified by the context within which the research was situated. Winter (2000) talks of this context-specific situation in his discussion paper about validity as it relates to both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, stating, "Interpretation is essentially couched within the rhetoric that the researcher uses to describe a situation and is mutually constructed between researchers and subjects" (p. 4).

4.1.1 Positivist and interpretivist paradigms

> *"Interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them" (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 5).*

The interpretive paradigm is found extensively in the qualitative research literature and has a large following, especially in phenomenological sociology, hermeneutics and ethnography (Lee, 1991). The rhetoric on positivist versus interpretivist research is wide-ranging in the literature, with extremes of positivist purists to the proposal of a „naturalistic paradigm‟ which aims to justifiably combine the two approaches (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This rhetoric surrounding positivist and interpretivist research labels is challenged by Weber (2000), as he views these methodologies as possessing significant commonalities. He suggests a move beyond these labels to a unity in what researchers are trying to achieve via their research methods. The differences between positivist and interpretive research approaches are characterised by Sandberg (as cited in Weber, 2004, p. iv), as illustrated in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Differences between Positivist and Interpretive Research Approaches

	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontology	The researcher and reality are separate	The researcher and reality are inseparable (life-world)
Epistemology	Objective reality exists beyond the human mind	Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person‟s lived experience
Research Object	The research object has inherent qualities that exist independently of the researcher	The research object is interpreted in light of meaning structure of the person‟s lived experiences
Method	Statistics, content analysis	Hermeneutics, phenomenology
Theory of Truth	Correspondence theory of truth: one-to-one mapping between research statements and reality	Truth as intentional fulfilment: interpretations of research object match lived experience of object
Validity	Certainty: data truly measures reality	Defensible knowledge claims
Reliability	Replicability: research results can be re-produced	Interpretive awareness; the researcher recognises and addresses implications of their subjectivity

The qualitative framework informing this research assumed an interpretive approach, as it helped determine the research methods and subsequent approach to the data analysis. Livesey (2006) discusses the relationship between positivism and interpretivism as they influence the choice of research methods. He describes the methods employed by the researcher as needing to reflect the fact that people consciously and unconsciously construct their own sense of reality. The research methods must therefore be capable of capturing the quality of people‟s interpretations, definitions, meanings and understandings of their experiences within the research context.

Rather than de-bunking interpretive research as dubious due to its innate subjectivity, the challenge for the qualitative researcher is to decide how to evaluate the quality of an interpretive approach within the qualitative research framework. Lin‟s (1998) explanation of the differences between positivist and interpretivist research aligns closely with Weber‟s (2004), as these authors highlight the differences in the questions asked of the data and the types of conclusions drawn from this. Lin (1998) also provides the comparison that positivist work comments on principles and relationships by focusing on identifying general patterns whilst interpretivist work does so by aiming to show how the general pattern looks in practice. The nature of interpretive research is open-ended, collaborative, situation-specific, methodologically eclectic and therefore not prescriptive in its use of methods, processes or final goals.

It is important to acknowledge that methodology and research methods are not the same thing, as highlighted by Clough and Nutbrown (2002). The authors emphasise that no single methodology is perfect and the ability of the researcher to identify the limitations associated with a particular methodology is important. Methodological considerations aim to “Ensure that the chosen research methods are valid, reliable, rigorous and appropriate to the research question/s” (p. 16).

4.2 Action Research: A Framework for the Study

Action research is conceived as a philosophy, a theory of learning, a methodology and a technique. The philosophy includes theories of action, critical theory and personal construct theory. The learning theory encompasses adult learning, experiential and double-loop

learning. The methodology is based in the dialectical epistemology and non-positivist paradigm. Action research as a technique includes tools which aid reflection and group discussion. Action research not only advances knowledge but also improves practice in higher education by developing people as professionals and organisations as „learning organisations". (Zuber-Skeritt, 2003, p. 45)

Zuber-Skeritt"s (2003) description of action research encapsulates the research design used in this study, as epistemologically, action research establishes how this (qualitative) researcher carried out and acted within her investigation, collaboratively with others. Applying the action research cycle of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation in response to data collected via interview from the past mentors and higher education institutions, enabled continual review and refinement of the research question and associated research objectives.

The theme of collaborative inquiry as integral to action research is prevalent in much of the research literature. Zuber-Skeritt (1992) defines collaborative inquiry as "Collaborative, critical enquiry by academics into their own teaching practices; a mechanism for professional development through group reflection, action, evaluation and improved practice" (pp. 1-2). She assigns this term to the action research approaches that are predominantly used in educational settings.

Collaborative inquiry as part of this action research cycle was employed when the eighteen mentoring teachers commenced their mentoring partnerships. Action research is not about doing research on people but rather people being active participants in their own research process (Ferrance, 2000). As teacher participants in the study, they had the opportunity to explore, identify and determine what their teaching practice was about and how mentoring supported this. Bendell (2002) points out that,

> "Work is done in both personal and group settings to bring the values, theories and practices of an individual closer together. Participants engage in cycles of action and reflection with the intention that more meaningful action can be generated" (p. 30).

Zuber-Skeritt and Fletcher (2007) believe it is impossible to arrive at a single, true definition of action research, because it depends on many environmental, situational, personal and organisational factors and multiple perspectives, as they comment,

> What positivists call „subjects", action researchers treat (people) as „participants" in the research process. It is not about investigating a phenomenon to try and find out what is wrong but rather a quest for knowledge generation and how to improve. (p. 423)

Given this thinking and the range and breadth of descriptions and contextual applications of action research, a working definition was devised for the study, based on an initial conceptual and theoretical basis for mentoring, described earlier in Chapter Three. This researcher"s definition is grounded in the qualitative research literature, in particular the work of Zuber-Skeritt (1992), Zuber-Skeritt and Fletcher (2007) and McNiff (2001, 2007). Additionally, the theory underpinning this study is an evolving phenomenon, as data from multiple perspectives - the research participants - and triangulation of research methods builds on the original theoretical premise for the study:

> Reality is constructed through individual constructs and collaborative group participation as influenced by the contextual nature of the environment in which the research is carried out. The collaborative action research paradigm frames an evolving process of inquiry and discovery that is participatory, reflective and reflexive in nature and outcome. (Petersen, 2010)

Within the literature on action research in the higher education context, the use of action research is varied and diverse. However, some authors are in agreement about this approach taking on the dimensional qualities of collaborative inquiry, and being fundamentally employed as a methodological strategy for improving educational practice, producing relevant, practical and useful knowledge and for instituting educational reform (Catelli et al., 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Hollingsworth, 1997; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009). For example, Catelli et al. (2000) describe the role and use of action research to change and improve teacher education in a school-university partnership project, whilst Somekh and Zeichner

(2009) discuss how action research can support educational reform by way of working towards a resolution of the impetus for action to generate new practices.

Lomax (2002) describes one of the strengths of action research as "A cross-cultural tool that the research starts with the researcher"s own values" (p. 128). It emphasises the lived experiences of people and provides the conduit for teachers to be researchers of their own practice (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Loftus (1999) argues that,

> A paradigm of research, where a teacher becomes more aware of their individual practice through analysis and reflection with a view to improving that practice thus leads to a better standard of education for students in their class, is most definitely one that should be considered by any educationalist ranging from student-teacher to university academic. (p. 34)

Kemmis and McTaggert (1988) argue, however, that action research is not the usual thing teachers do when they think about their teaching, rather, they see instead action research is "To plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life" (p. 10). A benefit of this study was the role of the researcher coordinating the mentoring participants as an action research group, providing the opportunity and vehicle for these teachers to actively engage in action research cycles for the purpose of investigating their teaching practice.

Action research presented the opportunity for the participants to become change agents in their own practices and potentially in the organisation. The nature of the research study engaging participants in mentoring and the application of action research methodology enhancing the outcome of change agency became a pathway for an emancipatory outcome for each individual involved. The layers of action research for this study are therefore explained as follows:

1. The researcher"s self reflection instigated the research question and consequent study;
2. The mentoring participants" self-reflection became an iterative process throughout the mentoring partnerships period, engaging them in evaluating their practice and professional development endeavours;

3. The iterative process of planning, action, reflection and evaluation provided the framework, parameters, data and validation of the research focus for the researcher and the research participants, via individual and collaborative inquiry approaches including reflective journals, focus group meetings and semi-structured interviews.

The research approach in this study was "Participative, grounded in experience, action-oriented and with a commitment to full integration of knowledge and action in inquiry as a practice of living" (Zuber-Skeritt & Fletcher, 2007, p. 423).

4.3 The Theory of Qualitative Research

> *"Inquiry which requires collaboration between researchers and the people who have direct experience of the phenomenon under consideration needs an epistemology to underpin the process of inquiry and its outcomes" (Fell, Russell & Stewart, 1994, p. 1).*

The epistemological and ontological orientations of qualitative research determine the data collection methods employed by the researcher in this study. Halai (2006) outlines these orientations in his paper about the ethical considerations of qualitative research. He identifies a range of methods, including participant observation, open-ended or semi-structured interviews and "Thick descriptions" (p. 6), with the researcher as the primary instrument, using broad and guiding research questions rather than testable hypotheses. Halai (2006) also talks of qualitative research as falling within a broad epistemological framework, where there is evolving understanding and flexibility for the research to go into new or different directions.

Consistent in the literature on qualitative research is the question as to whether the researcher begins their study with an established theory or whether the ensuing methodology generates this. Trauth (2001), for example, believes that the starting point for the researcher in qualitative research is to identify their philosophical and theoretical assumptions, which can then lead to a choice of an appropriate methodology, rather than the methodology providing the vehicle for theory generation. This thinking is reflected by Maxwell (2005) and McIntyre (1998), McIntyre (1998) viewing the researcher"s theoretical perspectives as "Providing constructs and schemes of interpretation which are deployed in attempting to "do

justice" to the meanings exhibited in such accounts" (p. 8). Maxwell (2005) also believes qualitative research is strengthened by ensuring the findings are grounded in a theoretical perspective and a research methodology. Mirroring Maxwell"s (2005) view, Love (2001) claims that a theoretical perspective helps shape the decisions that a researcher makes, which determines the choice of background material, theories, research techniques and analyses.

In contrast to the assertions that qualitative research should be grounded in theory, Rowlands (2005) comments on how qualitative researchers should try to avoid commitment to their theoretical framework before collecting the data. A description offered by Levy (2006) provides a similar perspective, as he proposes a concept of "Theory-in process" (p. 6), where theory is developed and rooted in engagement in (educational) action; where theory is open to refinement and elaboration through further iterations of purposeful, critical inquiry. Levy (2006) acknowledges this theoretical concept as borrowed from the action research methodology. Lomax (1986) supports this, as he states, "Action research should not be blinkered by theories outside the situation in which an action research study is located but should generate its own" (p. 43), highlighting the importance of the connection between this study"s methodology and its theoretical underpinning.

Given that an action research framework was selected to guide the construction and process of this study, a conceptual and theoretical framework that emphasised the individual and collective influence on the process and outcomes of mentoring as it supports teaching practice was developed prior to and during the data gathering phase, in order to establish a sound reasoning for the choice of research methods and consequent analysis. Yorks (2005) supports this, as he describes the action research approach as "The linking of theory to practice and practice to theory, a reciprocal relationship in the knowledge creation process" (p. 376).

By adopting a humanist-constructivist theoretical framework for this research, the concept and practice of mentoring is explored as a mechanism to support teaching practices in the higher education context. The action research framework used in this study drew primarily on this humanist-constructivist perspective, that is, that mentoring is an individual and a collective activity, with a natural tendency to be a developmental cycle of action, evaluation and reflection. The study emphasised the

participants‟ voice and experiences on the basis of the mentoring they engaged in, as it influenced change and/or improvement in their teaching and learning practices and in the organisational culture. Also, the researcher was given a place in the study, as an integral stakeholder and inquirer.

O‟Brien (1998) asks "What is the epistemological structure under which to place action research?" (p. 6). He suggests a paradigm of praxis to situate action research methodology as compared to earlier paradigms of positivist and interpretive. He claims that the structure of interpretivism retains the ideals of researcher objectivity and passive collector of data, going to the extreme of positivism being the antithesis of the principles of action research. In place of a reliance on one or other of these earlier methodologies for research, O‟Brien (1998) suggests that practice informed by knowledge is a cornerstone of action research, the action research framework ultimately chosen when circumstances require flexibility, the involvement of people in the research or when change must take place holistically.

Using the premise that knowledge and interpretation in a constructivist research paradigm is the result of a collective, not an individual process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), multiple constructs originated from multiple levels in this study, including the variations in age, gender, discipline area, years of teaching experience and the role assumed (mentor or mentee) for the mentoring partnerships phase. Also, multiple constructs were influenced by the very individual and unique experiences and personalities of each research participant that are shared to contribute to the research project. This study integrates varying perspectives on constructivism to formulate its own unique epistemology. This multiple-perspective helped to determine the theoretical foundations for the research generally and the research methods specifically. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlight,

> "The action researcher is involved in interacting with the participants and interpreting their perceptions that represent multiple constructs of reality. These multiple perceptions contribute to a constructivist view" (p. 33).

4.4 Types of Action Research

There are numerous types of action research highlighted in the action research literature. As Zuber-Skeritt (1992) points out, action research can mean different things to different people, the term „action research‟ ranging from an exclusive

definition to being quite loosely used. Within the literature, the range of types of action research includes participatory (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; McTaggert, 1997; Minkler, 2000; Seymour-Rolls & Hughes, 1995); collective inquiry (McNiff, 2001; Wal, 2008; Zuber-Skeritt, 1992); collaborative inquiry (Bendell, 2002; Greenbank, 2007; Holter & Schwartz-Barcott, 1993; Kanji & Greenwood, 2001; Lomax, 1986; Smith & Fernie, 2010; Wal, 2008); emancipatory (Berg, 2007; Boog, 2003; Kemmis, 2007); practical and critical (Rearick & Feldman, 1999); and feminist action research (Kirsch, 1999; Prieto, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stanley, 1990). Other terminology to distinguish the different types is also offered by Myers (2011), as he proposes the "Positivist perspective", the "Interpretivist perspective" and a "Critical science perspective" (p. 84).

Commonalities exist between the various types of action research described in the literature. A prevalent theme weaving through each of these action research approaches is the position of power as it relates to the researcher and the participants, and in relation to the intent and purpose of the inquiry itself. Also, the different approaches identify a key aim of achieving emancipation for the research participants. Whilst the application of collaborative action research and its over-arching principles is the framework for this study, the different approaches that share similar perspectives are outlined in this chapter, to provide a frame of reference and comparison.

4.4.1 Participatory action research

Participatory action research draws on the paradigms of critical theory and constructivism and may use a range of qualitative and quantitative methods (Baum et al., 2006). The participatory framework can be thought of as a strategy for shaping the researcher‟s choice and use of methods, and linking them to the outcomes. Inherent in the participatory action research approach is a concern of commitment to inform and improve a particular practice. McTaggert (1997) differentiates participatory action research from other research approaches from a political standpoint, as she believes that any research which co-opts people into the research process invented by social scientists, with the primary interest to maintain control, is not participatory. In her view, participatory action research is "Research

with people, not on people" (p. 29). This approach and its inherent principles is reflective of the collaborative approach taken in this study.

McTaggert‟s (1997) thinking is reflected by Baum et al. (2006), as they too believe that participants in a research study should be actively involved in the process and that participatory action research aims to achieve empowerment of those involved. Hall (1993) summarises this thinking in his comment, "Participatory research is fundamentally about the right to speak and argue for the articulation of points of view by the dominated and subordinated" (p. xvii).

Participatory action research has been extensively applied in context of the larger global community, as evidenced in the research literature. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991), for example, provide a range of case studies where the aim of the participatory approach is to empower poor and oppressed groups within a socio-political action framework. Baum et al. (2006) also highlight this global perspective, describing the aim of participatory action research as seeking to understand and improve the world by changing it.

Throughout the data collection phase, the researcher‟s aim and intention has been to actively involve a significant number of the participants in the research design and process, so that they "Ceased to be objects and became partners in the whole research process" (Baum et al., 2006, p. 854). Baum et al. (2006) also highlight how participatory action research pays particular attention to power relationships, where power is deliberately shared between the researcher and the research participants. The eighteen academic teachers in this study had the opportunity to decide how their partnership would be shaped, what the purpose of the mentoring would be and how the relationship would be developed. Before engaging in the partnerships, the participants were given a suggested model to use, but it was their choice how they implemented this model so that it met their requirements as mentors and mentees.

4.4.2 Collective and collaborative inquiry in action research

Within the action research paradigm, the research inquiry can incorporate both collective and collaborative approaches to engage with the research participants and collect data. As the action research framework guided the choice of methods used in this study, these methods consequently required a complementary form of

inquiry to support the integral elements of dialogue and hearing the participants‟ voices, and therefore enabling the data collection.

Collective inquiry is a group inquiry process, a methodology concerned with the transforming of existing activities to try to bring about changes which people in the situation regard as improvements. The process of collective inquiry leads to debate about change, following which action is agreed and initiated. A collaborative approach to research helps to validate the participants‟ knowledge and experiences, as well as connecting the participants to the research process. This is best described as a set of principles and a process of engagement in the inquiry (Sohng, 1995). As well as connecting participants to the research process, collaborative inquiry promotes the forging of a partnership between the researcher and the research participants; both are active in the investigation.

The link between collaboration and effective action research is emphasised by Lomax (1990) as she claims how important it is that the effectiveness of action research is demonstrated in terms of an improvement in the quality of the lives of people whom it is supposed to be affecting. The composition and nature of the participant group in this study is reflected by Lomax‟s (1990) description:

> Collaborators are a group of peers consisting of fellow action researchers, colleagues, tutors and colleagues from the action researcher‟s place of work. This group judges the authenticity and the value of the action researcher‟s work, they challenge as a group who are „the window between myself and the wide political organisational and professional context in which my practice is suspended. (pp. 23-24)

Wal (2008) defines the collaborative approach as a group of individuals contributing understanding of their perspective of a phenomenon, which is done by everyone in the group working together to build one understanding. In comparison, collective inquiry from Wal‟s (2008) perspective focuses on the individual voices, which are held separate as each individual is working as an individual; their contributions can then be collected and aggregated.

In the current study, both collaborative and collective inquiry approaches were applied by the researcher. Table 4.2 (refer p. 87) summarises the location of each approach inherent in the research design.

Table 4.2 Collaborative and Collective Inquiry Approaches in the Research Design

Collaborative Inquiry Approach	No. of Participants	Collective Inquiry Approach	% of Sample
Focus group meetings with the academic teachers	**n=18**	Structured interviews with the past mentors	**n=5**
		Structured interviews with the higher education programme coordinators	**n=4**
		Summative interviews with the academic teachers	**n=18**

The focus group meetings held during the mentoring partnerships period employed a collaborative inquiry approach where the academic teachers had the opportunity to come together and share their understanding of the mentoring experience. The structured interviews with the past mentors and the higher education programme coordinators and the summative interviews with the academic teachers used a collective inquiry approach, as the interview method provided the space for the separate individual voices. The results from the focus group meetings and the interviews then aggregated as a collection of data into the final data pool of analysis.

4.4.3 Emancipatory action research

Hammersley (2007) describes emancipatory action research as a process that shifts the responsibility for practice and the research process to the participating group, where the group takes joint ownership for action and reflection. Recent action research literature highlights the movement of emancipation as a goal of action research to become equated with empowerment, both being closely connected to a participatory worldview (Boog, 2003). Expanding the concept of participatory action research, Boog (2003) sees this as meaning communication and participation in decision-making, shared between the researcher and the research participants; he calls this a “Relationship of dialogue” (p. 427). Boog (2003) also believes there is a requirement for the research project to be a mutually supported learning process, for both the researcher and the participants.

4.4.4 Practical and critical action research

Practical and critical action research have been theorised as dichotomous forms of inquiry in the literature (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Manfra, 2009). Manfra (2009) points out in her article on the divide between practical and critical action research that these two forms of inquiry cannot be divided in the world of teaching. Within the context of mentoring, as the research findings illustrate later in Chapter Five, practical and critical issues were also not separated in the participants‟ recounting of their mentoring experience. In this research study, practical action research has given emphasis to the engagement in the practically-based activity of mentoring, which has provided a vehicle for teachers‟ action and reflection. A degree of critical action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kincheloe, 1993) resulted, as the participants explored social, cultural and political influences within the mentoring partnership, a natural consequence of their investigation into their own teaching practice which sits within these key contexts, in the larger organisational context.

4.4.5 Feminist action research

Feminist inquiry is summarised by Stanley (1990): “Succinctly, the point is to change the world, not only to study it” (p. 15). Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe this inquiry approach as a commitment to a liberatory, transformational project that is essential to any definition of feminism and feminist scholarship. Feminism and action research share the intent to work for social justice and democratisation. They ask, “Without a grounding in feminism, what would action research liberate us from and transform ourselves and communities into?” (p. 60).

Empowerment and the position of power in the research process are strong themes in feminist action research. The concept of voice is common to this research approach and directly aligned with the theme of power relations. Reason and Bradbury (2001) talk about the action of listening to people as a way of empowering them and state, “Action and feminist research problematise systemic relations of power in the social construction of knowledge” (p. 60). Kirsch (1999) also promotes emancipation as a core goal of feminist action research, seeing this as distinguishing feminist scholarship from other traditions.

4.5 Benefits, Strengths and Challenges of Qualitative and Action Research

Qualitative research is a vast area of methodology. As Key (1997) explains, qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies which emphasise the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found, the researcher being an integral part of this investigation. Because of these variables, the subjective nature of the inquiry often leads to difficulties in establishing the validity and reliability of the methods used to collect the data. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) also talk about the problem of bias in qualitative research, questioning what an acceptable level of researcher influence is and whether this should be controlled. They refer to this as "The interpretive crisis" (p. 501). Also, as Key (1997) highlights, there is a difficulty in detecting or preventing researcher bias, given their integral place in the qualitative research process. Key (1997) believes the scope of the research study is limited due to the in-depth, comprehensive data gathering processes required to mitigate some of the afore-mentioned issues.

4.5.1 Qualitative research

One of the most often claimed challenge in the qualitative research literature is the tension between the positivist and interpretive perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lin, 1998; Livesey, 2006; Weber, 2004; Zuber-Skeritt & Fletcher, 2007). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the qualitative researcher"s interpretive work is often termed as unscientific, and the rigour of validity and reliability strongly questioned by the positivist approach. However, there is a growing body of literature that espouses the potential for a combination of positivist and interpretivist methodologies to guide a research study (Lin, 1998; Malterud, 2001; Roth & Mehta, 2002; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCormick, 1992).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) talk of a crisis for social researchers as being the inability of the researcher to "Capture the social world of another or give an authoritative account of their findings, because there are no fixed meanings" (p. 17). The authors discuss the characteristics of qualitative research as being an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and counter-disciplinary field, where

practitioners are committed to the interpretive understanding of human experience. However, they also talk of the constant tensions and contradictions of qualitative research in terms of the life period of the research project. Inclusive in their claim of such tensions is the project‟s methods and the forms its findings and interpretations take. Marshall and Rossman (2006) add to this discussion, as they identify one of the challenges for the qualitative researcher as the development of a conceptual framework that is "Concise and thorough and a research design that is systematic, manageable yet flexible" (p. 10).

Patton (2002) contributes to this list of challenges. For example, she believes the qualitative researcher needs to decide how much involvement the participants will have and whether they will be involved in the generative phase of analysis or be expected to "Simply react to the researcher‟s analysis" (p. 496). As well as managing the research process, particularly where a number of people are involved, the qualitative researcher needs to create an environment where participants feel their perspective is valued and processes are in place to deal with any conflicts of interpretation of the data.

4.5.2 Action research

As has already been discussed in this chapter, action research has been awarded many descriptions and labels. Hopkins (1993) describes action research as an informal, qualitative, formative, subjective, interpretive, reflective and experiential model of inquiry in which all individuals involved in the study are knowing and contributing participants.

Using an action research framework requires exploration and explication of its merits and potential limitations or challenges when applied in a qualitative research study. Berg (2007) outlines a number of strengths inherent in action research, including the democratisation of knowledge production and use. For example, all participants in the research process, including the researcher, have a voice. Also, Berg (2007) discusses how an action research approach appreciates the capacity of humans to reflect, learn and change, supported by the fact that the participants involved in the study do so in their „natural‟ setting. He makes a significant point about the ethical fairness of action research, where no one participant is more important than another.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) point out that one of the problems in educational action research is the people involved in education do not naturally form action research groups for the organisation of their own enlightenment. As explained earlier in this chapter, an action research group was established, made up of the academic teachers in the principal institution. The action research cycle enabled these participants to focus on the actions they engaged in during the mentoring partnership meetings and then reflect on their learning from this experience in the focus group meetings and during the concluding individual interviews. These methods enabled each individual to be actively involved in experiencing, processing and evaluating mentoring as it related to the influence it had for them individually as well as the larger impact it had on student learning (as a result of the mentee"s learning about their teaching practice) and the organisation generally.

Catelli et al. (2000) highlight the nature of action research in an educational setting as being collaborative, critical and directed at action, with the purpose of changing and improving education. The authors claim the benefit of this type of inquiry as providing the organisation and the teacher specifically with ongoing and relatively inexpensive professional development, adding that such collaborative assistance helps teachers to improve their daily practices and professional life.

Catelli et al."s (2000) thinking is mirrored by a number of other authors who believe action research empowers the teacher to act based on their own values and belief system although acting within the „policies" of the organisation, creating a situation of dual achievement and anticipated outcome (Cain & Milovic, 2010; Riding, Fowell & Levy, 1995). As Lomax (1989) states, "Through action research, teachers can emancipate themselves from being mere implementers of others" policies and themselves become change agents for improvement" (p. 186). At the same time, Catelli et al. (2000) identify a number of issues and problems facing the action researcher. They give examples such as change-resistant bureaucratic structures, financial constraints and interpersonal dynamics that operate when people work together over long periods of time.

Walsham (2006) describes the action researcher as an "Involved researcher" (p. 322). He identifies the benefits of this close involvement of the researcher as providing in-depth access to people, issues and data, with the participants seeing

the researcher as attempting to make a valid contribution to the social phenomenon under investigation, rather than "Taking the data away and writing it up solely for the literature" (p. 322). Walsham (2006) does point out the risk, however, of the action researcher becoming socialised to the views of the participants with the possibility of losing critical distance on the value of their contribution.

More recently, a different challenge being highlighted in the action research literature is the expectation of chief administrators in the organisation wanting to see measurable outcomes as a result of the teachers" time investment. Within the mentoring literature, this same challenge is identified (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kincheloe & Horn, 2008). In both the action research and mentoring contexts, the demand for a measurable outcome needs to be paralleled by the organisation being prepared to understand the time required to build and sustain trusting relationships that the respective activity will "Ultimately improve education with a cost and quality benefit" (Catelli et al., 2000, p. 11).

McTaggert (1991) indicates a different reservation about action research, seeing this process as having the potential to become long cycles of activity that "Simply stifle momentum and distil knowledge" (p. 92). To attempt to mitigate this in this research study, a triangulation of methods was employed to ensure a mixed method approach of both collaborative and individual data collection processes, including focus groups, reflective journals and individual interviews. Also, the research process was explained to the participants before they engaged with the study, with opportunity for the participants to ask questions, clarify any points and check the expectations of them as participants in an action research project.

4.6 Place of the Researcher

The qualitative research framework recognises both co-construction of reality and researcher-as-instrument of data collection (Charmaz, 2000). Implicit in the term co-construction is the involvement of two or more people in a process of learning and constructing reality. Guba and Lincoln (1994) also identify qualitative research as constructivist in nature. They see the constructivist researcher as being interested in the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants. For the researcher working within an interpretive methodology, the methodological assumption is that they are an active agent in the inquiry, interested

in process and deriving meaning through communicating directly with the participants (Merriam, 1998).

Boog (2003) espouses a view that the action researcher must carry out an in-depth analysis of the specific situation of the participants and the history, power structure and organisational network of actors and policies before engaging in the research design and process itself. As he points out,

> "Initially, an action research design cannot be anything but sketchy. As soon as possible, the research participants must be engaged as co-researchers, where they are able to co-control the research process and participate in research decisions" (p. 436).

McIntyre (1998) argues that interpretive research is dependent on how the researcher works with the data, based on their understanding of their role and activity as a researcher. He identifies a number of values underpinning this understanding, including "Creativity, documentary thoroughness, procedural methodicality, reflexivity of analysis, descriptive richness, textual elucidation, conceptual power and participant validation" (p.5). To argue for an interpretive methodology as underpinning the design and process of this research study, McIntyre (1998) claims it is essential for the researcher to confront and critique their own practice and uncover their own assumptions that are active in making the inquiry process what it is.

Weber (2004) highlights how interpretive researchers understand that to make sense of the phenomena they are observing, their research actions will affect the research objects they are studying and the research objects will in turn affect them. The researcher and the research object are interdependent. This theoretical concept helps place the researcher within the research, and as some authors point out, this also provides valuable procedures for evaluating the value and rigour of the research (Charmaz, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Much of the qualitative research literature emphasises the importance and significance of the researcher possessing leadership and communication skills (Gerhardt, 2003; Luna & Cullen, 1995; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). For instance, Gerhardt (2003) identifies four key roles of the researcher in action research, including facilitator, educator, activist and advocate. He identifies the phenomenon

under investigation, or the problem, as being social in nature and calls for collective action to reach a solution. Verification of the researcher‟s skills in this study was evidenced by their history of mentoring and referencing of the skills they had developed as a result of assuming this role within a higher education context. Also, the participants were asked for feedback regarding the researcher‟s interpersonal skills in the individual interviews.

There is much emphasis placed on the role of the researcher being dependent on the research methods they use. For example, Sink (1991) stipulates that a focus group needs to be led by a well-prepared researcher as moderator who manages "Carefully planned discussions designed to go beyond a questionnaire" (p.197). This view is supported by numerous authors in the literature (Gibbs, 1997; Howze, 2000; Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger, 1988; Lewis, 1995), who highlight the required skills of the researcher in this context as including a knowledge of how to elicit opinions, how to encourage the participants to focus on the issues being discussed and good levels of group leadership, moderation and interpersonal skills. Morgan (1997) also points out that "The focus group is reliant on interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher" (p. 12). Walsham (2006) claims that maintaining a degree of neutrality enables the researcher to influence the participants‟ perception of the researcher as not being aligned with a particular individual or group within the organisation, or having strong prior views of specific people, systems or processes in the organisation.

Loftus (1999) argues that "It is the duty of the action researcher to „draw‟ colleagues into collaborative, dialectical, dialogical communities so as to utilise these colleagues‟ expertise" (p. 42). Via these communities, social and interpersonal skills are deployed and developed, constituting an improvement in an individual‟s practice. His view is based on the definition of collaboration given by Lomax (1990), where "The action researcher should engage others as collaborators, requesting their help in order to get feedback about their own practice" (p. 15). This study encouraged collaborative engagement by involving one of the participant groups in mentoring partnerships, a period during which the participants attended focus group meetings, maintained a reflective journal and provided feedback on their mentoring experience during individual interviews at the conclusion of the mentoring partnerships.

Another aspect to be considered and explicated regarding the place of the researcher is the issue of power between the researcher and the research participants. Prieto (2002) emphasises this as problematic in the research context as she comments, "It is in our hands as researchers, in a context of power imbalances, to make our investigation as relevant and beneficial to the people involved in our study as possible" (p. 2). Power in relation to the researcher and the research participants was managed by this researcher through ensuring active involvement of the participants in the research process from the beginning, during and at the end of the study. Details of this involvement are provided in the following section outlining the research design and process (refer section 4.7 below).

In qualitative forms of inquiry, the aim is to represent and understand the participants" experience as nearly as possible as they live it (Mullen, 1999). Mullen (1999) believes this requires the researcher to depict and consider their relationships with the participants and with themselves. Consequently, this researcher also maintained a reflective journal, to document their own lived experiences in response to the research process itself and any uninitiated interactions or communications from/with the research participants. This activity aimed to provide another mechanism for reduction of researcher subjectivity. The process in this study has included giving the research to the participants, engendering a context of empowerment, choice and legitimisation of their experiences. The opportunity to "Hear each others" voices" (Prieto, 2002, p. 6) in the focus group meetings allows for the participants to reflect and choose whether or how they would act on this collective knowledge-sharing in their own teaching context and/or the mentoring partnership.

4.7 Research Design and Process

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the choice of a research methodology involves reflection, identification and justification of the choice of research methods. The epistemological foundation for this research has enabled the research and the researcher to go beyond method and be concerned about knowledge sharing and theory development, not just with techniques, as advocated by Fell et al. (1994). The authors describe qualitative methodologies as an interrelated set of

assumptions about the social world which is philosophical, ideological and epistemological, seeing these as encompassing more than simply data gathering techniques. This point is taken up by Clough and Nutbrown (2002), the authors claiming that a characteristic purpose of a methodology is to "Show how and why the methods selected are unavoidable and required by the context and purpose of a particular enquiry" (p. 17).

Particular qualitative methods make particular claims, generate their own problematic and need to be argued for in their own terms, from the research traditions in which they are embedded (McIntyre, 1998). Also, methods in qualitative research are selected where the researcher either needs to identify variables within the phenomenon under investigation, which might later be tested quantitatively, or where the researcher has determined that quantitative measures will not adequately describe or interpret the situation being explored.

There are numerous factors that influence the choice of qualitative methods. Trauth (2001) for example, identifies three key factors including the nature of the research problem, the researcher‟s theoretical lens, and the degree of uncertainty surrounding the phenomenon being researched. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) believe that the most important rule that guides the choice of data collection is for the researcher to report how the data were created and how the researcher came to possess the data, claiming, "Every piece of information gathered should contribute to specifying observable implications of the researcher‟s theory" (p. 51).

Given the assumption of interpretive research that knowledge is gained through social constructions such as language and shared meaning, the methods used in this study enabled data to be gathered based on these premises. Both the mentoring partnerships and focus groups established opportunities for shared meaning between the participants and between the researcher and participants. Rowlands (2005) supports this thinking as he states, "Interpretive research acknowledges the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being explored and the situational constraints shaping this process" (p. 81). To enable the action research approach to be applied in this research context, the methods chosen supported the process of individual and collective action and reflection.

A framework and pathway for the choice of research methods in this study is provided by Bendell (2002), in his description of action research as being,

> Unlike traditional research in that participants seek to act in ways that are both useful to the people involved – producing knowing that is relevant and practical – and action research empowers participants as they construct and use knowledge. Work is done, in both personal and group settings, to bring the values, „theories‟ and practices of an individual closer together. (p. 30)

The decision to use action research as a basis for the research methods and data analysis process was accompanied by a recognition that this framework cannot be taken for granted and that certain checkpoints need to be embedded in the research process. For example, Lomax (1995) points out the danger of insufficient outsider involvement to compensate for possible insider collusion, that is, "Practitioners having a vested interest in getting a specific outcome" (p. 56). Triangulation of methods became the pivotal solution to incorporating insider and external involvement. Two other entities in addition to the mentor and mentee participants were included and data collected via interviews: four higher education institutions comprising two New Zealand polytechnics and two Australian universities, and five teachers from the principal institution who had assumed mentoring roles in the past, ten years prior to the current research study. These two additional sources provided Lomax‟s (1995) recommended „outsider involvement‟.

From the beginning, the research participant groups had a choice to participate in the study. The five past mentors, four higher education institutions programme coordinators and the eighteen academic teachers were invited to participate and signed a consent form (Appendix A, refer p. 431) after reading a participant information form prior to engaging in the study (Appendix B, refer p. 432). The academic teachers were also involved in deciding the shape and context of the mentoring partnership they would be engaging in for a year. Also, agreement was reached between the researcher and these participants on the research methods used to collect data during this one year period, before implementation of the methods. In addition, the participants kept a reflective journal of their mentoring experience through the year, rather than „reporting in‟ to the researcher periodically during the partnership period.

4.7.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating three or more different viewpoints and methods (Denzin, 2006; Key, 1997; Sevigny, 1978). Data resulting from these multiple sources helps to improve validity, helps the researcher increase their understanding of the probability that their findings are credible and worthy of consideration by others, and might yield results that could not be obtained by one method alone (Denzin, 2006). Triangulation aims to help corroboration of the research findings, ensuring that these accurately reflect the participants‟ perceptions (Key, 1997). As previously identified, triangulation was used in this study, involving the convergence of data from multiple data collection sources.

List (2006) describes the process of action research as "Cycles within cycles". (p. 673). This research study progressed through a cyclical process of planning, action, reflection and evaluation, leading to further action. Within this cycle of activity, multiple research methods were implemented in the study, including an evaluation questionnaire, focus groups, interviews and reflective journals. Qualitative, interpretive research provided the underpinning methodology to guide and secure the place of these methods within the study and determine their place within the action research cycle. A key methodological feature that distinguishes this study is dialogue, as "It is through talking to one another that people get connected, and this connectedness leads to shared meaning" (Levy, 2006, p. 3).

In this research context, the opportunity for dialogue in the focus group meetings, the interviews and in the written context of reflective journals, enabled the sharing of the participants‟ voices and acknowledged their participation as "Critical, active agents of change" (Levy, 2006, p. 3). The collaborative nature of action research supported the focus group process, whilst a collective inquiry approach (Wal, 2008) was applied to gather data from interviews with the past mentors and higher education institutions, the evaluation questionnaire completed by the mentoring participants directly following the mentoring training workshops, and the semi-structured interview process with the mentoring participants, this interview predominantly based on their reflective journals.

A key purpose of mentoring identified in the mentoring literature is the provision of a mechanism for reflective practice (Danielson, 2002; Hawkey, 2006; Walkington, 2005). To complement this, reflective processes were embedded in the methods selected for this study: collaborative reflection in the focus groups and autobiographical reflection (Rearick & Feldman, 1998) in the interviews conducted with the past mentors, the higher education institutions and with the mentoring participants at the conclusion of the mentoring partnerships. Autobiographical reflection was also an integral component as the mentoring participants became action researchers and in the reflective journals they kept during the partnership period.

4.7.2 Research methods

The collection of data that can be aggregated qualitatively and also quantitatively provides a degree of rigour to the research investigation otherwise questionable if only one source or the other is the focus of the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) summarise this well as they state, "We have to face the fact that numbers and words are both needed if we are to understand the world" (p. 40). The research methods applied in the current study included individual interviews, focus group interviews, reflective journals and an online evaluation survey following the facilitation of three mentoring training workshops.

An additional source of data was provided by way of the researcher maintaining a journal during the data collection phase of the study. This method, referred to as "Memoing" by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 74), was included to acknowledge and reinforce the place of the researcher as a co-constructor in the research process (Charmaz, 2000). Table 4.3 (refer p. 100) summarises the methods used and identifies which method was applied to each participant group. A description of each particular method is provided following Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Summary of Research Methods

Research Method	Participant Group	Sample
Semi-structured interviews	Past mentors	**n=5**
Semi-structured interviews	Mentoring programme coordinators in higher education institutions across New Zealand and Australia	**n=4**
Semi-structured interviews: Summative	Academic teachers	**n=18**
Reflective journals	Academic teachers	**n=18**
Focus group meeting interviews	Academic teachers	**n=18**
Online evaluation questionnaire	Academic teachers	**n=18**
Memo	The researcher	**n=1**

4.7.2.1 Interviews

Research interviews are a popular form of data gathering in qualitative research in the social sciences. Patton (2002) describes this method as "Interviewing people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe" (p. 340). Interviews are a part of most interpretive studies as a way of accessing the participants‟ interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation. As an interpretivist researcher, the aim of the interview in terms of both process and outcome is to seek the person‟s point of view and perceptions of the phenomena they have been actively researching as an action research participant (Walsham, 2006). As Weber (2004) points out, it is important as part of the interview process that the researcher takes steps to ensure that they share meaning with the interviewee – that the participant understands the researcher and vice versa.

From Guba and Lincoln‟s (1994) point of view, the constructivist researcher needs to attend to assumptions they bring to the subject of inquiry, the socially constructed meanings that occur in a particular interview context, the socially constructed meanings that existed prior to the investigation and the meanings that may emerge in an interview context. Sanders (1997) also talks of interviewer bias, believing that the research interviewer needs to know and acknowledge the ways in which they can inadvertently bias the results. Interviewer bias is a theme also highlighted by Hannabuss (1996), as he points out how easy it is to underestimate

the challenges of research interviews, for example, "Getting reliable responses, organising and presenting the findings, and guarding against subjective involvement by the researcher" (p. 22).

A range of interviewer skills are identified in the research literature, including being knowledgeable; structured in their approach; clear; steering; critical; remembering; interpreting (providing own interpretation of what the interviewee said and checking for accuracy of this interpretation); and keeping control of the interview process. Mellon (1990) stresses the importance of the researcher exploring each issue before moving on to the next question, and using the tactic of transitional information, where the researcher explains how a particular question fits to the research study.

There are several types of research interviews discussed in the literature, including topical oral history, life history, evaluation interview, focus group interview, structured and semi-structured and cultural interviews. In this investigation, a combination of semi-structured and focus group interviews were used, relative to the particular participant group, as summarised in Table 4.2 (refer p. 87).

Structured interviews are formal in design and process, consisting of pre-determined questions or interview schedule and the degree to which open-ended questions are applied (Hannabuss, 1996). Semi-structured interviews, in comparison, are often less formal in the pre-determination of questions and structure of the interview schedule. The semi-structured interview method was used to interview the five past mentors in the principal institution (Appendix C, refer p. 434) and the four programme coordinators responsible for mentoring programmes in higher education institutions in New Zealand and Australia (Appendix D, refer p. 435). The interviews were conducted face to face with the past mentors and by telephone with the programme coordinators. Thomas and Purdon (1994) identify the benefit of telephone interviewing as enabling data to be collected from geographically scattered samples more cheaply and quickly than by field interviewing. In this study, telephone interviewing provided a convenient data gathering mechanism as the higher education institutions interviewed were all geographically distanced from the localised research study content.

The semi-structured interview method was also used for the summative interviews conducted with the eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution at the conclusion of their participation in a mentoring partnership over a one year period (Appendix E, refer p. 436). The interview approach with the eighteen academic teachers provided a summative method of data collection at the conclusion of their one year mentoring partnership. Inherent in the summative interview design with the academic teachers was an expectation that the teachers would base some of their responses on a reflective journal which they had been asked to maintain during their mentoring partnership. The semi-structured interview method was chosen to provide the three participant groups with a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts, their experiences with mentoring and any particular areas of interest. The process also enabled certain interviewee responses to be explored in more depth, such as underlying motives, feelings and thoughts (Horton, Macve & Struyven, 2004).

From Sanders‟ (1997) point of view, this form of interviewing uses open-ended questions to allow for individual variations. The interviewer has a list of questions and the interviewee has „leeway‟ in how they choose to reply. Also, questions that are not included in the interview schedule may still be asked by the interviewer as they pick up on things said by the interviewee. The questions may be pre-determined but the semi-structured interview expects no pre-determined responses and instead allows the researcher to explore within the pre-determined inquiry areas. The process in this interview method involves a degree of structure, but retains relative flexibility. The emphasis is on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events and what they view as important in explaining these. Flexibility is advocated by Horton et al. (2004), particularly in terms of the interview design, refining of the interview questions and in actually conducting the interview.

The eighteen academic teachers were also involved in focus group interviews, as these meetings were a core data collection method applied in the study. During the five focus group meetings held over the one year period of the teachers‟ mentoring partnership, the researcher introduced pre-planned questions to guide the meeting process. As well as the researcher‟s philosophy determining what was important, ethical and accurate in the interview and its results, the interviews were guided by

and based on the mentoring literature and the gaps identified in this literature. Interviewing the academic teachers via the focus groups and the summative interviews at the conclusion of the mentoring partnership aimed to evaluate the mentoring experience from their perspective and provided a process for the teachers to share their reflective journals with the researcher as part of the concluding individual interview. Each of these interview opportunities provided an evaluative mechanism for the academic teachers to consider the larger context of mentoring within the organisational context where the primary research was situated.

According to Kelly (1991), a person‟s construct system represents the truth as they understand it; construct systems cannot be judged in terms of objective truth. It is useful to apply Kelly‟s (1991) theory to the interview processes conducted in this study when exploring the more intangible dimensions of the individual participants‟ values, feelings and judgements, that is, the construct system that they enter the research project with.

4.7.2.2 Reflective journals

Corti (1993) discusses the advantages of using diaries in the social research context, outlining the advantages of this method as a reliable alternative to the traditional interview method for events that are difficult to recall accurately or that are easily forgotten. Also, diaries can supplement interview data to provide a rich source of information on the participants‟ behaviour and experiences. Given the application of the diary as described by Corti (1993), similarities can be made between the use of a diary and a self-reflective journal which was the mechanism chosen in this study.

A key function and benefit of mentoring, as identified in the mentoring literature, is the opportunity for the teacher to engage in critical reflective practice (Ganser, 1997; Harrison, Lawson & Wortley, 2005; Irwin, Hanton & Kerwin, 2004; Rowley, 1999). Constructivism places great emphasis on the meta-cognitive functions of learning and journals serve as an excellent tool to think about one‟s thinking in regard to any learning (Foote, Vermette & Battaglia, 2001; Janesick, 2004).

The eighteen academic teachers were requested to maintain a reflective journal during their mentoring partnership over the one year period. Each participant was provided with a guideline regarding what constitutes a reflective journal and techniques for writing and maintaining a reflective journal. The reflective journals kept by the teachers aimed to be the vehicle for participant reflection during the mentoring partnerships period and following each focus group meeting. They were another means by which the research was documented and managed, providing further insights into the mentors" and mentees" articulation of their mentoring experience. The journals naturally became an iterative process, as the partnerships met on a monthly basis through the one year period. The semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of this period enabled the participants to review and reflect on their journal entries, providing the researcher with an additional data source to explore at the end of the mentoring partnerships period.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Janesick (2004) suggest the journal is also a useful tool for the researcher to record their thinking and how their concepts evolved and were transformed during the research project. These authors add that these written reflections help explain to an audience how the researcher"s conclusions were reached. Ortlipp (2008) describes the keeping of journals as "Engaging with the notion of creating transparency in the research process" (p. 695). He views reflective journals as a mechanism for facilitating researcher reflexivity, where they can talk about themselves as part of the constructed nature of the research outcomes. As identified in this chapter, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout the data collection phase.

4.7.2.3 Focus groups

The focus group is described by multiple authors as a form of qualitative research (Allen, Grudens-Schuck & Larson, 2004; Howze, 2000; Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1997), derived from someone interested in gaining insight into the feelings of people who would be most affected by issues or proposed changes. Specifically, Krueger and Casey (2000) offer the following definition:

> Focus groups are a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. They can be used to collect information as part of a needs

> assessment (before a programme begins) or to evaluate a current programme (after it has begun), with the potential benefit of generating further avenues of research. (p. 5)

Kitzinger (1995) also believes that the interaction within a focus group enables participants to re-evaluate and re-consider their own understandings of their specific experiences, as much as eliciting information for the researcher. In this study, five focus groups were conducted with the eighteen academic teachers during the mentoring partnerships period, that is, after the programme of inquiry had begun. Three meetings involved all eighteen teachers meeting together as one group and comprised three separate interview schedules (Appendix F, refer p. 437; Appendix G, refer p. 438; Appendix H, refer p. 439). The fourth focus group was conducted as a mentee-only meeting (Appendix I, refer p. 440) whilst the fifth meeting was specifically for the mentors (Appendix J, refer p. 441). The same interview schedule was used for the mentee- and mentor-only focus group meetings.

The focus group meetings served as an opportunity for the participants to reflect on and evaluate their mentoring experiences as they engaged in the mentoring partnership process. Consequently, these reflections contributed to the cycle of investigation in the research process, that is, the following focus group meetings and concluding interviews with the mentoring participants.

One of the limitations of using focus groups as a research method that must be taken into consideration is the limited ability to generalise the findings to a whole population, mainly if there is a small number of people participating (Gibbs, 1997). Gibbs (1997) argues that assumptions should not be made that the individuals in a focus group are expressing their own definitive view. As she says "They are speaking in a specific context, within a specific culture, and so sometimes it may be difficult for the researcher to clearly identify an individual message" (p. 3). The mixed method approach taken in this study helped towards addressing this issue, avoiding reliance on the focus group as the only method of data collection.

Race, Hotch, and Parker (1994) identify an advantage of focus groups as becoming a forum for change, both during the meetings and afterwards. One such change described by the authors is the participants experiencing a sense of emancipation,

through the development of building relationships and speaking in a public forum. This theme of emancipation is taken up by Kitzinger (1995), as she identifies the popularity of focus group methods by people conducting action research who are concerned with empowering research participants; the participants become an active part of the process of analysis.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the context of collaborative inquiry is "An inquiring and theory-building „situated" community of practitioners and the process is a spiral of inquiry and improvement" (Levy, 2006, p. 10). Hence the decision was made to conduct focus group meetings for the duration of the mentoring partnerships period.

4.7.2.4 The evaluation questionnaire

> *"At the simplest level, a questionnaire or interview that asks both fixed and open-ended questions is an example of how quantitative measurement and qualitative inquiry are often combined" (Patton, 2002, p. 5).*

Patton (2002) describes the questionnaire as a relatively elementary form of qualitative inquiry whilst the in-depth interview is a significant way in which the researcher can seek to understand perceptions, feelings and knowledge of the participants. He views the purpose of evaluation in research as a summative judgement of the overall effectiveness of an event to inform major decisions.

A key aspect of this study was the incorporation of three mentoring training workshops for the eighteen academic teachers prior to their engagement in the mentoring partnerships. The teachers who attended the training workshops were provided with a workbook which outlined the main objectives of the training and provided a range of mentoring resources they could use in the future. Given the limited mentoring literature to substantiate whether mentors and mentees should receive separate or combined training (Gardiner, 1999), the process chosen here was to facilitate three combined mentor-mentee workshops. The mentoring literature does, however, substantiate the benefits of providing initial training for mentors and mentees before a mentoring partnership is entered into (Rowley, 1999; Sweeney, 2003; Wolfe, 1992). Following the workshops, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire (Appendix K, refer p. 442) using Survey

Monkey™, as the tool to gain their feedback on the training process and whether they thought training was necessary to engage in prior to commencing in a mentoring partnership.

Because of the elementary nature of the mentoring training workshops, that is, provision of a starting point for the consequent in-depth mentoring partnerships which generated more in-depth data, the evaluation questionnaire is justified as the method used to gather data from this training activity. In the mentoring literature, there is strong advocacy from a number of authors for the provision of mentoring training as an integral component and a starting point when implementing a mentoring scheme within an organisation (Barrett, 2002; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). Based on this premise, the online evaluation questionnaire (Appendix K, refer p. 442) provided another primary source of data. As Patton (2002) also points out, one of the limitations associated with reliance on an evaluation questionnaire as a sole source of data is the impossibility of the researcher to probe or extend participant responses.

To address this limitation highlighted by Patton (2002), the online questionnaire was used in conjunction with the first focus group meeting, the results from the questionnaire formulating the focus for this first meeting. Guba and Lincoln (1994) also emphasise how the evaluation needs to be designed based on issues and concerns identified via direct, face-to-face contact with participants, claiming this increases the researcher"s understanding of what is important.

4.7.2.5 The Memo: Collecting data from the researcher

Memo writing is espoused by Lacey and Luff (2001) as a valuable practice for the researcher, to record their reflections and insights about what they are learning from the data. These reflections can be included as additional data to be analysed. Janesick (2004) reflects Lacey and Luff"s (2001) opinion as she refers to the use of journal writing as an important research tool to address the researcher"s self, as she states, “Often we qualitative researchers are positioned outside the very people and situations about which we write” (p. 144).

The researcher in this study maintained a reflective journal (Appendix L, refer p. 444) throughout the data collection phase, mirroring the expectation of the academic teachers to do the same during their one year mentoring experience.

These reflections provided a conduit for the researcher to constantly consider ethical issues that could arise as a result of their position in the study as well as regularly checking assumptions. Thorne (2000) and Gibson (2006) both highlight key assumptions the researcher needs to be aware of with regard to the degree of inherent subjectivity, that is, how key themes and processes are judged predominantly by the researcher"s interpretations as important. The process of reflective journaling supported the researcher"s reflexivity, an important aspect of the research when their position was one of researcher-in-context.

4.8 The Data Analysis Approach

Data analysis tends to be an iterative, non-linear process in qualitative research (Thorne, 2000). Clare and Hamilton (2004) talk of the concurrency of the data collection and data analysis processes in heuristically-designed human inquiry, whilst Lacey and Luff (2001) refer to the data collection phase as „interim analysis", describing this as a cyclical process of collecting and analysing data. Interim analysis allows the researcher to go back and refine questions, develop hypotheses and pursue emerging avenues of inquiry in further depth. Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000) believe this continuous analysis is almost inevitable in qualitative research, because the researcher is „in the field" collecting the data. Undertaking an interim analysis in the current study complemented the cyclical nature of action research as the underpinning methodology for the data collection.

Thorne (2000) talks about data analysis as an "Explicit step in conceptually interpreting the data set as a whole" (p. 69), the researcher then using different analytic strategies to transform raw data into meaningful findings. Thorne (2000) highlights the need for the data analysis approach to help with "Understanding how the data was sorted, organised, conceptualised, refined and interpreted" (p. 69). The data analysis in this study was conducted iteratively throughout the data collection phase. Four action research cycles provided the framework for the collection of data, Cycle One commencing with an extensive review of the mentoring literature. Interim analysis subsequently occurred during Cycles Two, Three and Four through the application of two specific analytic strategies including content analysis and thematic analysis. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2009) provided an over-arching framework for carrying out the code-

related analysis integral to the three data analysis approaches employed in this study.

This collective approach to the data analysis helped to shape each subsequent data collection method and therefore continually build on the findings at each of these collection points. The decision to use different approaches for the data analysis recognised the variances between the data collection methods undertaken in this study. Table 4.4 summarises the different data analysis approaches taken by the researcher in relation to each of the data collection methods during the four action research cycles and identifies the time frame for each. The individual cycles are representative of multiple data sets. An explanation of why these analytic approaches were used and a description of how they were applied to analyse the different data sets follows Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Summary of Data Analysis Approach

Action Research Cycle	**Data Collection Method**	**Sample**	**Data Analysis Method**	**Data Analysis Application**
Cycle One *2007*	Literature review		Self-evaluation scoring rubric	Singular approach
Cycle Two *February-May 2007*	Structured interviews	Past mentors **n=5** Higher education programme coordinators **n=4**	*Constant Comparison*: Content and thematic analysis	Collective approach
Cycle Three *June 2007*	Online training evaluation questionnaire	Academic teachers **n=18**	*Constant Comparison:* Content and thematic analysis	Collective approach
Cycle Three *July 2007-February 2008*	Three of five focus group meetings	Academic teachers **n=18**	*Constant Comparison:* Content and thematic analysis	Collective approach
Cycle Four *February-July 2008*	Two of five focus group meetings	Academic teachers **n=18**	*Constant Comparison:* Content and thematic analysis	Collective approach
Cycle Four *August-November 2008*	Semi-structured interviews (summative)	Academic teachers **n=18**	*Constant Comparison:* Content and thematic analysis	Collective approach

4.8.1 The constant comparative method

Glaser and Strauss (2009) explain the purpose of the constant comparison method as "Joint coding and analysis to generate theory systematically, by using explicit coding and analytic procedures" (p. 102). As this researcher identified in Chapter Three (refer p. 53), a „research-then-theory approach‟ to establish a theoretical framework for mentoring was taken, based on the work of Dash (1999) and Nachmias and Nachmias (1996). This strategy allows the researcher to consider the data before producing a theory, legitimising the researcher‟s decision to integrate the constant comparison method throughout the data collection phase.

As Thorne (2000) explains, the constant comparative strategy involves "Taking one piece of data and comparing it with all other data that may be similar or different (p. 69). This approach enables the researcher to develop conceptualisations of the possible relations between pieces of data. The underpinning methodology of content analysis, contextual analysis and thematic analysis, all of which were applied in this study, involves comparing the data, creating codes and identifying themes in order to analyse the data resulting from multiple data collection methods. Gibson (2006) stresses how there needs to be a clear link between thematic analysis and constant comparison, as the latter method "Lays out a framework for carrying out this type of code-related analysis" (p. 1). Based on these premises, the constant comparison method became the framework for the data analysis.

4.8.2 Cycle One: Literature review: Researcher self-evaluation scoring rubric

As illustrated in Table 4.4 (refer p. 109), Cycle One of the action research approach involved an extensive review of the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business. Although the literature review did not require specific data analysis and given that the research findings are analysed against the literature highlighted in the study, the researcher employed an evaluation strategy to determine the quality of the literature review, especially in light of its significance in the consequent analysis of the research findings. A framework for self-evaluation to determine the quality of the review was applied using Bootes and Beiles‟ (2005) „Literature Review Scoring Rubric‟ (Appendix M,

refer p. 445). Application of the five-category rubric enabled the researcher to evaluate i) the degree of coverage; ii) the level of synthesis; iii) the identification of methodologies used in the mentoring field and iv) the rationale and significance of the research problem and evaluate the quality of the rhetoric, as delineated by the rubric.

4.8.3 Cycles Two, Three and Four: Content and thematic analysis

Cycles Two, Three and Four involved four methods of data collection, including: i) structured interviews with the five past mentors and four higher education programme coordinators; ii) an online evaluation questionnaire completed by the eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution; iii) five focus group meetings with the academic teachers and iv) semi-structured interviews with the academic teachers. Data generated by each of these methods were analysed using content and thematic analysis collectively. The content analysis approach was particularly meaningful in its focus on coding and categorising the data derived from the four research methods, which subsequently contributed to the researcher identifying key themes for discussion.

4.8.3.1 Content analysis

Content analysis was selected as one of the data analysis approaches in this study as this approach is purported by Krippendorff (2004) as applicable when large volumes of text result from multiple research methods. Stemler (2001) summarises the definition of content analysis, as purported by a range of authors, as "A systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (p. 1). Stemler (2001) further points out how content analysis extends beyond simple word counts from texts to its reliance on coding and categorising of the data.

Content analysis provided the researcher with a comprehensive approach to summarising the findings and "Rendering the data comprehensible" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 192) which included tabulation of the data units. Krippendorff (2004) describes tabulation as collecting same or similar recording units in categories and presenting counts of how many instances are found in each. The analysis carried out by this researcher produced tables of relative frequencies, which Krippendorff (2004) identifies as "Percentages expressed relative to the sample size, proportions

of a total or probabilities" (p. 192). Tabulation of the data sets provided statistical consideration of the findings and assisted the researcher to further distinguish prevalent themes.

4.8.3.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a strategy that deals with data which involves the creation and application of codes to data (Gibson, 2006). This analysis approach categorises pieces of data into meaningful themes. As explained in the previous section, thematic analysis aligns well with the application of content analysis of text.

Coding meaningful segments of data as they are located helps the researcher to organise the data as it is collected. Coding is defined by Lacey and Luff (2001) as marking data segments with symbols, descriptive words or category names. Each interview and focus group transcript and the evaluation questionnaire were summarised, coded and organised into idea clusters (Beyea & Nicoll, 2000) which generated a list of key themes. Thematic analysis followed this process using NVivo 8™ software. Gibson (2006) describes thematic analysis as the coding of categories in relation to the data which enables the grouping of different data under an umbrella term. In this way, the data can be regarded as "Of the same type" (p. 1).

Gibson (2006) also believes that the categories decided upon by the researcher can come from multiple sources, such as the literature, theory, the research process and the data itself. NVivo 8™ enabled the data to be captured and preserved as a master list so that the codes could be reapplied to each new data segment, acknowledging that this programme aided the sorting and organising of the data but was not capable of conceptualisation to transform the data into meaningful findings (Thorne, 2000).

In this study, the main categories were split into different themes, from which code families were created. The upper level categories (Thomas, 2003) were derived from the research questions and an extensive literature review whilst the lower level categories derived from multiple readings of the raw data. The relationships of codes to each other were then identified and each thematic code was given a definition, an action also encouraged by Gibson (2006). Within each main theme, contradictory and/or new insights were searched for, with appropriate quotes

highlighted to qualify the researcher‟s decision about these. Development and refinement of the key themes occurred by repeated studying of the transcripts and online questionnaire responses, to consider possible meanings and how these connected with each other and linked to the central research questions. This element of the analysis process reflects Kreuger and Casey‟s (2000) contention that data analysis requires "A clear fix on the purpose of the study" (p. 128).

4.9 Strength of Research Approach: Validity and Reliability

Positivists strive to collect data that are true measures of reality, whereas methodologies in the interpretive tradition are concerned with claims that the knowledge acquired by the researcher via their research is defensible (Weber, 2004). In Clough and Nutbrown‟s (2007) view, research practices should arise from an evaluation of different methodological approaches. In this way, the researcher can justify the approach they take that maximises the validity, reliability and appropriateness of their methodology. Different lenses are used to evaluate the defensibility of knowledge generated via different research methods, therefore different notions of validity are applied to evaluate the outcomes generated by these different research approaches (Weber, 2004).

The question of evidence is critical in action research. McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (2003) believe that the evidence will finally decide whether or not your explanations can be regarded as valid, that is, that you have done what you claim to have done. Berk et al. (2005) emphasise the importance of creating as much validity to the data as possible. They point out that there is a bias to be aware of when conducting interviews as a research method, in particular,

> Acquiescence (yea-saying) and the halo effect. A mentee‟s and/or a mentor‟s close working relationship with their mentoring partner, may affect the interviewee‟s objectivity. Given the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship, no psychometric antidote for this potential subjectivity bias appears possible and the effects should be considered in the interpretation of the final ratings. (p. 68)

The questions formulated for the interviews across the three participant groups were based on an extensive literature review, ensuring the nature and focus of the interview directly aligned with the purpose of the research study as supported by

the mentoring literature. Validity, in Kvale"s (1996) definition, means whether an interview, for example, investigates what is intended to be investigated. From Clare and Hamilton"s (2004) perspective, validation occurs as a four step process. The first step in this study was the researcher confirming validation of the interview transcripts with the research participants. The second step involved editing the transcripts by the researcher, whilst the third step was then sharing the dominant findings from this second step with the participants. The fourth step manifested itself as iterative re-reading for thematic and pattern identification from the findings. Once these four steps have been taken, Clare and Hamilton (2004) then see validation as continuing on to a fifth step which involves a meta-critique by the researcher, as they critically reflect on their interpretations, suppositions and implications from the findings. As they state,

> "The nature of the research question guides the selection of the methodology and research methods. A strong documentation of the appropriateness of the method selection goes a long way in eventually supporting the validity of the research findings" (p. 109).

Spencer, Ritchie, and Dillon (2003) suggest eighteen appraisal questions that can be used to evaluate the quality and credibility of the research. For example, how defensible is the research design? In addition, how well has the approach to and formulation of analysis been conveyed? Specifically addressing the core components and processes of the research enables the researcher to check for validity and reliability of the findings as well as providing a framework against which to make decisions about the research methods to be used. Malterud (2001) supports these questions as integral to validity, as she identifies three distinct factors that affect research in the qualitative research paradigm, namely reflexivity, transferability, and interpretation and analysis of data. She points out that the effect of an investigator on a study, the principles and consequences of sampling, and the process of organisation and interpretation during analysis, all affect research and are closely related to different aspects of validity.

The interpretive researcher is described by Weber (2004) as believing the research is reliable if they can demonstrate "Interpretive awareness" (p. ix). He explains interpretive awareness as the researcher showing that they have acknowledged the

subjectivity they bring to the research process and have taken steps to address the implications of their subjectivity.

Throughout the data gathering phase of this study, this researcher"s subjectivity was acknowledged and mitigation processes put in place to minimise as much as possible any influence of their subjectivity on the research participants and the data. For example, the researcher maintained their own reflective journal, as a means to document any occurrence of possible subjective interference by themselves in response to uninitiated communications from the academic teachers. This overt acknowledgement and documentation ensured the researcher was continually aware of their position in the research process, which enabled them to consciously avoid or circumvent actively influencing the data and eventual findings. During the focus group meetings, the researcher remained open to the participants" explanations of the phenomena, an action and decision theoretically governed by the study"s humanist-constructivist framework. The researcher"s role was to document and participants" comments verbatim in response to pre-established questions, rather than shaping the participants" feedback through different questioning techniques. This was achieved by tape-recording each meeting and transcribing the recordings.

One of the guiding principles of research, as suggested by Spencer et al. (2003) is the "Credibility in claim, in which the research offers well-founded and plausible arguments about the significance of the data generated" (p. 20). In this study, the participants and their subsequent lived experiences provide the basis for the generated data.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

When the participants „in action" are also researchers, the boundaries between researchers and the researched can become blurred (Halai, 2006). Halai"s (2006) point is also highlighted by Mason (2002) who poses the question, "Are the research participants „researchers" as well?" (p. xii). Mason (2002) talks about the need for the researcher to develop practices that can be transformed into a methodologically and systematically sound process of "Researching from the inside" (p. xii). Sound processes in this study included the elements of informed consent and anonymity of the research participants.

Halai (2006) makes a significant point about the evolutionary nature of action research as challenging the principle of informed consent. He claims that "Informed consent is not possible as the researcher cannot provide information about the direction of the research prior to the inquiry being led" (p. 8). Tolich and Fitzgerald (2006) describe informed consent as people having real choices about levels of participation and non-participation, viewing informed consent as being central to any ethical consideration.

As described earlier in this chapter, each of the three participant groups was invited to participate in the study and had the choice not to or to withdraw during the data collection phase. The academic teachers in the principal institution were identified via an institute-wide invitation for academic teaching staff to volunteer, as opposed to a random sample. Only those people willing to participate in this aspect of the study were involved, with the right to withdraw at any stage. Participants were fully informed of the purpose, conduct and dissemination of the research and gave their consent to be involved.

The institution where the eighteen academic teachers were based gave informed consent for the research to be undertaken in its environment and for teachers to volunteer their involvement. Permission was gained from the existing research ethics committee and the senior management team before the study commenced. In the early stages of the study, researcher and participant roles were clarified and the participant"s agreement was gained regarding the research methods. Reflecting the nature of action research as a cycle of planning, action, reflection and evaluation, each stage of the study was negotiated with the participants.

The anonymity of research participants is another core consideration for the ethical conduct of research, mechanisms to protect their identity having become central to the design and practice of ethical research (Grinyer, 2002). However, Grinyer (2002) questions the assumption made that research participants desire anonymity, suggesting that the likelihood of participants wishing to be acknowledged in published research is underestimated. She explains this acknowledgement as enabling the participants to retain ownership of their stories. Anonymity of the research participants was assured, with the assumption that this would be the desirable approach taken. A consent form (Appendix A, refer p. 431) and a

participant information form (Appendix B, refer p. 432) outlining the ethical considerations embedded in the study were given to all participants for signing prior to commencement of the data collection. All participants across the three groups requested anonymity during the data collection phase and in the final thesis publication.

4.11 A Framework for Reporting the Research Findings

Congruent with action research methodology which is cyclical in application, each cycle of data collection within the current study produced data that guided and informed the consequent data generation method. Table 4.5 summarises the four cycles implemented in this study. The research methods, dates of implementation and the participant cohort involved in each cycle are also represented.

Table 4.5: The Action Research Cycles Framework

Action Research Cycles	**Cycle One**	**Cycle Two**	**Cycle Three**	**Cycle Four**
Research Method & Implementation Date	Literature review *2007*	Semi-structured interviews *February-May 2007*	a) Three training workshops and online evaluation questionnaire *June 2007* b) Three focus group meetings *July 2007-February 2008*	a) Two focus group meetings *February-July 2008* b) Summative interviews *August-November 2008*
Participant Cohort		i) Past mentors in principal research institution **n=5** ii) Programme coordinators in Higher Education Institutions in Australia and NZ **n=4**	Academic teachers in principal research institution engaging in dyad mentoring partnerships **n=18**	Academic teachers in research principal institution engaging in dyad mentoring partnerships **n=18**

As identified in Table 4.5, three separate participant groups were involved in this research investigation: five academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role within the principal institution twelve years prior to the researcher instigating this research; four mentoring programme coordinators based in higher education

institutions in New Zealand and Australia who had been identified as having some level of mentoring programme activity; and eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution who had previously never been involved in a mentoring programme at the institution. Each of these participant groups and the action research cycles they engaged in are explained. The purpose of the data collection from the three groups is also detailed.

4.11.1 Cycle two

Cycle Two immediately followed the literature review undertaken by the researcher and occurred in the first half of 2007. This cycle involved the researcher in conducting semi-structured interviews with the five academic teachers in the principal institution who had assumed a mentor role in the past (Appendix C, refer p. 434). Twelve years prior to the current research study, the principal institution had in place a very informal mentoring scheme, coordinated and administered by the Staff Education and Development (SED) Manager at that time. The purpose of interviewing the five academic teachers was to assist the researcher in gaining a picture of how mentoring had historically been provided within the principal institution from the research participants" experiences. Their feedback provided data to later compare with the mentoring experiences of the eighteen academic teachers in the same institution, which formed the basis of Cycles Three and Four of the data collection phase.

Cycle Two also included structured interviews conducted with mentoring programme coordinators in two Australian universities and two New Zealand polytechnics (Appendix D, refer p. 435). The purpose of the data collection undertaken with the four higher education institutions was two-fold. Firstly, the data informed the researcher"s questions for the consequent focus group meetings and summative interviews with the eighteen academic teachers in Cycles Three and Four. Secondly, the interview data from the higher education institutions was to contribute to an analysis of the factors that influenced the establishment and coordination of an institute-wide mentoring programme. Commensurate with the primary objective of the research investigation, which aimed to identify what was required to establish a mentoring system as a teacher support mechanism in the higher education context; this data could then be used to compare with the

research-led mentoring programme undertaken in the principal institution with the eighteen academic teacher participants.

4.11.2 Cycles three and four

Cycle Three and Cycle Four comprised the eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution engaging in mentoring dyad partnerships over a one year period.

4.11.2.1 Cycle three

Cycle Three commenced with the facilitation of three mentoring training workshops, which occurred during June 2007 and defined a significant component of the data collection. Inclusive in Cycle Three was the first three of five focus group meetings involving the eighteen teachers (Appendix F, refer p. 437; Appendix G, refer p. 438; Appendix H, refer p. 439). The first three focus group meetings were conducted during the first six months of the one-year dyad mentoring partnership period, which commenced in July 2007.

The purpose of the data collection undertaken in Cycle Three was to begin exploring the eighteen academic teachers‟ perceptions of mentoring as a support mechanism for teaching practice and to provide for an examination of the outcomes of their mentoring experiences. The training workshops initially helped to establish the expectations and the process of mentoring for the eighteen teachers and provided a conduit for the researcher to gather feedback from the teachers regarding their perceptions of mentoring prior to actively engaging in a mentoring partnership via the teachers completing an online evaluation questionnaire (Appendix K, refer p. 442). The three focus group meetings which followed provided the opportunity for the academic teachers to start sharing their mentoring experiences and for the researcher to gain common or differing views of mentoring from a collective perspective.

4.11.2.2 Cycle four

Cycle Four involved the eighteen academic teachers participating in two further focus group meetings, facilitated in the second half of the one year dyad partnership period, from February to July 2008. These meetings were specific to the mentoring roles, that is, respectively a mentee-only (Appendix I, refer p. 440)

and a mentor-only focus group meeting (Appendix J, refer p. 441). The data collection phase in Cycle Four was then completed with individual summative interviews with each of the academic teachers at the conclusion of the one year mentoring partnership time frame (Appendix E, refer p. 436). The summative interviews spanned the period of August to November 2008. The purpose of the data collection undertaken in Cycle Four was to collect specific role-related impressions of the teachers‟ mentoring experiences via the separate focus group meetings, whilst the summative interviews enabled the teachers to reflect on their whole mentoring experience based on a reflective journal they were required to maintain over the mentoring partnership period. The summative interviews in turn provided the researcher with the opportunity to examine what the teachers believed were key factors that had influenced their mentoring experience.

4.12 Summary

To summarise, the main goal of this study was to deepen the understanding of mentoring as a support mechanism for the teaching practice of teachers in the higher education context, using action research methodology. This chapter has outlined the choice and application of qualitative research methods from an interpretive methodological perspective to provide a catalyst for a deeper level of understanding of mentoring. Action research has provided the framework for reporting the research findings, underpinned by this methodological perspective and enabled continual review and refinement of the research question and associated research objectives.

A range of benefits, strengths and challenges of qualitative and action research were presented, highlighting the significance of how these research methodologies can be interpreted. The subjective nature of qualitative research, leading to a questioning of the validity and reliability of the data collection, was identified as a key challenge. In contrast, a key benefit of action research was highlighted as enabling research participants to reflect, learn and change in their „natural‟ setting. The place of the researcher within an action research framework was also explored.

Triangulation was presented as a process that increased the validity of the data collected in this current study. Data was gathered from multiple sources across the three participant groups, including an evaluation questionnaire, focus group

meetings, interviews and reflective journals. Each of these methods was discussed extensively in this chapter.

A mixed method approach to the data analysis was applied, including content analysis, contextual analysis and thematic analysis. Each of these methods enabled the researcher to compare data collected across the three participant groups, create codes and identify key themes.

This chapter has also outlined a framework for reporting the research findings. The framework identifies the four action research cycles of data collection and the corresponding research methods, dates of implementation and the participant cohort involved in each cycle. The framework describes the content and sequence of the data collection and data analysis which are presented in the following two chapters, Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE FINDINGS: CYCLE TWO

Chapter Five and Chapter Six following (refer p. 169) summarise the findings identified from the data collected during four action research cycles which underpinned the methodological approach taken by the researcher in this study. These four cycles provided the framework within which the findings from this study are reported, as summarised in Table 4.5 in the previous chapter (refer p. 117). The first cycle of the study commenced with secondary level data collection via an extensive literature review (refer Chapter Two, p. 7) undertaken by the researcher. Reflective of the action research methodology applied in this study, each cycle informed the next cycle of enquiry, as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Four Cycles of Enquiry

Cycle One	Cycle Two	Cycle Three	Cycle Four
Literature review	Interviews with five past mentors in the principal institution	Mentoring training evaluation with eighteen academic teachers	Two focus group meetings with eighteen academic teachers
	Interviews with four higher education programme coordinators in New Zealand and Australia	Three focus group meetings with eighteen academic teachers	Individual summative interviews with eighteen academic teachers

Chapter Five reports on the findings generated from Cycle Two which included semi-structured interviews with the five past mentors and the four programme coordinators in higher education institutions within New Zealand and Australia. Chapter Six reports on the findings from Cycle Three which involved completion of an evaluation questionnaire by the eighteen academic teachers following their involvement in three mentoring training workshops and the first three of five focus group meetings with the academic teachers. Chapter Six also reports the findings from Cycle Four which comprised a further two of the five focus group meetings with the academic teachers and individual summative interviews conducted with the academic teachers at the conclusion of a one year mentoring programme.

Within an action research cycle framework, the findings of this study are contextualised in this chapter within a secondary framework of reflective feedback, experiential learning and mentoring literature. This chapter reports the findings from Cycle Two of the research study.

CYCLE TWO
Stage one data collection:
Semi-structured interviews with five past mentors

This section presents the findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with the five academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role in the principal institution twelve years prior to commencement of the current study. The interview schedule comprised seven questions (Appendix C, refer p. 434) and was conducted over the period of one hour. The content of the past mentors‟ responses provided a range of data regarding mentoring as a teacher support mechanism and covered the following key areas: i) how mentoring had been provided for academic teaching staff in the principal institution; ii) the purpose of the mentoring that had been provided; iii) how mentors were identified and selected; iv) the provision of mentoring training; v) how the mentoring partnership had been established; vi) how the organisational culture had influenced mentoring and vii) how mentoring had supported teaching practice of academic teachers.

5.1 Question One: Mentoring Provision for Academic Teaching Staff

In response to the first question in the interview schedule regarding how mentoring had previously been provided for teaching staff in the principal institution, the five past mentors identified a number of programme structure features. Feedback varied significantly between the five past mentors, depending on which faculty was representative of that person‟s experience. Table 5.2 (refer p. 124) summarises the components of the programme structure as described by the five teachers. The first three categories were commented on repeatedly by the past mentors. This is reflected in Table 5.1 in the comment frequency.

Table 5.2 Mentoring Provision for Academic Teaching Staff

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=5 % of sample
Regulated programme: centrally coordinated by Staff Education and Development (SED) manager	11	**220%**
Formal and informal processes	7	**140%**
Pool of mentors available	6	**120%**
Buddy system established in faculties	3	**60%**
Reactive mentoring	3	**60%**

The most common response describing how mentoring was provided for academic teachers related to how the programme was centrally coordinated by the SED manager at that time. All five teachers offered a number of comments which indicated that the mentoring support they provided for teaching staff was "*almost solely*" dependent on "*a referral from the SED manager*". They talked about their experience of "*a regulated programme*", referring to the SED manager as being the person who "*pushed you in certain directions, so it was a formal structure in the sense of him controlling this whole process*". The teachers perceived the SED manager as the person who made decisions about the mentor-mentee matching and who decided which teacher required mentoring support. Two of the teachers described how they had often felt frustrated by the amount of control the SED manager had in regard to how they as mentors could offer their support to other teachers: "*The SED manager coordinated the whole process. He referred tutors to the mentors. He controlled this*".

The next most frequently mentioned category by four of the past mentors focused on formal and informal processes that defined the mentoring system and how these processes influenced the support that was provided for teaching staff. For example, the four teachers described the system as formal when associated with the institution"s new teacher induction process, "*With the new staff member, it was part of their induction – formally requested by their manager*". The teachers used the terms "*adhoc*" and "*the lines were never written down*" a number of times to describe how they found the processes for providing mentoring support extremely informal also. Again, a degree of frustration was communicated in the teachers"

comments. This was evident in one of the teachers" response: "*Often the mentor role just occurred without any planning. All pretty informal. You know, sometimes mentoring happened*".

The third most frequently mentioned process for providing teacher support through mentoring was the establishment of a pool of mentors coordinated by the SED Manager. Six references were made to this feature of the programme as the teachers talked about the availability of a mentoring pool, referring to this structural component of the mentoring system as a "*central contact point*" that was *"very informal but provided you with a contact point."* One of the teachers explained how they had been "*part of a pool of mentors, so I would respond to a general request for mentoring from the SED coordinator*". They indicated that this aspect of the mentoring system was one of the more effective features for being able to support teachers.

The fourth most common category that described how mentoring was provided for academic teaching staff was commented on by three of the past mentors, as they talked about a buddy system that had been established in the faculties. They described buddying as similar to mentoring, indicating that this type of system was more formally attached to the induction process. One of the teachers explained how this process worked in the organisation: *"From a formal point of view, the PINS (probation and induction for new staff) process for new staff was a buddy/mentor type system"*.

The final category of mentoring provision was described by two of the past mentors as a "*reactive mentoring*". They explained this as "*you just worked and helped your colleagues*." One of the teachers referred to the "*reactiveness*" of their mentor role, explaining how mentoring was often a "*by-product*" of other assistance they were providing teaching staff across the campus. A general comment made by this teacher indicated that as the organisation changed under the management of a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the nature of the mentoring they provided had changed as a consequence: *"As the organisation became more structured, there were less and less informal conversations, which can also be defined as mentoring"*.

5.2 Question Two: The Purpose of Mentoring

In response to question two in the interview schedule, which asked what they believed was the purpose of mentoring, the five past mentors identified a range of both professional development and personal development dimensions which they believed the mentee was supported in through mentoring. Their comments indicated that they perceived the purpose of mentoring as supporting both the professional and personal development of a teacher.

5.2.1 The purpose of mentoring: Professional development support

Table 5.3 provides a summary of the past mentors‟ perceptions in relation to the purpose of mentoring as it supports a teacher‟s professional development.

Table 5.3: The Purpose of Mentoring: Professional Development Support

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=5 % of sample
Classroom management	4	**80%**
Reflective teaching practice	3	**60%**
Moderation and assessment practices	3	**60%**
Experimenting with different teaching techniques	2	**40%**
Acting on course and tutor evaluations	1	**20%**
Familiarisation with organisational systems and processes	1	**20%**

The most important response to question two regarding the purpose of mentoring as it supports a teacher‟s professional development was to support the new teacher in classroom management techniques. The four past mentors who commented on this described various ways in which they had assisted teachers in this area of their practice, including "*having control in the classroom*", "*managing the classroom atmosphere*" and "*managing dominant students*". In reference to the third comment, two of the teachers emphasised how a large proportion of their mentoring time had been focused on helping the teacher with "*managing challenging students*". The teachers described this support as "*helping them learn to cope with student bluntness and arguing in the classroom*" and explained how they would sit in on classes to "*just be there as a support*".

Encouraging reflective teaching practice was the second most frequently mentioned category. Three of the mentors indicated that the mentoring they provided had assisted teachers in scheduling time to "*think about their teaching*" and prompting teachers to view reflection on their teaching practice as "*a useful adjunct in the day to day formalities*". One of the three mentors who believed that mentoring was an important mechanism in supporting reflective practice stated, "*No matter how good you are at reflection, you can"t see yourself*".

The third highest category focused on how mentoring supported teachers with assessment and moderation practices. Of the three past mentors who mentioned this category, one of them referred to how they often found themselves assisting the experienced teacher in assessment techniques, in contrast to the more common situation of assisting the new teacher. Another of the teachers identified how they regularly provided mentoring support in the area of assessment design as there was an acknowledged "*lack of teaching knowledge around this topic*" in the institution.

The fourth category was mentioned by two of the past mentors. They identified the purpose of mentoring as helping the new teacher with "*experimenting with different teaching techniques*". One teacher talked about how they regularly found themselves assisting the new teacher with learning how to "*facilitate groupwork versus didactic approaches*" and "*create teaching plans*". A similar support role was described by the other teacher as they explained how a key area of mentoring support had been in helping new teachers "*learn how to find resources*". The four teachers all mentioned that they believed mentoring was "*an absolutely essential and fantastic support for the new teacher*".

The fifth category was mentioned by one of the five past mentors who identified that the purpose of the mentoring they provided had mainly centred on assisting teachers in dealing with student and course evaluations. This teacher described mentoring as a "*conduit for talking the teachers through their evaluations*". They added that sometimes they found themselves "*mentoring teachers who received negative evaluations*". The teacher emphasised how there was no other mechanism in place at the time to help teachers work through evaluation results, indicating that their mentoring support was the only mechanism available to help teachers in this area.

The final category identified by one of the past mentors indicated that the purpose of mentoring was perceived as a useful mechanism for helping new teachers become familiar with organisational systems and processes: "*The purpose of my mentoring support? For new staff, getting familiar with systems and processes stuff*". They added as a final comment, "*Also, using you as a sounding board*".

5.2.2 The purpose of mentoring: Personal development support

As well as describing the purpose of mentoring as supporting a teacher‟s professional development in teaching and learning, all of the five past mentors identified that mentoring also provided a mechanism for supporting the personal development of the mentee. The five past mentors viewed personal development support as a significant element of the mentoring meetings and also described "*personal development*" in a number of ways. Table 5.4 highlights the comments made by the past mentors that reflect their perception of how the mentoring they provided supported a teacher‟s personal development.

Table 5.4: The Purpose of Mentoring: Personal Development Support

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=5 % of sample
Conflict management	4	**80%**
Building relationships	3	**60%**
Increase in self-confidence	2	**40%**
Empowerment of the mentee	2	**40%**

The most frequently mentioned category in respect to the purpose of mentoring as supporting a teacher‟s personal development was the issue of conflict management. For example, four of the past mentors highlighted how they had assisted the mentee with managing conflict with work colleagues and managing conflict in the workplace generally. These two contexts requiring conflict management support were identified in addition to the five teachers‟ earlier comments regarding how they often supported teachers with managing challenging students. One of the teachers described their support of the mentee in conflict management as helping them "*learn blocking and gate-keeping tactics in team meetings*". Another teacher added that they were occasionally asked about techniques on how to approach the Dean or how to write a formal letter of complaint. A comment from one teacher

indicated that they also provided mentoring support for more experienced teachers in the institution, assisting "*teachers who felt blocked with moving through the career progression system*".

The second most important response from three of the past mentors indicated that a percentage of their mentoring time had been focused on encouraging teachers with building relationships and building their networks across the campus. One of the teachers described the support they had provided in this area: "*As you work with mentees, you are aware that you are helping them establish relationships as well as helping them with their teaching*". One comment indicated that the past mentors had benefitted from the networking opportunity as much as the teachers they were helping, explained as: *"You got to know and understand how things can be done differently and effectively, especially if you have the opportunity to mix with people outside your own department"*.

The final category commented on by two past mentors focused on the purpose of mentoring being to support the mentee"s development of self-confidence in themselves as well as in their teaching. The two teachers were adamant that "*self confidence as a teacher impacts on the individual, the students and the organisation*". One of the teachers believed that the purpose of their role as a mentor had been to "*help empower*" the mentee, stating that this inevitably helped them gain confidence in their teaching. The same teacher also commented that both the mentee and the mentor developed personally and professionally as a result of engaging in mentoring: *"A lot of non-teaching mentoring is still supportive of teaching practice. Mentoring is an opportunity for growth of both the mentor and the mentee"*. A final comment from one of the two teachers who had identified the purpose of mentoring as supporting a teacher"s self confidence provided a comprehensive perspective of the meaning of mentoring, *"There are three strands to mentoring – the time frame within which to do it, the content and meetings and the nurturing of the mentee"s self confidence and ensuring their self concept remains intact. This last one is the central strand of mentoring"*.

5.3 Question Three: How Mentors Were Identified and Selected

Question three of the interview schedule asked for the past mentors" feedback about how they had been selected as mentors and what they believed were

important mentor attributes. The five teachers identified a number of mentor attributes which they believed were essential traits that assisted with the mentor selection process. Interestingly, their feedback indicated that in their experience as mentors, a link between these two factors was not an explicit process in the mentoring system that was in place.

5.3.1 How mentors were identified and selected

Table 5.5 summarises the five past mentors‟ feedback on the processes that were in place in the principal institution to identify and select the mentor.

Table 5.5: How Mentors Were Identified and Selected

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=5 % of sample
Assigned by the SED manager	5	**100%**
Informal process: Approached by staff	3	**60%**
Common pool of mentors	3	**60%**
Assigned by the manager	2	**40%**
Voluntary participation	1	**20%**

The highest number of responses received from all five past mentors identified that in their appointed role as a SASM (senior academic staff member), they were often approached by the SED manager and asked if they would be an "*identified mentor in the institution*". They talked about how achievement of SASM status "*in those days*" automatically meant the SED Manager expected them to assume a mentor role. One of the teachers described the SED manager‟s mentor selection process as "*he had his own way of working. He would pick mentors based on his own relationships with staff*". Three of the teachers described how the SED manager assumed the responsibility for assigning experienced teachers to new teachers, indicating that the "*assignment of duty*" involved little or no choice on their part.

The second most frequently mentioned process for mentor selection in response to question three in the interview schedule indicated that mentor selection decisions were "*very informal*" and often as a result of senior teachers being approached by staff requesting help. Of the three teachers who commented on this category, one of them talked about how "*people would just approach me individually*", further describing, *"I would see someone struggling, for example, people starting to get stressed. I wasn‟t going to wait until I was assigned to help them"*. All three

teachers mentioned how their "*roles were less clear*", one of them adding "*my mentoring role was less clear formally*". They indicated that the mentoring support they provided happened "*by luck and good timing or because the teacher had the confidence to ask for help*".

The third category which was also mentioned by three of the past mentors identified that a common pool of mentors was another mechanism that had been established by the SED manager. One of the teachers referred to this as a positive feature of the mentoring system at that time, perceiving the mentor pool concept as "*a useful contact point for mentees and for the mentors*". However, as one teacher pointed out, the teachers contributing to this mentor pool were "*always the same teachers who were always called upon*" to mentor new teachers. They talked about their own experience as often being "*loaded up*" because there were so few experienced teachers available to provide mentoring.

The fourth category mentioned by two of the past mentors referred to how they were often assigned to a mentee by their manager if not by the SED manager. One of the teachers talked about being "*assigned by the Head of School*" or "*sometimes assigned by the faculty Dean*". The other teacher explained how they were regularly "*asked by my own manager to help as the mentee"s needs related to my area of teaching practice*".

The final category which was referred to by one of the five past mentors identified that their mentor role had been on a voluntary basis. This teacher talked about how they had volunteered periodically, especially if there were no other experienced teachers available, adding that they often found themselves in the mentor role as a "*by-product of other involvements*" they had with teachers. Although they mentioned how they had a "*natural interest*" in mentoring, conversely they also stated that the voluntary nature of mentoring was "*actually negative as it was on top of your usual workload*".

5.3.2 Open-ended findings: Mentor attributes

In addition to the five past mentors" responses to question three which identified the processes for mentor identification and selection that had been in place in the principal institution, the teachers also talked about some of the key attributes that a mentor needed to possess in order to be effective in the role of supporting a

mentee‟s teaching practice. Their feedback resulted in the identification of five key attributes. Table 5.6 summarises the mentors‟ perceptions of these core mentor attributes.

Table 5.6: Mentor Attributes

Mentor Attributes	**Frequency of comment**	**n=5 % of sample**
Building trust throughout the relationship	5	**100%**
Motivation to help others	4	**80%**
Resource person	3	**60%**
Establishment of ground rule and role clarity	2	**40%**
Know their philosophical underpinnings	1	**20%**

The most important category of mentor attribute mentioned by all five past mentors identified this as the ability of the mentor to build trust in the mentoring relationship. The five teachers believed building trust in the relationship was critical and that the mentor had to work on this throughout the mentoring partnership period. This attribute was described in various ways, for example, one teacher stated, "*being able to establish a relationship based on the tutor‟s success being important to the mentor*". Another teacher referred to the importance of the mentor maintaining confidentiality which was reflected in another teacher‟s feedback: "*You have to have trust and respect. The mentee knows the mentor isn‟t going to go and tell the manager*". Two teachers described the approaches they used in the mentoring meetings which they perceived as contributing to trust and rapport building with the mentee, such as "*asking them what support they wanted from me*" and "*initially sharing things about myself as well*".

The second most frequently mentioned category identified the mentor‟s motivation to help others as an important mentor attribute. Four of the past mentors commented on this aspect of the mentor‟s skills in supporting other teachers. One of the teachers explained their own reason for being a mentor as "*my motivation and goodwill and helping each other*". Another of the four mentors who commented on this category described the mentor as "*someone who puts themselves out to help the other person in their time of need*". Interestingly, one of the teachers believed that it had been their responsibility as a mentor to "*be available, especially at unstructured times*", indicating that mentoring wasn‟t an activity restricted to the scheduled mentoring meetings. The same teacher made an

additional reference to the issue of mentor availability that signified the resulting quality of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee: *"The mentor is someone who puts themselves out to help the other person in their time of need. I remember two mentors in my faculty. One would always be available and help you as much as possible; the other one was rarely available and not very interested at all"*.

The third most important mentor attribute identified by three of the past mentors was the ability of the mentor to refer a teacher on to other sources of help if required. This was clearly indicated as an attribute that the mentor should possess and take responsibility for in the mentoring relationship. For example, one of the teachers stated, "*It is important for the mentor to know when they can"t help that person anymore and referring them on to other resources or support services*". Another teacher acknowledged that they were not the only expert in teaching and learning: *"Refer people on to others for help. Mentoring was not a situation where I had all the answers. Rather, I can add to the solution"*.

The fourth category related to how the mentor needs to take responsibility for establishing the partnership relationship and process from the outset. Two of the past mentors commented on this, talking about how "*The mentor needs to set the scene, not expect the mentee to*". Establishing ground rules at the beginning and clarifying roles were two specific actions the teachers identified as important for the mentor to undertake. Including the mentee in deciding the ground rules was perceived as an important part of this process, as explained by one of the teachers: *"Need to establish clear ground rules, especially around what you can help with. Also, you need to ask the mentee questions such as "How do you want to do this?", "How do you want the room or environment to be?", "Where will we meet?"*

The second teacher described how they believed role clarity influenced the quality of the mentoring relationship but could also be a challenge for the mentor to manage: "*Role clarity in the relationship is one of the most important but also difficult things to achieve. Often problems occur when people act outside their roles*". An additional comment from this teacher highlighted how they perceived role clarity as critical in a mentoring relationship: *"You have to also be careful of the relationship becoming a dependency with a strong sense of rescue. All the time,*

you need to be aware of giving the mentee choices, then stepping back when you need to. You have to know what you are there for".

The final category commented on by one of the five past mentors focused on the mentor needing to have a sound philosophical foundation to their own teaching and be interested in adult education if they were to be effective in helping other teachers in their teaching practice. Their response illustrated this point clearly: *"The mentor needs to know what their philosophical underpinnings are as a teacher in adult education and as a mentor. If it"snot genuine and authentic, it will show"*.

5.4 Question Four: Mentoring Training

In response to question four in the interview schedule regarding the provision of training for mentors, all five past mentors commented that mentoring training was not formally conducted. This was reflective of their earlier feedback about the informality of mentoring provision in the principal institution at that time. The five teachers had already indicated in their responses to question three regarding mentor selection processes (refer p. 129) that experienced teaching staff were approached individually by the staff education and development manager to mentor a new teacher, based on their years of teaching experience at the institution: "*I received no training. The mentor role occurred based on my teaching experience*". They added that training would have been helpful in supporting them with the mentoring role. When asked what training had been provided for mentors, one teacher summarily stated "*Zilch*".

5.5 Question Five: Establishing the Mentoring Partnership

In response to question five in the interview schedule, the five past mentors identified two key factors that they believed were influential in the establishment of a mentoring partnership. The teachers made reference to the process of how the mentor and mentee were matched and identified what they believed were the determinants of how the mentoring partnership was structured.

5.5.1 Mentor and mentee matching

One of the key factors discussed by the past mentors that they believed influenced the mentoring partnership was the processes used for matching a mentee with a

mentor. Table 5.7 summarises the four different matching processes identified by the teachers.

Table 5.7: Mentor and Mentee Matching

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=5 % of sample
Mentor identified and assigned by SED Manager	5	**100%**
Pool of mentors to choose from	3	**60%**
Managed by administration coordinator	2	**40%**

With regard to the topic of mentor and mentee matching, the most important response from the five past mentors involved the SED manager coordinating and controlling the whole process. As one teacher explained, "*The SED manager identified a mentor, would tell the mentee who this person was and then the mentee took it from there*." All five of the mentors indicated that this was the main process of matching mentors with mentees within the institution. The teachers also commented on the "*informal*" processes that occurred, describing how the mentoring partnership would often result from staff approaching them as mentors at any time. For example, one of the teachers talked about how mentoring "*sometimes happened in the faculties, especially new tutors approaching if as we taught the same of similar subjects*".

The second most frequently mentioned category identified the mentor-mentee matching process involved mentees having access to a pool of mentors, the process and the mentor pool both managed by the SED manager. The existence of a mentor pool had been identified by the past mentors in response to question one, which had asked them how mentoring had been provided for teaching staff (refer p. 5). In response to question five, two of the teachers referred to this process again in the context of how mentees were matched with mentors. Their comments indicated that the mentor pool was a system where the mentee "*could put forward names of whom they would like as a mentor*". One teacher described the mentor pool as "*very informal*" and "*a general point of contact*", explaining how it had been established by the SED manager. The degree of informality in this particular process for matching mentees with mentors was evident in a comment made by the second teacher, who described a buddy system concept operating: *"The pool of*

mentors was useful. Sometimes you buddied up with a mentee in your own faculty but it was easier sometimes to go to someone in a new area".

The final category mentioned by one of the past mentors identified that the SED administration coordinator, who worked with the SED manager, had been the central point for managing the matching process. In direct reference to the SED administration coordinator assuming a central role in managing the matching process, this teacher perceived that a central coordination function within a mentoring system was an important concept that should be integrally established: *"I think it needs to come from a central point. The benefit of this is going outside the faculty makes it more general. Talking to someone in the same faculty can create a fear that it might go back to the manager".*

Interestingly, this teacher"s feedback was in contrast to all of the five teachers" responses to the previous four questions in the interview schedule in which they had strongly indicated that the SED Manager had been the prime leader in coordinating and managing the mentoring system and all of the components within this, the matching process of mentors with mentees being one of these.

5.5.2 Determining the structure of the mentoring partnership

The second key factor perceived by the five past mentors as influencing the establishment of the mentoring partnership was the people or processes that determined the structure of the partnership. The teachers" perceptions of the main determinants influencing the partnership structure are summarised in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Determining the Structure of the Mentoring Partnership

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=5 % of sample
Formal versus informal	5	**100%**
SED Manager control	4	**80%**
Role clarity	3	**60%**

The most frequently mentioned category in relation to how the mentoring partnership structure was determined was the lack of any formal mentoring system being in place in the organisation. All of the five past mentors talked about the lack of a formal mentoring programme structure which directly influenced the lack of

formal mentoring partnerships being established and acknowledged by managers as beneficial in supporting teachers. One of the teachers stated that mentoring often occurred "*behind the manager"sback*". Their feedback indicated that this lack of a formal programme structure influenced how the mentoring partnerships were established initially, with the consequence of minimal or no structure to the ongoing meetings they had with mentees. Another teacher described the opportunities for the mentoring they offered as "*mentoring by chance*".

The second highest category of comment was elicited from four of the five mentors who once again referred to how the mentoring system in place at that time was totally dependent on the coordination role of the SED manager. Three of these teachers believed that the dependency on the SED manager influenced how many and how often partnerships were established and also how long these relationships lasted. Additionally, one of the teachers talked about how the whole mentoring programme structure "fell apart" when the SED manager left the organisation: *"It was a good idea but it didn"tgo anywhere; more of a pilot scheme that just faded when the staff development manager left. The momentum was lost; mentoring dropped off in a big way".*

The final category focused on role clarity as an important factor in determining the mentoring partnership structure and consequent relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Of the three past mentors who referred to role clarity as a determinant of the mentoring partnership structure, two of them had previously highlighted this aspect as an important consideration for the mentor when establishing the mentoring relationship in response to question three regarding mentor attributes (refer p. 131). One teacher referred again to the significance and influence of the mentor"s actions in the mentoring partnership: *"Each relationship establishes itself in a way. As you work with someone or a group, you have to keep being aware that you are establishing a relationship as well as helping. You need to keep these roles very clear. I would let the mentee react to that – a safety thing as well as making the partnership workable".*

5.6 Question Six: The Organisational Culture and its Influence on Mentoring

In response to question six in the interview schedule which asked the past mentors how they believed the organisation influenced mentoring, a number of factors and issues were mentioned. Table 5.9 summarises the key indicators of how the organisation was perceived by the teachers as influencing the success and effectiveness of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism. A selection of the five teachers‟ comments is included in Table 5.10 (refer p. 141) to provide further explanation of their perceptions.

5.9 The Organisational Culture and its Influence on Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=5 % of sample
Institutional processes dictated by business model	5	**100%**
Dependency on SED manager as central coordinator of mentoring scheme	5	**100%**
Minimal senior management support	3	**60%**
Localisation of unions: cultural change	2	**40%**

As table 5.9 depicts, the past mentors‟ perceptions of organisational influence on mentoring focused predominantly on the culture of the organisation as the underpinning influence on how and whether mentoring was provided for teaching staff, evident in one teacher‟s comment, "*The organisational culture of that time definitely influenced the mentoring process*".

The first most important response received from all five past mentors in regard to how they perceived the organisation had influenced the mentoring support provided for teachers in their time as mentors involved the issue of how the strategic direction of the organisation had determined the degree of recognition of mentoring as a support tool for teachers. There was a strong feeling expressed by the teachers that their role as mentors had been dictated by the business model that was determining the strategic initiatives and organisational activities at that time, described by one of the teachers: *"The change in the CEO definitely impacted on mentoring. He pretended to be interested in support processes for staff but was more focused on the end dollar"*. Two teachers referred to how staff had felt

"*under-valued and dictated to*" because of the business model approach that had been taken by the new CEO. One of these teachers articulated their perception of this: *"People at the top dictated the values and focus of the organisation which influenced how and where you spent your time"*.

The second most important response also received from all five past mentors focused on the dependency on one person to manage the provision of mentoring for academic teaching staff, a common theme running through the interview to this point. The teachers again talked about the total reliance on the SED manager to coordinate the mentoring programme and communicate to the CEO the need for "*more robust teacher support systems*". Their feedback indicated that this reliance on one person managing the mentoring process was a major challenge and ultimately a negative outcome. One of the teachers emphasised how this situation had resulted in staff questioning the integrity of the environment they worked in, explaining how ultimately the mentoring scheme had stopped altogether once the SED manager left the organisation: *"Once the SED manager left, the mentoring dropped off in a big way. After a year or so, people were still asking for mentoring help. It all collapsed when the SED manager left"*.

The third category commented on by three past mentors indicated another perception of the organisation negatively influencing the mentoring that occurred and the outcomes of this. For example, the three teachers talked adamantly about the minimal senior management support they had received as mentors and the general lack of recognition by management of mentoring as a support mechanism for teachers. One teacher talked about how they believed the CEO at that time had a significant influence on the acknowledgement and provision of mentoring in the organisation: "*The CEO didn"t have supervision so he wasn"t going to support it for other staff*".

With a dependency on the SED manager coordinating the whole mentoring process and the need for him to be supported in this by management, it was apparent in their feedback that the lack of management support impacted directly and indirectly on whether mentoring occurred: *"The mentoring was done without senior management support. It took up so much of the SED manager"s time, his direct manager was definitely not happy. The SED manager was not prepared to*

drop the mentoring, so this created a lot of conflict. The impact on his other job tasks was huge". One of the three teachers added however that the mentoring had been able to continue during the SED manager"s reign because of some support from management, albeit minimal: *"A couple of people in the senior management team recognised the real importance of mentoring and the SED manager"s role in this. This supported him to keep doing the mentoring"*.

The final category was emphasised by two of the past mentors as they talked about the localisation of the teachers" union and how this had resulted in a new promotion and progression system for academic staff. The two teachers had mixed views as to whether the introduction of the union, which they perceived as evidence of the cultural change that was occurring in the organisation, had had a positive or negative influence on how teachers were supported, particularly with regard to progressing through the promotion scales: *"People were very dissatisfied with the progression system. They felt they had union support if they felt blocked in the progression system. The system wasn"t very clear, creating feelings of unfairness"*. In reference to their role as mentors, the teachers talked about how they had found the focus of their mentoring support had changed in focus, as they had been "*called on to assist staff with new promotion and progression systems*".

5.7 Question Seven: How Mentoring Supports Teaching Practice

In response to question seven, the final question in the interview schedule, regarding their perceptions of how mentoring supported teaching practice, the five past mentors referred to a range of benefits they perceived both the mentee and the mentor gained. Their responses indicated that the mentee and mentor benefitted from mentoring both professionally and personally.

5.7.1 Mentor benefits

Table 5.10 (refer p. 141) summarises the past mentors" perceptions in regard to the benefits gained by the mentee from receiving mentoring support. Table 5.10 also indicates the category type as to whether the teachers" perception of each category had a professional development or personal development focus.

Table 5.10: Mentor Benefits

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=5 % of sample
Chance for reflection and evaluation of own practice	Professional	4	**80%**
Mentor support: Receiving feedback from other teachers also in the mentor role	Professional	4	**80%**
Developing professionally in the mentor role	Professional	2	**40%**
Learning from the mentee	Professional and Personal	1	**20%**

The first highest category in response to question seven, highlighted four of the past mentors" perceptions that mentoring had supported them in reflecting and evaluating their own teaching practice. Comments like "*it"s a good wake-up call for the mentor too*" and "*gives the mentor an appreciation of how it really is*" indicated that the mentors believed that they had the opportunity for professional gain and a chance for reflection because of their engagement in mentoring. One teacher commented that "*no matter how good you are at reflection, you can"t see yourself*". As an adjunct to the benefits gained by the mentor from the mentoring relationship, another teacher believed that both the mentor and the mentee had "much to gain" from the mentoring experience: *"It helps the mentor and the mentee to look at their own practice and evaluate if you are perhaps becoming too complacent or co-dependent".*

The second most important benefit identified by four of the past mentors was the opportunity to received feedback on their teaching from the other mentor teachers. As well as getting feedback on their teaching practices, the four teachers also referred to appreciating the chance to talk about their mentoring role with each other and getting feedback on this, mainly as a consequence of being part of an informal mentor support group. They explained how as mentors, they had "*met as a group organised by the staff development manager*". Their feedback indicated that the group meetings provided them with an opportunity to talk about the positive and negative aspects of their role and share ideas: "*We had a few meetings and discussed what the issues were and what we could do about them."* Feedback from one of the teachers however indicated that they felt the support for mentors

could have been better: "*A clear objective would have been helpful and also the opportunity to meet other mentors*."

Reflecting comments made in regard to benefitting from receiving feedback on their teaching practice and mentor role, the third category identified by two of the past mentors referred to the development of their role as a mentor. Described by one of the teachers as "*extending my mentoring role within my own faculty*", the two teachers attributed this professional development benefit to the relationship they had with the SED manager. As one of the teachers explained, "*The SED manager worked in a way that he was developing you in this role*". Both teachers felt that talking with the SED manager was "*quite easy*" and described him as "*an omnipotent mentor*". The opportunity to work and meet with other mentor teachers was raised again as an added benefit.

The final category mentioned by one past mentor identified that as a mentor they believed they had benefitted from learning from the mentee. Their comment indicated that as well as professional learning occurring, they had personally gained from the mentoring relationship as well: *"Mentoring becomes a friendship and then it becomes interchangeable – the mentee helps you as much as you help them"*.

5.7.2 Open-ended findings: Mentee benefits

As well as identifying mentor benefits in their response to question seven which asked how mentoring supported teaching practice, the five past mentors identified a range of benefits for the mentee. Table 5.11 (refer p. 143) summarises the mentee benefits as perceived by the five participants and indicates the category type as to whether the teachers" perception of each category had a professional development or personal development focus.

Table 5.11: Mentee Benefits

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=5 % of sample
Appraisal support and promotion advancement	Professional	5	**100%**
Increased self-confidence: Learning how to help themselves	Professional & Personal	4	**80%**
Receiving feedback and getting confirmation on teaching	Professional	3	**60%**
Reflection: Gaining a different perspective on teaching and other ways of teaching outside own faculty	Professional	3	**60%**
Time away from a busy work environment	Professional & Personal	2	**40%**

The most important response to question seven identified that all five past mentors believed that the new appraisal and promotion systems that had been introduced at that time had provided teachers with the opportunity to receive mentoring, in order to support them through these processes. For example, they talked about how their mentor role had grown out of a need for the institution to have a mechanism in place for supporting staff through the appraisal and promotion systems and emphasised how they believed teaching staff had benefitted from their support in these processes: *"The progression system was put in place and it was always at the back of your mind that mentoring could now be used for promotion support"*.

The second highest category indicated that mentoring assisted the mentee with increased confidence in their own abilities as a teacher. Four of the past mentors described their role as being very supportive for new teachers and how this level of support fostered "*growth for the mentee*". They described this as building the mentee"s confidence which in turn helped the mentee learn how to help themselves.

The third most frequently mentioned category of mentee benefits as perceived by three of the past mentors indicated that mentoring provided the teacher with opportunities for receiving feedback on their teaching from a more experienced teacher. One of the teachers commented how they had often observed new teachers in their classroom, "*sitting in on their teaching sessions*" which they described as a

form of support and guidance and an opportunity to "*provide the teacher with feedback following this*".

The fourth category mentioned by three of the past mentors indicated that these teachers perceived the mentee benefitted from having time to reflect, learning how to critically reflect on their practice and gain a wider perspective of teaching techniques and approaches. The three teachers commented on how they encouraged the mentees to reflect on and evaluate their own practice and "*gain a different perspective on teaching*" by taking the time to observe other teachers in their classrooms and therefore learn how to "*teach in a different way*". They described how they tried to create opportunities for teachers to appreciate how teaching was done in other faculties. One teacher explained this as "*a lot of informal things could happen also. When you put teachers with different discipline teachers, they still talk about teaching.*"

The final category indicated that two of the past mentors perceived mentee benefits as a chance to "*get away from the day to day teaching*" and have some time to think and talk about their teaching with another teacher (the mentor). The reality of mentoring offering time out and still supporting the mentee"s teaching professional development was expressed by one teacher: *"A lot of non-teaching mentoring is still supportive of teaching practice. Time away from a busy work environment meant you found out the tutor wanted help for very different reasons from what they had approached you for"*.

5.8 Summary of Stage One Data Collection, Cycle Two: Semi-structured Interviews with Five Past Mentors

To summarise, the small sample size of past mentors was indicative of the informal nature of how mentoring had been provided twelve years previously in the principle institution. That is, the academic teachers who assumed a mentor role did so voluntarily, with no formal structure in place to legitimate mentoring as a professional development practice within the institution. However, the five past mentors were able to provide a range of feedback in response to the seven interview questions. A common finding from the mentors" responses highlighted that there was no formal mentoring system in place within the institution and any mentoring that did occur was controlled and regulated by the staff education and

development (SED) manager at that time. This included the SED manager deciding who the mentee was and assigning the mentors accordingly. Their comments indicated that the dependency on the SED manager was often detrimental to consistent provision of mentoring support across the faculties, to the point where mentoring assistance ceased once the SED manager left the institution.

The past mentors identified a range of reasons for the mentoring that they did engage in, all of them citing the new teacher as the predominant staff member with whom they worked. Areas such as classroom management, reflective teaching practices, conflict management and increasing the new teacher‟s confidence were often the focus of the mentoring support. A number of mentor attributes were identified by the past mentors, as they perceived the mentor needing to be motivated to help others and act as a resource person. Building trust and having a strong commitment to the mentoring relationship were also identified as critical mentor attributes.

Numerous comments were made about the cultural climate of the institution at the time these teachers assumed a mentor role. All five past mentors talked about how the "*politics*" impacted on the provision of teacher development support, in particular the lack of senior and other management recognition and support of mentoring as a legitimate professional development mechanism. The past mentors did identify mentee benefits from receiving mentoring support and some benefits for themselves as mentors, including a chance to reflect and evaluate their own practice, receive support from other teachers in the mentor role and develop professionally in their role as a mentor.

The next section presents the findings collected from interviews with the mentoring programme coordinators at four higher education institutions in New Zealand and Australia. These findings comprised the second stage of data collection that occurred during Cycle Two of the research study.

CYCLE TWO
Stage two data collection:
Semi-structured interviews with mentoring programme coordinators at four higher education institutions

This section presents the findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with four mentoring programme coordinators at two New Zealand polytechnics and two Australian universities. One of the programme coordinators was the Staff Development Director at an Australian university that had implemented five separate mentoring programmes for academic staff in their institution.

The key objective of this research study was to examine what was involved in establishing an institute-wide mentoring programme for academic teaching staff in a higher education environment. Interviews with the four higher education programme coordinators comprised the second data collection component of Cycle Two of this action research study in addition to data gathered from the five past mentors at the principal institution. Data from the programme coordinators contributed to informing the third and fourth action research cycles of data collection which involved the eighteen academic teachers engaging in dyad mentoring partnerships over a one year period. The four programme coordinators‟ data also provided a comparative analysis of the mentoring programme engaged in by the eighteen academic teachers with the four higher education contexts and the processes the coordinators had followed to establish mentoring programmes in their institutions.

The four programme coordinators completed a forty-five minute semi-structured interview, conducted by the researcher during the first half of 2007. The interviews were conducted via telephone and comprised seven questions (Appendix D, refer p. 435). The content of the interviewees‟ responses provided a range of data regarding the establishment of a mentoring programme and covered the following key areas: i) how a mentoring programme had been implemented in the institution; ii) what had instigated the implementation of the mentoring programme; iii) the provision of mentoring training; iv) mechanisms used to support the mentoring participants; v) how mentoring supported teaching practice; vi) the mentoring programme structure and vii) how the mentoring programme was evaluated.

5.9 Question One: Implementation of a Mentoring Programme

When asked to describe the mentoring system that had been implemented in their institution as question one in the interview schedule, the four programme coordinators provided a range of responses. In addition to a general description of their mentoring programmes, comments across the four institutions highlighted other variables, including: i) mentor selection; ii) identification of the mentee and iii) mentor and mentee matching.

5.9.1 Mentoring programme description

Table 5.12 presents the first set of data, summarising the general descriptions of the four institutions" mentoring programmes as provided by the mentoring programme coordinators.

Table 5.12 Mentoring Programme Description

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Voluntary participation by mentees and mentors	4	**100%**
Centrally coordinated programme	3	**75%**
Formal system	2	**50%**
Comment Category	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=4 % of sample**
Application of a peer mentoring model	2	**50%**
Application of an expert-novice model	2	**50%**
No system	1	**25%**
Five separate mentoring programmes	1	**25%**

The highest number of comments received from the four programme coordinators in the descriptions of their mentoring programmes highlighted the aspect of voluntary participation by the mentee and the mentor. All four coordinators stated that the voluntary nature of involvement in mentoring within their institutions was an integral part of their programme and led to a greater commitment to the mentoring programme and the partnership as a result: *"Involvement in the programme is completely voluntary. Expressions of interest are invited from potential mentees. Teachers are invited to nominate themselves as mentors"*.

The second highest category was commented on by three of the coordinators, who described the mentoring programme as being centrally coordinated, either by themselves or, as in one of the New Zealand institutions, by a "*mentoring core group from across the campus including some staff education and development staff*".

The next three categories were mentioned by two of the coordinators from one of the New Zealand polytechnics and one of the Australian universities. They indicated that relatively formal mentoring systems were in place and described these formal features as relating to the administering and central coordination of the programme. However, the coordinators also described their programmes as incorporating some informal features, such as the level of flexibility inherent within the mentoring partnership structure and process. One coordinator referred to this as "*informally embedded structures within the formal mentoring processes*".

The same two programme coordinators referred to how they applied both the peer mentoring and expert-novice models to underpin the structure and process of their programmes and the mentoring activities that occurred. The university coordinator suggested that the progressive nature of mentoring, that is, the development of the mentee over the time of the programme, generally led to an initial expert-novice model evolving into a peer mentoring relationship: *"A natural phase in the partnership is the need to ask "what will we do now?" This may be where the partnership equalises, although it may have commenced with an expert-novice model"*. The polytechnic coordinator identified that there was an option for peer mentoring, however this model was not formally managed by the mentoring programme core group that had been established to oversee the programme. Their feedback indicated that if the partnership was not structured as an expert-novice model, then the mentoring activity was not monitored: *"Peer mentoring groups are another option available. These are not monitored by the core group but rather people choose to set up their own partnerships"*.

The sixth category was explained by the coordinator in the other New Zealand polytechnic. They indicated that no formal mentoring system existed in the institution, although coaching and mentoring assistance was available through the staff development department: "*We have no formal system. It is all rather*

haphazard which is a concern". They explained how they did not have any formal or central management system in place and believed this would be a definite advantage to their current mentoring programme: *"I think we need a base where we can go and request a mentor to help with a specific teaching area of general support. This person sets up the meeting and asks if the person is prepared to be a mentor"*.

The final category related specifically to the Australian university which had implemented five separate mentoring programmes within their institution. The programme coordinator explained how these programmes were established to meet different needs for academic staff. The programmes were described by the coordinator as providing mentoring support for teachers in areas such as early career academics, post-doctor graduates and women academics engaging in leadership development.

5.9.2 Mentor selection process

There were varied opinions across the four institutions with regard to the processes that were most effective in selecting the mentor. Two main groupings relating to how the mentor was selected resulted from their comments, including i) individual voluntary selection and ii) organisational management of the selection process. Table 5.13 summarises the determinants of mentor selection options as identified by the programme coordinators and indicates the category type for each of these.

Table 5.13: Mentor Selection Process

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Self selection: voluntary participation	Individual	4	**100%**
Asked to participate by central coordinator	Organisation	3	**75%**
Assigned by the manager	Organisation	2	**50%**
Mentor profiles available for mentee choice	Organisation	2	**50%**

The most important response from all four of the programme coordinators identified mentor selection as a voluntary self-selection process. Voluntary self-selection as a mentor was described by two of the Australian institutions as a

process which involved "*self nomination by a senior teacher*". In their programme coordination role, the four coordinators indicated that although the mentor selection process was voluntary, they regularly approached senior teaching staff to ask if they would assume a mentor role. Two of these coordinators admitted that they struggled to find enough teachers who were willing to be mentors, particularly as "*the same teachers are asked to be mentors each year*". As one of the New Zealand coordinators explained: *"A percentage of the mentors are experienced mentors. They have been in the mentoring programme for a long time"*. An additional comment made by one of the coordinators indicated a perception that the teacher who assumed a mentor role needed to be self-motivated and willing to help other teachers. Their response also inferred that teachers who volunteered to be a mentor possessed high self-motivation to help others.

The second most frequently mentioned process for mentor selection identified that this process was centrally coordinated within the institution. The three coordinators who commented on this process explained how in their central coordination role, one of their responsibilities was to approach teachers to participate in the mentoring programme as mentors. The three coordinators described how teachers were "*openly asked to participate*", one coordinator additionally emphasising that their mentoring programme was "*completely voluntary for people to get involved as mentors*".

The third category of mentor selection involved a process whereby the mentors participating in the mentoring programme could be "*assigned by their respective managers*" in addition to the programme coordinator approaching teachers to be mentors. Two of the coordinators referred to this process existing within their programmes, perceiving the involvement of managers as an additional and useful process to ensure teachers were taking on a mentor role.

The final category was commented on by two of the coordinators. They described how mentor profiles had been created, which provided criteria to assist them with identifying teachers as potential mentors in their programmes. One of the coordinators added that the mentor criteria they had established also helped the mentor to guide the mentoring activity within the mentor-mentee partnership,

indicating that the teacher who met the criteria had an awareness of what was required in their role as a mentor supporting a mentee teacher.

5.9.3 Identification of the mentee

In their description of the mentoring programmes they had in place within their institutions, the four programme coordinators talked about who the mentee was. The six groups of teachers who were identified as potential mentees are summarised in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Identifying the Mentee

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
The new teacher	4	**100%**
The experienced teacher	3	**75%**
Early career academic	2	**50%**
Post-doctorate graduate	1	**25%**
Women academics	1	**25%**
Non-teaching staff	1	**25%**

The new teacher as the mentee was the most frequently mentioned category identified by all four coordinators, regardless of whether their institution had a formal or informal mentoring system in place. The second highest category commented on by three of the coordinators identified the experienced teacher as the mentee. Two of the coordinators mentioned how more experienced teachers were increasingly applying to be mentees in their programmes.

The third category mentioned by two of the coordinators identified the early career academic as the mentee. In addition to the early career academic as mentee, the fourth and fifth categories highlighted by the Australian university which had established five different mentoring programmes across the campus also explained that the mentee could be a post-doctorate graduate or women academic lecturers engaged in leadership development. The coordinator at this institution talked about how the differentiation of these models meant that teachers at different stages in their teaching career had the opportunity to be a mentee and receive mentoring support.

The final category was commented on by one of the New Zealand polytechnics, as they indicated that their programme was open to both teaching and non-teaching

staff: *"We directly market the programme to new staff, both teaching and non-teaching, but they are not obligated to apply and get involved in mentoring"*.

5.9.4 Mentor and mentee matching

Also in response to question one of the interview schedule, the process of matching the mentor and mentee for the ensuing mentoring partnership was described in various ways by the four programme coordinators. Their feedback revealed three key variables that they perceived as guiding this process and having an influence on the success of the matching and consequent success of the mentoring partnership and outcomes. Table 5.15 illustrates the coordinators" perceptions of the key factors that contribute to a successful mentoring partnership match.

Table 5.15: Mentor and Mentee Matching

Comment Category	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=4 % of sample**
Self-matching	4	**100%**
Pool of mentors to choose from	3	**75%**
Managed by central coordinator	1	**25%**

The most important category in relation to the mentor-mentee matching process involved the preference for self-matching by the mentoring partners. This was a predominant theme identified by all four programme coordinators, with some variation on how the self-matching process occurred. One of the Australian coordinators was adamant that "*definitely no matching was done by the Unit*". They believed the success of their mentoring programme was based on the mentees having the choice of their mentor, rather than the partnership being a "*forced marriage*". This particular institution had established specific criteria as a guideline for the choice of mentor, which fell into three distinct areas: teaching, research and promotion. In this environment, potential mentees were invited to put forward an expression of interest. A list of mentors was given to them and it was then up to the mentee to arrange a meeting with two or three mentors from this list, to see if a match could work with one of them. The uniqueness of this mentoring programme was evident in the coordinator"s explanation that their programme was based in only two faculties, rather than a campus-wide initiative. They commented further in relation to this point: "*How far reaching is mentoring across the university? Not very far, I think*".

The coordinator at the other Australian university which had identified five different mentoring models operating on their campus, referred to the mentee-mentor matching in each of these models, implying a voluntary, self-selection process. For example, in their mentoring model for early career academics, a key focus in the programme was assisting the mentees with how to find a mentor. Another of their models stipulated that staff were "*invited to nominate themselves to be a mentor*", with an expectation that those who did put their name forward were people already focused on helping others with teaching or research-related practices.

The second highest category revealed that a pool of mentors was an integral component of the mentoring programmes in three of the institutions. Three programme coordinators referred to the benefit of having a mentor pool for the mentee to choose from. Within this discussion, it was evident that the degree of mentee choice was important and integral in this type of structure.

The final category mentioned by the coordinator in one of the New Zealand institutions highlighted how mentor-mentee matching was a process managed by the programme coordinator or a central coordination team. They explained that although the selection of mentors and mentees was based on a voluntary system, a more formal process of matching the mentors with mentees was in place and centrally coordinated: *"There is a mentoring core group from across the campus, including some staff development staff, who do the mentor-mentee matching. First, we individually match the mentee with a mentor. Second, we meet as a group and decide on the matchings. There can be quite a bit of debate within this group process. If we can"tmatch a mentee with a mentor, the mentee and/or mentor can re-apply the following year. Our priority is that we don"tmatch people just for the sake of matching"*.

5.10 Question Two: Instigation of the Mentoring Programme

In response to question two in the interview schedule, related to what had instigated the implementation of a mentoring programme in their institution, three of the four programme coordinators identified two main catalysts. Table 5.16 (refer p. 154) identifies the coordinators" responses with regard to the underpinning reasons for implementing a mentoring programme in the institution.

Table 5.16: Instigation of the Mentoring Programme

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Professional/leadership development for women	2	**50%**
International benchmarking and accreditation	1	**25%**

The most frequently mentioned reason for a mentoring programme to be established in the institution was provided by two of the coordinators from one of the New Zealand and one of the Australian institutions. They both referred to how there was an increasing focus in their institutions on providing professional development for women academics. As the New Zealand programme coordinator explained: *"The Women's Advisory Council was encouraging professional development for women. They approached human resources to initiate and manage the process"*. This coordinator identified that their mentoring programme was administered and coordinated by the Human Resources department, stating that one of the stipulations of the programme was that it had to be open to all staff, both academic and non-teaching staff. The Australian programme coordinator described how their institution had established a specific leadership development mentoring programme for women academics, as one of the five mentoring models they had in place.

The second category was commented on by the other Australian university as they explained how the instigation of their mentoring programme was linked with the international benchmarking and accreditation processes that their institution regularly participated in. For example, one of the accreditation findings had highlighted the need for "*more quality information to students*" and "*quality programme design*". In response to these findings, a teaching support and development unit had been set up which now coordinated a mentoring programme for two faculties within the university.

5.11 Question Three: Mentoring Training

In response to question three in the interview asking if their mentoring programmes provided training for the mentors and mentees, the four programme coordinators commented on two dimensions in response: i) whether or not they offered training and ii) how the training workshops were structured.

Table 5.17 summarises the coordinators" feedback and identifies whether the category was related to the provision of training or how the training was structured within the respective mentoring programmes.

Table 5.17: Mentoring Training

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Formal component of mentoring programme	Provision of training	3	**75%**
No formal training	Provision of training	1	**25%**
Up-skilling sessions	Provision of training	1	**25%**
Advanced mentor training	Provision of training	1	**25%**
Half day workshop for mentees	Structure of training	1	**25%**
One day workshop for mentors	Structure of training	1	**25%**

Training as a formal component of the mentoring programme was the first category commented on by three of the programme coordinators. They perceived training as an important aspect of a mentoring programme, which was provided for both mentors and mentees. One of the coordinators explained that mentoring training had been an integral aspect of their mentoring programme from its inception, stating that staff were "*more committed to the programme because of the training*". Another coordinator from the Australian university which facilitated a mentoring scheme to support leadership development for women academics stated they had achieved an 80% success rate of this programme, referring to the provision of mentoring training as a contributing factor to this outcome.

The second most frequently mentioned category identified that no formal training was provided in one of the institutions. The programme coordinators who referred to this aspect represented the New Zealand polytechnic where there was no formal mentoring programme in place. They emphasised that although there was no formal training process in place, they did provide mentoring and coaching to support staff professional development: *"We use mentoring and coaching all the time for targeted staff development but do not have a formal training system for mentors nor do we have a formal system of linking staff for peer mentoring"*.

The third and fourth categories mentioned by the other New Zealand programme coordinator indentified that additional training was incorporated in the mentoring programme alongside the general mentoring training workshops. The coordinator talked about extraordinary professional development sessions that they had designed for mentors and mentees, called "*up-skilling sessions*" and an "*Advanced Mentor Training*" course aimed at providing mentoring training for more experienced mentors. This coordinator described the advanced mentor training as a way to provide supplementary mentor training during their one year mentoring programme: *"We also facilitate an advanced mentor training workshop, mainly as a refresher course for those who have been involved in the programme for a long time".*

The remaining two categories highlighted how the mentoring training was structured in one of the New Zealand institutions. This programme coordinator explained how workshops were facilitated for both the mentors and mentees and the expectations of the participants as a result of attending the training workshops. For example, a whole day workshop was facilitated with the mentors and a half-day workshop was provided for the mentees. They also identified the expectations integral in the training process: *"During the mentee training, it is made clear what they can expect from the mentor. It is also emphasised that they are fully responsible for this process, that is, not the core mentoring group or staff development".*

5.12 Question Four: Mechanisms to Support Mentoring Participants

In response to question four in the interview schedule, when asked what mechanisms their mentoring programme had in place to support the mentoring participants, two of the four programme coordinators commented specifically on this aspect. Interestingly, all four programme coordinators mentioned different challenges they perceived as impacting on the mentoring partnership, the overall mentoring programme and the individual mentoring participants in response to question four.

5.12.1 Mechanisms to support mentoring participants

Table 5.18 summarises the key mechanisms the two coordinators identified within their mentoring programmes that provided support for the mentors and mentees.

Table 5.18 Mechanisms to Support Mentoring Participants

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Mentoring agreements/contracts	2	**50%**
Email and phone contact	1	**25%**
Feedback to mentors	1	**25%**
Contact from core mentoring group	1	**25%**
Stipend	1	**25%**

The highest category in relation to support mechanisms for the mentor and mentee involved the use of mentoring agreements or contracts between the mentor and mentee at the commencement of the mentoring partnership. The two coordinators from one of the New Zealand polytechnics and one of the Australian universities respectively explained how a signed contract between the mentoring participants at the commencement of the partnership was an integral expectation of the programme.

The next three categories were mentioned by the New Zealand polytechnic coordinator. Three other support mechanisms were identified in addition to the mentoring agreement. Having earlier described how their mentoring programme was coordinated by a core mentoring group of academic and staff development staff, the coordinator explained how this team took responsibility for keeping in contact with the mentors and mentees during the one year partnership programme via email and phone. The coordinator also talked about how the core mentoring group took responsibility for "*giving feedback to the mentors as required*".

The final category was referred to by the Australian university programme coordinator, who explained how the mentees and mentors received a stipend once the mentoring contracts had been finalised. This fund was used mainly to buy assistance for the time the teachers spent in the mentoring meetings. The

coordinator mentioned that receiving money for this purpose had definitely created a sense of commitment to the mentoring partnership and the programme in general.

5.12.2 Challenges to mentoring

A range of challenges were also identified by the four programme coordinators in response to question four. Their responses resulted in the identification of four predominant challenges perceived as impacting on the mentoring experience and outcomes, which are summarised in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Challenges to Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Workload expectations	3	**75%**
Time constraints	3	**75%**
Level of commitment	2	**50%**
Finding enough mentors	2	**50%**

Workload expectations coupled with time constraints received the highest number of comments from three of the coordinators, as they described these as the predominant challenges to teachers regularly engaging in mentoring and for those teachers already in a partnership, achieving regular mentoring meetings. At one of the New Zealand institutions, the current mentoring programme structure was under review, with the central coordination team being increased because "*the workload of teachers is increasing*". The programme coordinator at this institution indicated that the significant ramifications of an increasing workload introduced time constraints and meant there were changing expectations of the ways in which teachers could engage in professional development activities, such as mentoring. This was a perception reflected by another coordinator as they cited increases in teaching workloads as potentially preventing teachers from engaging in mentoring, whether they were in a mentor or mentee role.

The third category of challenge to mentoring mentioned by two of the programme coordinators involved the issue of commitment by teachers to the mentoring programme and partnership. Interestingly, this challenge was discussed in the same frame as the challenge of time constraints faced by teachers: "*The key issues are workload and time to commit for the year period*". Conversely, earlier feedback from the coordinators in response to questions one and three in the interview

schedule had indicated that they perceived teachers as being more committed to mentoring due to the voluntary nature of the programme (refer p. 147) and the provision of mentoring training for mentors and mentees (refer p. 155).

The final category was referred to by the two Australian university programme coordinators, as they talked about the difficulties they experienced in having enough experienced teachers to assume the mentor role. This issue had been raised earlier in response to question one when two coordinators had commented on the mentor selection process they had in place (refer p. 149). The two university coordinators perceived the lack of experienced teachers as a high risk to the sustainability of their mentoring programmes. An additional comment by one of the coordinators identified that there were fewer experienced teachers volunteering to be a mentor.

5.13 Question Five: How Mentoring Supports Teaching Practice

In response to question five in the interview schedule, the four programme coordinators all believed that mentoring supported targeted staff development, with a particular focus on the improvement of teaching practice. As one of the coordinators stated, "*There are a lot of academic staff who are wanting to improve their teaching practice*". Table 5.20 provides a summary of the coordinators" perceptions of how mentoring supports teacher development.

Table 5.20: How Mentoring Supports Teaching Practice

Comment Category	Frequency of comment	n=4 % of sample
Teaching techniques and up-skilling of new teacher	4	**100%**
Help with building research capabilities	3	**75%**
Help with assessment techniques	2	**50%**
Assist with career decisions; career management	2	**50%**
Support promotion applications	2	**50%**
Induction of the new teacher	2	**50%**
Leadership skills for women	1	**25%**
Support with appraisal process	1	**25%**
Team and problem-based learning	1	**25%**

The most important response in relation to how mentoring supported teaching practice involved the provision of support for the new teacher with teaching techniques and "*general up-skilling*" in their teaching practice. All four programme coordinators commented that the fundamental purpose of their mentoring programmes was to assist teachers in teaching and learning development.

The second highest category was identified by three of the coordinators as helping the teacher build their research capabilities. As one of these coordinators commented, "*Research is a common focus in our early career academic programme*". Another coordinator talked about how the mentoring programme had become a useful vehicle for encouraging teachers to move into the research domain, with a particular focus on mentoring and the role of the mentee.

The following three categories mentioned by two programme coordinators identified that mentoring supported teachers in specific applied teaching skills such as assessment techniques, as well as helping with career management decisions and promotion applications.

Induction of the new teacher was the fourth category, mentioned by the two Australian university programme coordinators. They described teacher induction as a common purpose of mentoring which underpinned their mentoring programmes: *"A sponsor is organised for the induction of early career academics who have no contacts, don"tyet have the confidence and don"trealise how important mentoring is"*.

Interestingly, the two coordinators explained how the main aim of their mentoring programmes was to support the new teacher but then also attributed mentoring to supporting academic teachers at different stages in their career. Again, this was particularly evident in the institution which had implemented five different mentoring models.

The seventh category of how mentoring supported teaching practice was identified by one of the university programme coordinators as the development of leadership skills for women. The development of leadership skills for women academic teachers had been discussed by the coordinator from the university which had implemented five different mentoring models in response to a previous question in the interview schedule. In conjunction with this theme of leadership development,

the coordinator also talked about how their mentoring programmes aimed to create "*a whole institute acceptance of mentorship, embedded in leadership attributes and professional practice*".

Support with the appraisal process comprised the eighth category. A teacher"s engagement in the institution"s mentoring programme was perceived by one of the coordinators as a possible consequence of the teacher"s performance appraisal identifying teaching practice needs. They explained that often in these cases, it was expected that the respective manager encouraged the teacher to receive mentoring support. This coordinator added that a more general approach was also taken by themselves as the central programme coordinator, where "*managers are regularly encouraged to encourage staff to apply to the mentoring programme*".

The final category mentioned by one of the Australian university programme coordinators identified that a key focus of mentoring support in their programme was to up-skill teachers in team and problem-based learning. They explained this focus of teacher development as initially requiring "*an individual foundation of knowledge from which the teacher then learns best in a team setting*". The coordinator indicated that mentoring was a mechanism to help the teacher make this transition in their practice.

5.14 Question Six: Mentoring Programme Structure

When asked to describe the structure of their mentoring programme in response to question six in the interview schedule, three of the four programme coordinators identified three specific features. As explained earlier in this presentation of findings from the interviews with the higher education institutions, one of the programme coordinators identified that they did not have a formal mentoring programme in place. Table 5.21 (refer p. 162) illustrates the programme features identified by the three coordinators and highlights their comments made in relation to each of these categories; the comments provide further description of the programmes" key features.

Table 5.21 Mentoring Programme Structure

Comment Category	Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Programme duration	Six months	2	**50%**
	One year	1	**25%**
Frequency of mentor-mentee participation	Mentees can re-apply at end of formal period	2	**50%**
	One hour once a month	1	**25%**
Programme activities	Mentoring training	3	**75%**
	Meet and greet	2	**50%**
	End of year wrap-up	2	**50%**
	Catch-up sessions	1	**25%**
	Newsletter	1	**25%**

The first category, programme duration, identified two of the three institutions‟ programmes as having a six month time-frame, the third institution coordinating a full year. The programmes of six months duration were seen by their respective coordinators as sufficient to provide adequate time for the mentoring partnerships to meet and for the mentee to gain from this experience.

The second category involved the frequency of participation by the mentors and mentees in regard to the duration of the programme and the amount of time spent meeting as a partnership. This category was commented on by one of the New Zealand coordinators and one of the Australian coordinators. The Australian coordinator described how at their institution of 5000 academic staff, engaging in staff development activities, of which mentoring was one activity, was at the individual teacher‟s discretion. Both of the coordinators explained how the mentees could reapply at the end of the formal programme time-frame. The New Zealand coordinator elaborated on this point, adding that the partnerships could continue once the one year programme concluded: *"The partnerships can continue outside the one year programme if they wish to. However, we encourage the*

mentees to reapply as needs change and so we can allocate them a different mentor".

In addition to explaining how mentees could remain engaged in mentoring on an ongoing basis, the New Zealand coordinator also mentioned that the mentoring partnerships were encouraged to meet at least once a month for one hour duration. Interestingly, this coordinator added that often mentees ended up becoming mentors and remaining in the programme assuming this role: "*By the third time, the mentees are often offering their services as mentors*".

The third category identified the different activities that occurred within their programmes. All three coordinators again mentioned how they provided mentoring training for the mentors and mentees, a feature of their programmes that had been earlier discussed in response to question three in the interview schedule. Two of the three coordinators commented on other aspects of mentoring activities, including how they organised a "*meet and greet*" event at the commencement of the mentoring partnerships directly following mentoring training and an end of year "*wrap up*" at the conclusion of the programme. These events were perceived as integral aspects of the programme structure, described as providing a social and familiarisation opportunity for the mentoring participants.

The remaining two comments related to the category of programme activities were made by one of the coordinators. As well as producing a mentoring newsletter twice a year, they identified that "*catch-up sessions with the mentors*" during the mentoring partnerships time-frame was an important feature of their mentoring programme design. This coordinator acknowledged that the catch-up sessions were an informal aspect of the programme: *"During the year programme, there are one or two catch-up sessions with the mentors and separately with the mentees. These sessions are voluntary participation. They provide an opportunity to give feedback on processes. This feedback is then communicated to the whole group".*

5.15 Question Seven: Evaluation of Mentoring

In response to question seven, the final question in the interview schedule, three of the four coordinators identified a range of strategies they employed to evaluate their mentoring programmes. Table 5.22 (refer p. 164) summarises the different strategies they identified.

Table 5.22 Evaluation of Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Phone contact throughout programme	2	**50%**
Post-programme evaluation survey	1	**25%**
Group feedback session and debrief	1	**25%**
Written reflections at end of programme	1	**25%**
Optional evaluation by mentoring participants	1	**25%**

The most prevalent category in relation to how the institutions evaluated their mentoring programmes was mentioned by two of the coordinators. This category involved regular, formative evaluation via telephone contact with the mentors and mentees throughout the programme duration. The two coordinators described this approach to evaluation as "*informal checks*".

The remaining four categories were commented on by individual coordinators and illustrated how a number of different processes were used to evaluate the mentoring programme effectiveness. The first of these four categories was described by the New Zealand coordinator. They explained how they sent an evaluation survey to the mentoring participants to gain their feedback at the conclusion of the mentoring partnership period. The evaluation survey example comprised fifteen questions which targeted key areas such as meeting frequency, perception of the matching and whether this had been effective and if the mentoring participants felt they had received any benefits from the mentoring experience. The survey also aimed to uncover whether the partnership had worked and if not, why not: "*We always ask this of the people who pulled out of the programme*". This coordinator described their evaluation approach as "*usually pretty informal, as we have been keeping in contact with everyone in the programme throughout the year anyway*".

The second of these four remaining categories was mentioned by a coordinator in one of the Australian institutions. They described how all of the mentoring participants were brought together as a group at the conclusion of the six month programme, "*to debrief and share their experiences*". The coordinator explained how a consequence of this group evaluation strategy contributed to the creation of

research opportunities and outputs by academic teaching staff. They indicated that their institution was particularly interested in research on the mentee experience, this decision being based on an evident lack of literature in this area: *"The notion of „gift"is underplayed in the literature. If the mentee doesn"t feel they can give something back – especially mid-career academics – then the sustainability of a mentoring scheme is greatly reduced".*

The third of the four remaining categories was referred to by one of the coordinators as they explained how written evaluations, in the form of reflections from the mentors and mentees, were received by the mentoring core group at the end of their one year programme. This evaluation process was again referred to as an informal approach.

The final category of evaluation of the mentoring programme was mentioned by one of the coordinators as an optional activity engaged in by the mentors and mentees. They explained how the mentoring participants were invited to provide feedback but there was no formal process or outcome associated with any feedback received by the mentoring programme coordinator.

Interestingly the coordinator in the Australian institution which offered five mentoring schemes talked about the impact of mentoring on the organisation in their response to how mentoring was evaluated in their institution. They emphasised how the five mentoring programmes they had in place contributed to the "*building of a community*" and having an impact on "*building capacity within local areas of the institution*".

5.16 Open-ended Data: Mentee Benefits

Near the conclusion of the interview, each programme coordinator was asked if they had any further comments to make with regard to any of the interview questions. Two coordinators provided additional comments that focused predominantly on the perceived benefits of mentoring for the mentee. Table 5.23 (refer p. 166) summarises the perceived mentee benefits as identified by the two programme coordinators.

Table 5.23: Mentee Benefits

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=4 % of sample
Guidance with research	2	**50%**
Promotion advancement	2	**50%**
Learning skills of being a mentee/Learn how to find a mentor	1	**25%**
Independence and self-ownership	1	**25%**
Gain perspective on faculty environment and wider campus community	1	**25%**
Chance to clarify thoughts and ideas	1	**25%**

Specifically referring to mentee benefits in their additional comments near the end of the interview, the highest number of responses focused on the enhancement of research capabilities. One of the two coordinators indicated that supporting the individual teacher in research led to building greater research capabilities within the faculties and across the institution.

The next most frequently mentioned category highlighted assistance with promotion advancement as a key benefit for the mentee. As one of the coordinators stated, "*Helps you with promotion because you need to find out what else needs to be done before you apply*".

The next two categories of mentee benefits were mentioned by the coordinator from the institution which had implemented five separate mentoring models. They explained how some of these models aimed to help the mentee learn how to be a mentee, so that they continued to benefit from the partnership. When the coordinator referred specifically to their Mentorship Programme, they suggested that "*self ownership*" and "*independence*" were key benefits for the teacher who engaged in this mentoring scheme.

The final two categories were identified by the second coordinator, who talked about how mentoring helped provide the new teacher with a more informed perspective on the faculty environment and the wider campus community: *"The mentee gets a perspective on the faculty environment and finds out what else goes on in the university"*. This coordinator also mentioned how they believed mentoring gave the mentee an opportunity to clarify their thinking and ideas

around teaching and learning. Their comments were partly based on their own earlier experience as a mentee in the programme: *"You need to have someone else to bounce ideas around with. Mentoring can be very helpful in clarifying your thoughts as a teacher"*.

5.17 Summary of Stage Two Data Collection, Cycle Two: Semi-structured Interviews with Mentoring Programme Coordinators at Four Higher Education Institutions

To summarise, there was a wide range of feedback from the four programme coordinators in response to the seven interview questions. Three of the institutions had implemented formal mentoring programmes whilst one coordinator explained that there was no formal programme in place. The small sample size of programme coordinators was in part due to the minimal presence of mentoring systems in the New Zealand higher education sector. Additionally, one of the New Zealand institutions had minimal processes in place to provide mentoring for academic teaching staff, further reducing the number and range of responses.

Of the three institutions which had a formal mentoring scheme, collectively they perceived that voluntary participation in a mentoring programme was the most effective process for teachers to engage and believed that this led to greater commitment from the teachers. They also reported that their programmes were centrally coordinated by an individual or team of academic staff. The institution which had no formal mentoring scheme in place saw the benefit of a central coordination function to help assign mentors for specific teaching needs.

Selection of the mentor was predominantly based on a voluntary, self-selection process. The coordinators talked about taking responsibility for approaching teachers to become involved as mentors, often referring to the lack of experienced mentors as problematic. Also problematic was that the same teachers were asked each time to assist as a mentor in the programme.

The concept of establishing five separate mentoring models to meet a variety of teaching development needs was described by one of the coordinators. As well as providing support for the early career academic, other models assisted post-doctorate graduates and women academics engaging in leadership development.

Reflecting the predominant process of voluntary participation and teacher self-selection for the mentor role, there was also a preference stated for self-matching by the mentor and mentee. One institution however identified that their central coordination team formally managed the mentor-mentor matching process. Three of the institutions had formally embedded mentoring training in their programmes, perceiving the benefits of training as increasing teachers‟ commitment to the mentoring. Additional training and up-skilling for the more experienced mentors was provided by one institution. Other mechanisms embedded within the programme structure to support teachers in the mentoring process included stipends and mentoring contracts.

Key challenges identified by the coordinators involved workload issues and time constraints, particular challenges for the mentor. When asked how they perceived mentoring supported teaching practice, the coordinators identified up-skilling of the new teacher, building research capabilities, assistance with career decisions and progression and leadership development. The processes used to evaluate the effectiveness of their mentoring schemes varied across the three institutions which had formal programmes in place. The spectrum ranged from informal phone contact during the mentoring programme period to a formal evaluation survey at the conclusion of the programme. For one institution, the evaluation was optional and based on written reflections by the teachers who had participated.

The following chapter, Chapter Six, continues a presentation of the findings including data collected from Cycle Three and Cycle Four of this study. Cycles Three and Four comprised the eighteen academic teachers attending mentoring training workshops, participating in five focus group meetings and engaging in mentoring dyad partnerships over a one year period. Cycle Three commenced with the facilitation of three mentoring training workshops and included the first three of five focus group meetings involving the eighteen teachers. Cycle Four involved the academic teachers participating in two further focus group meetings. The data collection phase in Cycle Four was then completed with individual summative interviews with each of the academic teachers at the conclusion of the one year mentoring partnership time frame.

CHAPTER SIX
THE FINDINGS: CYCLES THREE AND FOUR

Four action research cycles provided the framework within which the findings from this study are reported. The study commenced with Cycle One which comprised an extensive literature review conducted by the researcher. Following on from Chapter Five which presented the findings from Cycle Two, this chapter reports the findings from Cycle Three and Cycle Four. Cycle Three involved the completion of an online evaluation questionnaire by the eighteen academic teachers in the principal institution following their involvement in three mentoring training workshops and the academic teachers attending the first three of five focus group meetings. Cycle Four comprised the individual summative interviews conducted with the eighteen academic teachers at the conclusion of a one year mentoring programme. The first section of this chapter reports the findings from Cycle Three of the research study.

Cycle Three
Stage one data collection:
Mentoring training online evaluation questionnaire
with academic teachers

This section presents the findings collected from three mentoring training workshops and the first three of five focus group meetings involving the eighteen academic teachers who were based at the principal institution. The training workshops and the first three focus group meetings comprised Cycle Three of this action research study.

6.1 Mentoring Training Online Evaluation Questionnaire

Cycle Three of the data collection phase commenced with fourteen of the eighteen academic teachers attending a half-day mentoring training workshop prior to engaging in their dyad mentoring partnerships. Three workshops were conducted during June 2007 and provided the teachers with the opportunity to explore the purpose and process of mentoring and clarify role expectations in preparation for

the mentoring partnerships they would engage in over a one year period. Data were collected from the teachers via an online evaluation questionnaire (Appendix K, refer p. 442) focusing on gathering the teachers‟ feedback in two distinct areas:

1. Their beliefs regarding the purpose and benefits of attending mentoring training before commencing a mentoring partnership;
2. Their perceptions about the usefulness of the content, time frame and whether the training should be combined or separate mentor/mentee workshops.

6.1.1 Online evaluation questionnaire

Three workshops of three hours duration were facilitated prior to commencement of the one year mentoring partnerships period. An evaluation questionnaire was sent to all eighteen participants using the online survey tool Survey Monkey™ immediately following their participation in the workshops. Fourteen of the eighteen teachers attended the training workshops. All fourteen teachers completed the online questionnaire, which consisted of seven questions. Six of these questions were in open-ended format, requiring respondents to provide an answer that identified their opinions rather than a yes/no answer. Question six only required a yes or no response. Table 6.1 (refer pp. 170-172) provides a summary of the teachers‟ responses to the seven questions.

Table 6.1: Mentoring Training Online Evaluation Questionnaire Results: Question One

Question 1	Response Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
What aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?	Sharing ideas and meeting each other	9	**64%**
	Gaining a clearer understanding of the mentoring partnership	6	**43%**
	Opportunity to consider potential challenges and issues	5	**35%**
	Consider the type of mentoring relationship want to establish	3	**21%**
	Clarifying the mentor and mentee roles and expectations of these roles	3	**21%**
	Determining the qualities of the mentors and mentees	3	**21%**
	Redefined purpose of the study	2	**14%**
	All of it	1	**7%**

Table 6.1 Continued: Mentoring Training Online Evaluation Questionnaire Results: Questions Two - Four

Question 2	Response Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Do you think a training workshop is integral to a mentoring programme? **Whether 'yes' or 'no', please explain why you think this.**	Engendered commitment to the mentoring programme	7	**50%**
	Clarified the mentoring process and purpose	5	**35%**
	Gained a clearer focus and understanding of the mentoring partnership	4	**28%**
	Meeting each other	4	**28%**
	Shared different perceptions of what mentoring means	4	**28%**

Question 3	Response Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
How do you think mentoring training will assist the mentoring partnerships?	Clarifying expectations of how to develop the partnership	10	**70%**
	Shared perceptions of the purpose of mentoring	5	**35%**
	Engenders sense of a mentoring support group	4	**28%**
	Up-skilling of the mentors‟ and mentees‟ abilities	3	**21%**
	Better understanding of how to deal with issues within the partnership	3	**21%**

Question 4	Response Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
What other information or material would be useful to include in the workshop?	Adequate	6	**43%**
	More case studies	3	**21%**
	Unsure	2	**14%**
	No response	2	**14%**
	Timeline exemplars	1	**7%**
	Practice with giving feedback	1	**7%**
	More information about their partner	1	**7%**
	Boundaries	1	**7%**

Table 6.1 Continued: Mentoring Training Online Evaluation Questionnaire Results: Questions Five - Seven

Question 5	Response Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Did you think it was useful for the mentors and mentees to attend the same training workshop or should the training be separate?, i.e., mentor training and mentee training. Whichever answer, please explain why you think this?	**Combined mentor-mentee training workshops**	12	**85%**
	Everyone on same playing field	6	**43%**
	Provided common frame of reference	6	**43%**
	Initiated mutual understanding about the mentoring relationship	5	**35%**
	Enabled sharing of ideas about the mentoring roles	3	**21%**
	Established an inclusive, transparent process	3	**21%**
	Able to learn from each other	2	**14%**
	Identified commonalities and potential issues	2	**14%**
	Separate training workshops	2	**14%**
	Different ideas can be discussed	1	**7%**
	More concentrated discussion on required mentoring roles	1	**7%**
Question 6	**Response Category**	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=14 % of sample**
Was a three hour training workshop long enough?	Three hours was sufficient	14	**100%**
Question 7	**Response Category**	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=14 % of sample**
What impact do you think the training will have on your engagement in a mentoring partnership?	Greater understanding of the mentoring process	4	**28%**
	No comment	3	**21%**
	Clearer expectations of the partnership	2	**14%**
	Commitment to the partnership and the programme	2	**14%**
	Gives the mentee more confidence to participate	2	**14%**
	Feedback on progress during the partnership is important	1	**7%**
	A more equitable relationship will result	1	**7%**
	More effective focus in the meetings	1	**7%**
	More familiar with jargon	1	**7%**
	Mentor may have to look at their own professional development	1	**7%**

6.1.2 Question one

The most important response to question one indicated that the opportunity to share ideas and meet each other were useful aspects of the training workshops. Nine of the teachers commented on this, identifying that the sharing of ideas had helped them "*discover that a better way to look at mentoring is as a „partnership'.*" Two teachers emphasised how they had appreciated the chance to "*meet the other participants and ask questions*".

The second most frequently mentioned category was referred to by six of the teachers as they indicated that the workshops had enabled them to gain greater clarification of the mentoring roles as well as the expectations of each role. The third highest category focused on how the training workshops had provided the teachers with an opportunity to consider and talk through potential challenges that could face the mentoring partnership: "*Case studies gave an indication of challenges that may be encountered. Also helpful to explore potential difficulties and the opportunity to note concerns*."

The next two categories were commented on by three of the fourteen teachers. Identifying mentor and mentee characteristics and considering the type of mentoring relationship they wanted to establish were indicated as areas in which the training workshops had helped them: *"The workshop was useful for me to think about the relationship I wanted to develop. So the idea of it being a partnership sat comfortably with my pedagogical beliefs. The other aspect for me was the power of the language we use and to be mindful of this in the conversations to come"*.

The second to last category was mentioned by two of the teachers as they referred to how the workshops had helped them revisit and redefine the purpose of the research study and therefore the purpose of the mentoring partnership they were about to engage in: *"It redefined the original purpose and I came out with fresher perspectives of mentoring, i.e., the ‚partnership" process"*.

The final category which was commented on by one teacher in regard to how useful they had found the training workshop felt that "*all of it*" had been useful.

6.1.3 Question two

In response to question two, all fourteen teachers agreed that mentoring training should be an integral component of a mentoring programme. When asked to explain their initial „yes" or „no" answer, the most important reason as to why the training workshops should be provided in a mentoring programme focused on how the training helped to engender a sense of commitment to the programme. One of the teachers explained: *"I initially believed that a handout giving the parameters of the programme would suffice, but in fact the commitment to this as a serious initiative seems a likely outcome of my attending the workshop".*

The second highest number of comments identified clarification of the mentoring process and purpose as important reasons for mentoring training to be provided for potential mentoring participants. The five teachers who mentioned this indicated that they had gained "*more clarification of what mentoring was all about*", including a "*greater understanding about the mentoring*". One of the teachers added, "*You need training to have a collective understanding of the mentoring process*."

The remaining three categories provided further explanations of why the teachers believed mentoring training should be integral in a mentoring programme. The four teachers who provided these comments stated that the opportunity to meet each other and "*break the ice*" had been beneficial. Gaining a clearer understanding of the mentoring partnership was also seen as important by these four teachers. The final category referred to by the four teachers referred to the training workshops providing a space where the participants could share their perceptions of what mentoring means: *"Yes, I think it is integral, because as we saw, different people had different perceptions of what mentoring is. Talking through these perceptions really helped me get my mind around what my idea of mentoring is".*

6.1.4 Question three

When asked how they thought the mentoring training would assist them in the ensuing mentoring partnership, the fourteen teachers identified five key areas. The most important response from ten of the teachers involved the opportunity for the mentor and mentee to clarify expectations of the partnership structure and process

before commencing in this relationship: *"I think it has supported me to begin the process of developing a relationship with the mentor. I suspect we are more likely to be on the same page – clear goals and more understanding of the process to be worked through as we embark upon this journey"*.

The second most frequently mentioned category regarding how the training would assist the mentoring partnership involved the opportunity for a sharing of perceptions about the purpose of mentoring. For example, five of the teachers commented that they had appreciated the chance to "*listen to other people"s ideas about mentoring*" and then be able to consider what the purpose of their particular mentoring partnership would be.

The third highest category was commented on by four of the teachers as they talked about how they believed the training workshops had engendered a sense of group support for the mentoring participants. This was described by one of the teachers: *"It puts everyone on the same step of the ladder. Better understanding and, I think, the group will become a mentoring support group upwards/downwards/sideways – if you get my meaning? Helping each other as required on issues not related to particular partnerships"*.

The final two categories were mentioned by three of the teachers. How to deal with issues in the partnership, which had been earlier identified in response to question one, was again raised in the answers to question three. The three teachers indicated that the training would assist them in understanding better how to manage any issues that arose during the partnership period: "*I think it will assist those who have never done mentoring before deal with issues that might arise*".

The last category identified by the three teachers highlighted that the opportunity to up-skill in the role of mentor or mentee was an area where the training had assisted them. One of the teachers summarised this: *"Getting a better picture of what is required by both parties, identifying assistance or clarification of areas of concern, to up-skill or broaden and strengthen each individual"s abilities"*.

6.1.5 Question four

There was a range of feedback from the fourteen teachers in response to question four in the evaluation survey. Two teachers chose not to provide a comment,

indicating that they did not believe there was a need for any additional information or material to be included in the training workshop they had attended.

Of the remaining twelve teachers who did comment, the most important response from six of the teachers focused on how they believed the workshop had provided enough content to assist them prior to commencing a mentoring partnership, therefore "*there was not a lot more needed, it seemed pretty comprehensive*". Two other teachers commented that they were "*unsure at this stage*" as to whether additional content was required. One of these two teachers added in their response that they felt they needed to start experiencing the mentoring partnership before they could fully answer this question: "*I may have more idea of this once the partnership has progressed*".

The next most frequently mentioned category was identified by three of the teachers. They indicated that the provision of more case studies would be a useful addition in the training workshops. One of these teachers added that book references for the mentor to follow up if they wished to learn more about how to conduct their role would also be advantageous in the training material provided: *"In regards to the mentor, it may be advantageous to include or to make available case studies covering the mentor"s role as well as provide book references where mentors can read and explore what it is that they are expected to do as mentors"*.

In addition to their comment that the workshop material had been adequate for their learning needs, the six teachers individually identified four additional suggestions of extra workshop material that they believed could be useful to include in future training workshops. These included timeline exemplars, practice with giving feedback and receiving more information about their prospective mentoring partner. Learning how to establish boundaries in the mentoring partnership was explained by one of the teachers: *"The boundaries for both the mentor and mentee would be good to know and understand, i.e. how much support can the mentee expect to ask from the mentor and when does the mentor know when to draw the line"*.

6.1.6 Question five

In response to question five in the evaluation survey regarding whether training should be delivered as a combined workshop of mentors and mentees or separate

workshops, twelve of the fourteen teachers indicated that they believed a combined mentor-mentee training workshop was the ideal approach.

The most important reasons given for combining the training were indicated by six of the twelve teachers, as they commented that the combined structure "*puts everyone on the same playing field*" and provided the participants with "*a common frame of reference*" regarding the purpose and process of mentoring. One of the six teachers indicated that a combined training workshop assisted both the mentor and mentee with deciding the type of partnership they wanted to establish "*from the start*". Also, as a mentor, the combined training offered ongoing opportunities for the mentor with regard to this role in the partnership: *"I intend to revisit the workshop, begin to develop the trust and set some objectives with the mentee. Having been to the workshop together, none of this will seem „strange" to the mentee. So, doing the combined workshop establishes some shared expectations, makes the process inclusive and transparent"*.

The third most important category was referred to by five of the teachers and related to how they believed the combined workshops had initiated mutual understanding about the mentoring relationship: *"We managed to get a feel for where we want to go with our „partnership". Mutual understanding is developed faster when training is cooperative"*.

Three of the teachers who commented that combined training was more beneficial indicated that this structure enabled the participants to share their ideas about the mentoring roles, therefore gaining a better understanding of what is expected of the mentor and the mentee. These three teachers also emphasised that the combined workshops had "*helped to establish an inclusive, transparent process*".

The final two categories in relation to the training workshops being a combined structure were commented on by two of the teachers. These teachers mentioned how a combined training workshop enabled participants to learn from each other, as "*everyone can participate in discussions, receive the same information and mentors/mentees can learn from each other*." Equally important with learning from each other was the opportunity to identify commonalities and potential issues, the latter comment having been identified in one of the earlier survey questions. One of the two teachers explained this point: *"Shared ideas related to understanding*

mentoring and allowed both sides to see what we had in common and issues each has – and how to work through these".

The two teachers who indicated that the training should be separate for mentors and mentees offered two perspectives that qualified their thinking. One of the teachers believed that "*different ideas can be discussed openly*" whilst the second teacher stated that a "*more concentrated discussion on the requirements of the mentor and the mentee*" could occur if the prospective mentoring participants attended separate training workshops.

6.1.7 Question six

In response to question six, all fourteen teachers believed the workshop time-frame of three hours had been sufficient.

6.1.8 Question seven

The aim of question seven was to provide the teachers with an opportunity to make any additional comments, particularly in terms of the future impact of training on their mentoring partnership. Three teachers did not respond to question seven. The most important response to question seven involved the participants gaining a greater understanding of the mentoring process, which was seen as "*enabling the partnership to evolve and change*". Four of the teachers indicated that this was a significant way that mentoring training could impact on their partnership experience.

The next highest number of responses regarding the potential impact of mentoring training on the partnership identified three different categories. Two of the teachers indicated that clarification of the teachers" expectations of the partnership was a benefit from attending the training. The same two teachers also identified that mentoring training would encourage the participants to commit to the partnership and to the mentoring programme overall. The other category mentioned by two teachers indicated that the training workshops were perceived as giving the mentee more confidence to participate in the partnership, rather than relying on the mentor to guide the whole process.

The remaining five responses covered a range of perceptions from individual teachers as to how the training could impact on the mentoring partnership. One of

the teachers believed that a "more equitable relationship will result" whilst another teacher stated how they had realised the importance of receiving feedback on progress during the partnership period: *"Training has to be good for the outcome of the programme. Feedback on progress is an important aspect here and maybe this can be achieved if we ran individual catch-up workshops where mentors could discuss and give feedback and the mentees can separately give feedback on how things are going for them and where things could be improved if required".*

Maintaining a more effective focus in the mentoring meetings was also identified as a beneficial impact of mentoring training: "*It will probably lead to a more in-depth and thought-through approach to the mentoring process*", and becoming more familiar with mentoring jargon was mentioned. A final comment from one teacher focused on how "*the mentor may have to look at their own professional development*".

6.2 Summary of Stage One Data Collection, Cycle Three: Mentoring Training Online Evaluation Questionnaire with Academic Teachers

In response to the online evaluation questionnaire, the teachers identified a range of benefits they believed they had gained by attending the mentoring training workshops. There was commonality of benefits in a number of areas, such as gaining a greater understanding of the mentoring process and partnership and clarifying expected mentor and mentee roles and responsibilities. The opportunity to consider potential challenges and issues was also identified as a useful aspect of the training experience.

When the teachers were asked whether they thought mentoring training should be an integral component of a mentoring system, there was a general perception that the training helped to establish an inclusive, transparent process and engendered a sense of a mentoring support group. Commitment to the mentoring programme was highlighted as one way in which the training would impact on the teachers" engagement in a mentoring partnership. The opportunity to meet together to clarify expectations and create a common frame of reference prior to engaging in a mentoring programme were emphasised by the teachers as important reasons for mentoring training to be provided.

Cycle Three
Stage two data collection:
Focus group meetings with academic teachers

This section presents the findings collected from the first three of five focus group meetings involving the eighteen academic teachers who were based at the principal institution. The first three focus group meetings comprised stage two of the data collection in Cycle Three of this action research study.

6.3 Focus Group One

The first focus group meeting was facilitated in the third month following commencement of the dyad mentoring partnerships, at the end of September 2007. The partnerships had been able to meet at least three times prior to the first focus group meeting. Focus group one consisted of two interview questions (Appendix F, refer p. 437). As an introduction to the concept of focus group meetings, of which there were five in total, the first question asked for the teachers‟ first impressions of their initial three partnership meetings.

The researcher had created an explanatory handout regarding the structure of the focus group meetings for the eighteen teacher participants which was emailed to everyone prior to their attendance at the first meeting. The handout provided an explanation of the purpose for the focus group meetings and a structured guideline of the meeting process that the teachers could expect to participate in. Each set of interview questions for the five meetings were emailed to the eighteen teacher participants the day before each meeting was scheduled. This enabled the teachers to reflect on their mentoring experiences in relation to the questions prior to the meeting, with the aim that they came prepared to contribute to the meeting.

6.3.1 Question One: First Impressions of the Mentoring Experience

In response to question one of the meeting interview schedule, when asked about their first impressions of the mentoring experience, having now met three times in their dyad partnerships, twelve of the eighteen teachers who attended this first focus group meeting offered a range of comments. Table 6.2 (refer p. 181) summarises the twelve teachers‟ first impressions following three mentoring partnership meetings.

Table 6.2: First Impressions of the Mentoring Experience

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=12 % of sample
Identifying goals for the mentoring	9	**75%**
Deciding structure of the meetings	7	**58%**
Expectations of self and the mentoring role	5	**40%**
Initial apprehension	3	**25%**
Pairing of similar age	2	**16%**

The most important response in relation to what the teachers had found was important in establishing their partnership involved the mentee deciding the goals for their teaching development that could be supported by mentoring. The nine teachers who commented on this category talked about how they were "*coming to terms with what we want to achieve from the mentoring*" and "*we want to use this time profitably*". Three of the teachers emphasised how they had found it useful to establish goals for the mentoring in the first meeting, as they believed this had helped to "*determine the direction of the meetings for the rest of the year*".

The second most frequently mentioned category referred to how the teachers had found it important to decide the structure of their meetings. Five of the seven teachers who talked about this aspect explained: "*We have formalised our meetings, for example, the times we meet and what we will use the meetings for*". One teacher emphasised that this aspect of the mentoring meetings was important to establish and agree on early in the partnership. They indicated that even though they had only met three times they felt they had gained benefit from the mentoring already because their meetings were structured and both participants were committed to this.

The third highest number of comments in response to question one related to five of the teachers" expectations of the mentoring partnership, including the expectations they had of their own investment in their professional development and in particular the respective mentee or mentor role they would be assuming. For example, in relation to self expectations, two of the teachers identified that they had found the three mentoring meetings to date "*really useful in terms of focusing*

on my own development and seeing how the mentor can help me with this". Another of the five teachers admitted that "*the mentoring roles have been different to what I thought they would be*", explaining this comment further: "*The partnership has quickly become a shared role rather than mentor-mentee*".

The fourth category was commented on by three of the teachers as they shared their first impressions of the mentoring partnership meetings. These teachers talked about having experienced "*quite a bit of apprehension*", in particular being "*a bit apprehensive at our first meeting. Neither of us were sure what we were going to talk about*". One teacher indicated a shift in their perception of the initial concern they had experienced: *"Although I was initially apprehensive, I have so far enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas and teaching experiences with my mentor".*

The final category was referred to by two teachers who commented on the nature of the mentor-mentee pairing in their partnership. The mentor teacher in this particular partnership stated: *"It's an interesting pairing of two more mature people. I had pre-conceived ideas of assisting someone with less experience than me. In actual fact, my mentee has been here a lot longer than me".*

6.3.2 Question Two: Establishing the Relationship

In response to question two in the meeting interview schedule, the twelve academic teachers mentioned a number of factors they perceived as important in establishing the mentoring relationship in the early stages of a mentoring partnership. Several of their comments were reflective of and subsequently built on the feedback they had provided earlier in response to question one. Table 6.3 illustrates the key factors that were perceived by the academic teachers as being important considerations for establishing the dyad mentoring relationship.

Table 6.3.: Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=12 % of sample
Decide focus of the meetings	8	**66%**
Clarify role expectations and set ground rules	7	**58%**
Set ground rules	5	**40%**
Build rapport and establish trust	4	**33%**

The most important response to question two in the meeting interview schedule, related to how the mentoring relationship was established, involved the mentoring partners deciding what the focus of their meetings would be. This was commented on by eight of the twelve teachers as they referred particularly to the importance of the mentee deciding how they wanted to use the mentoring meeting times. One teacher described how their partnership had spent the first meeting discussing the direction they wanted the consequent meetings to take, identifying that they had "*completed a mentoring contract*" which established expectations of the meetings‟ focus.

The second highest category mentioned by seven of the teachers involved the importance of clarifying the mentor and mentee roles within the partnership. These teachers talked about how they had found it was necessary to discuss their respective roles early in the partnership meetings. One of the teachers who had assumed a mentor role admitted: *"I felt somewhat guilty initially as a mentor when the research project belonged totally to the mentee and asked myself the question of „What did I need to do?". A couple of meetings later we"ve slightly changed the focus of our topic so that it has become more of a joint project we are both pursuing"*.

Another two teachers referred to role expectations in terms of questioning who should be responsible for establishing the mentoring relationship. These teachers believed that this was up to the mentor, describing the mentor‟s role as "s*etting the scene*". This responsibility of the mentor was perceived as a key role that needed to be determined early in the partnership, as well as a way of validating the mentor‟s competence. From one of the two teachers‟ perspectives, their experience as a teacher added to this expectation of responsibility: *"The mentor needs to set the scene and ask the mentee questions such as "how do you want to do this?" and "how do you want the room where we meet to be? I have been in teaching for a while, so it was easier to establish the relationship. This helped to create an evenness of where we were in our teaching and how we were feeling"*.

The third most important response involved the need for ground rules to be set and agreed to by the mentor and mentee. Five of the teachers explained how setting ground rules helped to set parameters for the relationship and provide structure for

the ongoing meetings. One of them found that having ground rules established helped "s*top us from going off on a tangent*". Interestingly, three of the five teachers who commented on this aspect felt that "*it is the mentor"sresponsibility to set ground rules early in the partnership*". They believed that after the ground rules had been set by the mentor and agreed upon by both partners, the meetings needed to be driven thereafter by the mentee.

The final category involved the importance of trust being established and rapport built between the mentee and mentor. Four of the teachers referred to these two aspects, perceiving them as critical to the success of the mentoring in terms of how often the partnership met and what the mentee achieved in their teaching development as a result. Two teachers explained how the focus of their initial meetings had been an important opportunity to establish their relationship built on trust, as one of them asserted, "*You enter a relationship open to the trust being there until it is broken*". Another of the four teachers indicated that the mentor was more likely to be responsible for developing trust and building rapport than the mentee. They suggested how the mentor could achieve this: *"We observed each others" teaching. This was valuable in developing trust with each other and gaining an understanding of each others" context. It was good to do this early on. Establishing and maintaining trust between the mentor and mentee involves meeting regularly, meeting when you say you will meet and gaining and building rapport".*

6.4. Focus Group Two

The second focus group meeting was conducted in November 2007, five months after the dyad mentoring partnerships had commenced. Eleven of the eighteen academic teachers attended the second meeting. The interview schedule (Appendix G, refer p. 438) consisted of three questions, focusing on themes of i) creating trust in the partnership; ii) the ideal environment for the partnerships to meet and iii) achieving value-for-time in the mentoring partnership.

6.4.1 Question One: Creating Trust in the Mentoring Partnership

In response to question one in the meeting interview schedule, which asked the teachers what they perceived was important to create trust in their mentoring partnership, the eleven teachers identified a range of factors that could influence

trust being established between the mentoring partners. Table 6.4 summaries the teachers" perceptions of what they perceived as important factors which determined the level and development of trust in a mentoring partnership.

Table 6.4: Creating Trust in the Mentoring Partnership

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=11 % of sample
Confidentiality	10	**90%**
Mutual respect	8	**72%**
Setting ground rules	7	**63%**
Mutual sharing: Willingness to share	5	**45%**
Teaching commonalities	4	**36%**
Equal playing field	4	**36%**
Personalities	2	**18%**
Assume trust exists	1	**9%**

The most important response in relation to factors that influenced the creation of trust in a mentoring partnership involved the issue of confidentiality. Ten teachers perceived this as an important determination of creating trust, emphasising that keeping confidentialities was the responsibility of both the mentor and the mentee. As one of the teachers described, "*You enter a relationship open to the trust being there until it is broken*". Another of the teachers who had assumed a mentee role in their dyad partnership referred to the connection between confidentiality and creating trust commented, "*I knew that whatever I said would stay there*".

The second highest category mentioned by eight of the teachers identified mutual respect as a significant factor contributing to trust in the mentoring partnership. Respect was described in various ways, including "*respect that we came from different faculties*" and "*mutual respect for each other's discipline*". One teacher indicated that coming from a different discipline to that of their mentoring partner had a significant impact on the relationship: *"Being in totally different fields has been better. The mentor is a sounding board for me, not just understanding because they are in a similar field and therefore taking things for granted. We*

actually respect each other"s knowledge". This theme of mutual respect based on different disciplines and teaching expertise between the mentor and mentee was raised by another teacher in response to this: *"Respect of the person being an expert in their field and an excellent teacher. That was important. Our partnership was one of shared expertise"*.

The third most frequently mentioned category focused on the importance of setting ground rules early in the partnership, a theme that had been identified in the first focus group meeting in relation to factors that influenced the establishment of the mentoring relationship (refer p. 182). Seven of the teachers indicated that they believed setting ground rules helped to establish expectations of the mentoring process as well as consolidating what the partners could expect from each other when they met for mentoring. For example, three of the seven teachers talked about ground rules in terms of agreeing when the partnership would meet and making the meetings a high priority: "*Meet when you say you will meet. Decide this and agree on it early*".

Two teachers who were in one of the dyad partnerships discussed the decisions they had made together about the focus and "*informal rules*" of the meetings and how they would be structured for the duration of the one year programme: *"When we first met each time, we would start with how things were and what each of us had been doing – personal stuff. We would always do this before talking about teaching and learning"*. Although two of the seven teachers admitted that they had "*never set definite ground rules*", they referred again to the theme of mutual respect for each other"s discipline and felt that this contributed to a certain level of trust existing in their partnership from its commencement.

Mutual sharing and a willingness to share with each other received the fourth highest number of responses from five of the eleven teachers. Three of these teachers emphasised that both the mentor and the mentee needed to be willing to share in the meetings, one teacher stating, "*I would have found it difficult if the other person didn"t share things about themselves too*". Another teacher who had assumed the role of mentor in their partnership explained their concept of the importance of mutual sharing: *"I shared something personal about me which I*

wouldn"t do to another colleague. The mentee then felt able to share things too, which led to very productive sessions".

The fifth highest category identified the aspect of teaching commonalities as leading to trust being created in the mentoring partnership. For example, four of the teachers emphasised how they had found having things in common with each other was important and influenced the early and now later stages of their mentoring meetings. One teacher was adamant that "*it would have been quite different if the person didn"t share my area of expertise*". Two other teachers identified that they had worked together prior to their mentoring partnership, indicating in their comments that this contributed to the level of trust they had developed in their mentoring relationship: *"I felt I already had the trust because I had been working with them already. Any barriers had already been broken down."*

The sixth category was mentioned by four teachers as they suggested that equality in the partnership was important if trust was to develop between the mentor and the mentee. They talked about the need for a "*lack of hierarchy*", one commenting "*making sure there is a balance of power in the relationship*". One of the teachers reflected this concept of hierarchy and power as they described what they perceived equality in the mentoring partnership meant: *"It"s not dictatorial. You reach agreement rather than one person being superior and making all the decisions. It"s an equal playing field"*.

The seventh category was mentioned by two of the eleven teachers, as they talked about the influence of personalities on whether trust was created in the mentoring partnership or not. One of these teachers was particularly clear in their perception of how personalities determined trust in the relationship: *"If I"d been teamed up with someone who I had a clash of personality with; that would make the mentoring relationship almost impossible."*

The final category in relation to factors that influenced trust in the mentoring relationship was mentioned by one teacher who questioned whether trust in the partnership should be able to be assumed rather than created over time: *"What about gut and heart feeling? Trust is just there or it isn"t there. We assumed we already had the rust when we first met"*.

6.4.2 Question Two: The Ideal Environment for Mentoring Meetings

When asked what they believed was the ideal environment for the mentoring partnership meetings in question two of the meeting interview schedule, the eleven teachers identified a number of environmental features they perceived as influencing the meetings in terms of how often the partnerships met and what was discussed in the meetings as a consequence. Table 6.5 summarises the environment features perceived by the teachers as influencing their mentoring meetings.

Table 6.5: Ideal Environment for Mentoring Meetings

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=11 % of sample
Privacy	9	**80%**
Venue and seating arrangement	4	**36%**
Neutral zone	2	**18%**
External venue	2	**18%**

The most important response in relation to what the teachers perceived were ideal environment factors impacting on their mentoring meetings involved the issue of privacy. For example, five of the teachers emphasised how having a private place to meet was critical if the mentee in particular was going to feel "*comfortable*" with sharing and talking through any issues or problems in their teaching. The lack of meeting spaces that provided privacy was apparent in one of the teachers" comments: "*There really aren"t enough spaces for people to meet privately. I wouldn"t be comfortable in a public area*". The issue of confidentiality was also raised by two of the teachers in relation to the theme of privacy for meetings: "*Privacy is important because of the confidentiality thing*".

The second highest category mentioned by three of the teachers highlighted that the physical comfort room and how the seating was set up impacted on the quality of their mentoring meetings. One teacher was adamant that "*where you meet makes a difference. The room makes or breaks the whole thing*". The degree of comfort afforded the mentoring participants by the venue where they could meet was referred to by another teacher as creating a barrier to the mentoring interactions between themselves and the mentee: *"I was not comfortable with the seating set*

up. I had to mentally put aside a perceived barrier to any meaningful communication".

The next highest category was referred to by two of the teachers, who indicated that a "*neutral zone*" was an important environmental feature for their mentoring meetings. For example, these teachers indicated that the mentoring meetings would be most effective if the venue was neutral in terms of "*not in each others" office or teaching spaces*".

The final category was commented on by two of the teachers. One teacher, who had assumed a mentee role in their mentoring partnership, suggested that meeting with their mentor outside the institution had been particularly beneficial for them. They emphasised how the external venue had provided the "*neutralness and privacy*" that the other teachers had referred to during the focus group meeting. Conversely, the other teacher who commented on this stated they felt "*constrained*" by having to meet with their mentee in a public area sometimes: "*It is difficult to be open with one another as usual in such surroundings*".

6.4.3 Question Three: Achieving Value for Time in the Mentoring Partnership

In response to question three in the second focus group meeting which asked the teachers how they believed they had created value for time in their mentoring meetings, the eleven teachers identified a range of ways in which they had ensured the partnership meetings supported their teaching professional development. Table 6.6 illustrates the teachers" feedback in relation to this concept.

Table 6.6: Achieving Value for Time in the Mentoring Partnership

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=11 % of sample
Number of meetings	9	**80%**
Mentee identifies learning goals	8	**72%**
Commitment to the partnership	7	**63%**
Getting feedback from the mentor	4	**36%**
Establish formal partnership structure	3	**27%**

The highest category mentioned by nine of the teachers identified that the regularity and frequency of meetings had had a significant influence on their sense of achieving value for time. It was apparent from the teachers" feedback that there

was a major difference in the perception of achieving value from the mentoring meetings between the partnerships which had met fortnightly and those which had "*struggled to find any time to meet*" with the result of having only met twice in the last five months. Two of the nine teachers reported that meeting fortnightly had meant there was a continued focus on teaching and learning and, they believed, a more rapid development of the mentoring relationship. They added that "*stronger ties had been built quickly*" because of the regular meetings. In comparison, two teachers who had only met twice expressed disappointment that they hadn"t engaged as much as they had intended or would have liked: "*We were both so busy this semester, we have struggled to find times when we were both free. We"d like to have met more often*".

The second most important response in relation to how the teachers had achieved value for time in the mentoring meetings was a perception that the mentee needed to identify their learning goals in the initial stages of the partnership and come prepared to discuss these. The concept of establishing learning goals for the mentoring had previously been mentioned in the first focus group meeting in response to question one which asked the teachers for their first impressions of their mentoring experience after four months of meeting. Eight of the eleven teachers, who represented a mixture of mentor and mentee roles, described this responsibility of the mentee as additional to the mentor and mentee setting goals together for each mentoring meeting. One of the mentee teachers explained how at the first mentoring meeting they "*talked about some of the things I wanted to change and implement for the year*" and how the mentor had helped them "*set goals for the mentoring meetings to come*; *it felt really positive*".

Commitment to the partnership was indicated by seven of the teachers as the next most important factor influencing value for time in the mentoring meetings. For example, one of the teachers explained how "*sheer determination and sacrificing things to keep my commitment meant I got something out of the partnership*". Commitment to the meeting times and formalising a space for these in terms of scheduling and timetabling were also perceived by two of the teachers as determinants of effective meetings and their outcomes: *"I think it makes sense to formalise the meetings and discuss teaching situations, as that"s what the process of mentoring is about – improving one"s teaching. If it"s not formalised and times*

set, you wouldn"t doanything specific". Another teacher indicated in their response that commitment to the partnership in terms of prioritising the mentoring meetings was also a value-for-time variable: *"We made it a priority. It is too easy to not make it a priority because it is not on your job list. This has to be thought through by both partners"*.

The fourth category was mentioned by four teachers who perceived that they had achieved value for time in their mentoring meetings by ensuring that they asked for and received feedback from the mentor on their teaching practice. One of these teachers explained how they believed they had achieved value from the meetings because of their own actions outside the formal meeting timetable: "*I always go away with a few things to do and talk about at the next meeting to get some feedback on*". Another teacher felt that it was important to ask for feedback without having to enter into long conversations or debates: *"Sometimes I just want an answer. I don"twant any dialogue. Sometimes the mentor will rescue you if you do this. Possibly you are the one in dialogue so much, you don"t want them to dialogue, you just want their direct feedback. As a mentee, that will have an impact on value"*.

The final category identified in three of the teachers" responses to question three of the meeting interview schedule indicated that establishing a formal structure in the mentoring partnership influenced whether the mentee and/or mentor received value from the mentoring meetings. One of the teachers explained how "*We set up a timetable. This structure helped a lot*". Another teacher emphasised that there needed to be structure within the meetings, stating that because of the lack of structure in their partnership, "*sometimes we just talked for two hours*". This particular teacher subsequently questioned "*is that mentoring though?*" In comparison, the third teacher was adamant that keeping their partnership structure and process informal had led to a positive mentoring experience for them: *"We decided how often we would meet at the beginning, but didn"t sign an agreement as such. We decided not to have it too formal. We knew each other well, so we chose not to formalise the meetings. It was all very fluid and it seemed to work"*.

6.5 Focus Group Three

The third focus group meeting was conducted in February 2008, representing the last data collection phase of Cycle Three. Although this meeting was actually conducted eight months after the mentoring partnerships had commenced, in July 2007, there had been no mentoring activity by the eighteen academic teachers over the Christmas and New Year period, including January. Hence the third focus group meeting was still considered as occurring in the first six months of the mentoring programme and therefore contributing to the data collection during Cycle Three of the research study.

Fourteen of the eighteen academic teachers contributed to the third focus group meeting, ten teachers physically attending the meeting and four teachers emailing their responses to the researcher. The meeting interview schedule (Appendix H, refer p. 439) consisted of three questions, all of the questions specifically focusing on the implications of formalising mentoring for academic teachers, both in relation to formalising the mentoring partnership and the institution"s mentoring system as a whole.

6.5.1 Question One: Impact of Formalising the Mentoring Partnership

There was a range of comments from the fourteen teachers in response to question one of the meeting interview schedule. When asked what they believed the impact would be on their mentoring partnership if it was based on a formal mentoring model design, the teachers" feedback indicated that some of them perceived numerous advantages for the mentee and mentor whilst others in the group communicated an opposing view that the mentoring partnership should be voluntary and informal in nature.

In addition to commenting on the advantages of formal and informal models underpinning the mentoring partnership, reference was also made to the expert-novice and peer mentoring models. Although these models had not been specifically included in question one, the teachers mentioned them when they were asked what they believed the impact would be if their mentoring partnership was based on a formal model. The additional data regarding the expert-novice and peer mentoring models is summarised on pages 196-199.

6.5.1.1 Advantages of a formal mentoring partnership model

Four key advantages of formalising the mentoring partnership for both the mentee and the mentor were highlighted in the academic teachers‟ feedback. Table 6.7 summarises the teachers‟ perceptions in relation to these advantages.

Table 6.7 Advantages of a Formal Mentoring Partnership Model

Comment Category:	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Meets teaching development needs of the new teacher	5	**35%**
Stronger commitment to the partnership	4	**28%**
Establishes a feedback process	3	**21%**
Regular meeting schedule	3	**21%**

The most important response from five of the teachers involved the perception that a formal mentoring partnership model was an important structure for ensuring the new teacher received support in their teaching practice. The teachers‟ comments with regard to this point indicated that they believed a formal partnership model was not as necessary for the more experienced teacher but that the teacher new to teaching would definitely benefit from being automatically engaged in a mentoring partnership, which a formal mentoring programme structure would provide.

One of the mentors (an experienced teacher) who had partnered with a mentee who was new to teaching expressed their belief that formalising the partnership for a new teacher would definitely be advantageous: *"Formalising the partnership? I think it makes sense to have it somewhat formal for the new teacher and discuss teaching situations as that‟s what the process is about – improving one‟s teaching. It hasn‟t meant we haven‟t talked about some other things but we have always been conscious of keeping it teaching based"*.

The second highest category referred to how a formal model for the mentoring partnership would engender a stronger commitment to the partnership by both the mentor and mentee. Four of the teachers who had identified that their partnership had been based on a more formal model commented that they believed this level of commitment was directly attributed to the formal arrangement they had made in their respective partnerships. Two teachers identified that "*the formal aspect has*

forced me to make it a priority" and "*formalising the process tied it down, which meant the mentoring happened"*.

Establishment of a feedback process in the partnership was identified as the third most important consequence of having a formal mentoring partnership model in place by three of the ten teachers. This concept was described by one teacher as involving "*an expectation by both people to report back*". They perceived that such a process enabled the mentor and the mentee to give feedback on how they were finding the partnership process.

The final category identified in relation to how a formal model underpinning the mentoring partnership could impact on the mentoring relationship involved the concept of scheduling. Three teachers referred to how they believed a formal model would ensure the regular scheduling of mentoring meetings which had to have a positive impact on the mentoring experience and outcomes. One of the teachers commented on how a regular meeting schedule would be "*particularly useful, especially if the mentoring doesn‟t get off the ground, even if only initially*".

Interestingly, a separate finding that did not „fit‟ the general findings from the teachers who had advocated a more formal model underpinning the mentoring partnership highlighted a perception that the sense of hierarchy in a mentoring relationship needed to be eliminated if mentoring was to be successful. This opinion was voiced by one teacher in relation to their view that a formal mentoring system would be of benefit to academic teaching staff so long as it was not a mandatory, management-directed activity: *"Mentoring should not be dictatorial. You reach agreement rather than one person being superior and making all the decisions. It is really important that it doesn‟t become another tick-box exercise"*.

6.5.1.2 Advantages of an informal mentoring partnership model

In addition to the teachers who had advocated for the mentoring partnership to be based on a formal model of mentoring, several teachers indicated strongly that they supported a more informal approach to how the mentoring partnership was structured and the process it followed as a consequence. Table 6.8 (refer p. 195) summarises the teachers‟ perceptions of how an informal model underpinning the mentoring partnership would have advantages for the mentor and mentee.

Table 6.8: Advantages of an Informal Mentoring Partnership Model

Comment Category:	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=14 % of sample**
Acknowledges professional autonomy	8	**57%**
Non-engagement if have to conform to rules	6	**43%**
Reduces issue of power imbalance	4	**28%**
Need for flexibility	3	**21%**

The most important response regarding how an informal mentoring model would benefit the mentee and mentor involved the issue of professional autonomy. The eight teachers who commented on this category described professional autonomy as meaning individual choice in whether the teacher chose to engage in mentoring as a teacher support mechanism or not. One of the teachers believed that it was important for the mentor and the mentee to have the choice of whether they partnered together for mentoring or not: *I would prefer to have the choice of accessing mentoring when I decided I needed it. I don"t like it to be too structured"*. Another teacher emphasised that formalising the partnership would be "*inhibitive if it was something you had to do*". Contributing to this discussion, four of the teachers agreed that there should be autonomy and flexibility "*for us to organise our own activities and meetings*". Some ambiguity was communicated however as they continued to refer back to the issue of how a formal process would benefit the new teacher and ensure this teacher received the necessary support for their teaching practice.

The second highest category was commented on by six of the teachers. "*Forced mentoring*" and "*conforming to rules*" were seen by these teachers as having the potential to be counter-productive to the purpose of mentoring as supporting teaching practice. They argued for voluntary mentoring, stating that they would not be interested in engaging in a mentoring partnership otherwise.

The next most frequently mentioned category referred to the issue of power in the partnership. Four teachers perceived this as an issue if the mentoring partnership was made to adhere to formal requirements and guidelines by the institution. For example, one of the teachers emphasised that "*mentorship is not about a position of power, therefore should not be made a formal requirement*". Another of the four

teachers indicated their belief that "*you meet people and just click – a totally informal process*". This teacher explained how they felt this informal approach to mentoring would result in more positive outcomes for both the mentee and the mentor, adding that "*the partnership could become too formal and inhibit the mentee"s willingness to share*".

The final category concerned the need for flexibility in how the partnership was structured. Three of the teachers mentioned how they believed an informal mentoring model would ensure a high degree of flexibility in the mentoring participants" choice as to how they managed their partnership. They also indicated that any mentoring programme needed the support of managers for it to be successful. This combination of feedback regarding the need for flexibility was emphasised by one of the teachers: *"We are all busy people. My timetable isn"t flexible, so I really need my manager on board, buying into the programme"*.

6.5.1.3 Expert-novice and peer mentoring models

In addition to the responses to question one in the interview schedule of the third focus group meeting, the fourteen teachers made specific reference to the expert-novice and peer mentoring models. There appeared to be a distinction between the expert-novice model being useful for a new academic teacher and the peer mentoring model applying to experienced teachers. Table 6.9 (refer p. 197) highlights the number of references made to each of the models and summarises how the models were perceived as impacting on the mentoring partnership and mentoring experience by the academic teachers.

Table 6.9: Impact of the Expert-Novice and Peer Mentoring Models on the Mentoring Partnership

Comment Category:	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Expert-Novice Model		
Suitable for the new teacher	5	**35%**
The new teacher is able to get support and advice from an experienced teacher	4	**28%**
Hierarchical in structure and nature	4	**28%**
Peer Mentoring Model		
Equalising of the mentoring relationship	8	**57%**
Non-hierarchical and non-dictatorial structure	8	**57%**
Suitable for the more experienced teacher	5	**35%**

The expert-novice model

The highest category of response in relation to the expert-novice model was received from five of the teachers as they perceived the new teacher was the key mentee cohort who benefitted from a mentoring partnership based on this model. Two of the teachers described the expert-novice model as a specific relationship consisting of a new teacher learning from an experienced teacher. They commented that mentoring was "*really valuable for new people coming into the organisation*" and that it was important for the new teacher to "*be matched with someone more experienced*".

The second most important response involved a description of the expert-novice model as providing a formal conduit for the new teacher to get support and feedback from the experienced teacher. In response to the six teachers who provided their definition of this model, four of them elaborated on the aspect of the partnership as a forum for feedback, indicating that the expert-novice model ensured the support of the new teacher in their teaching development. One of the teachers who had assumed a mentee role in their dyad partnership emphasised how they believed that the expert-novice model had met their needs and expectations: "*Mentoring works for me as I like the support and advice of a more experienced tutor*". Another teacher, who had assumed a mentor role in their partnership,

highlighted the positive aspects of being a mentor with extensive teaching experience in supporting the less-experienced teacher: *"It was good to be able to give feedback from a mentor"spoint of view on aspects where I could see room for improvement. Because of the mentoring role, this was taken very positively"*.

The third and final category which was also commented on by four of the teachers illustrated their perception of the expert-novice model being hierarchical in nature. Interestingly, the teachers" responses in relation to this feature of the model were negative in comparison to the other comments they had made about the expert-novice model supporting the new teacher. They indicated that the sense of hierarchy in an expert-novice mentoring relationship needed to be eliminated if mentoring was to be successful. As one of them commented, "*I have a definite desire to take out the hierarchical sense of mentor-mentee even though my mentee is a new teacher*".

The peer mentoring model

In contrast to the comments received from the five teachers who identified the expert-novice model as a useful approach for a mentoring partnership, other teachers in the focus group meeting focused on the peer mentoring model as the preferred approach.

The first category commented on by eight of the teachers highlighted their perception that this model helped to "*equalise the relationship*". The teachers viewed this as an important aspect of the mentoring relationship, one teacher describing the advantage of this model as enabling the mentor and mentee roles to work "*far more collaboratively than following an „expert-novice" model*".

Two of the eight teachers, who were experienced teachers, had adopted a peer mentoring approach in their partnership at the commencement of the one year programme as opposed to a more hierarchical expert-novice approach. They also stated that they had found this approach supportive of an equalising of the relationship, which they believed had directly influenced their attitude towards engaging in the mentoring: *"We were equals rather than mentor-mentee. This led to a sharing of ideas rather than a one-way flow. We were happy with this shared role approach. Ours wasn"treally mentor-mentee, it was more peer mentoring. At times he was the mentor and at times the mentee. He was clear at the beginning of*

the partnership that he could learn as much from me". Similarly, two other teachers referred to an "*equal relationship*" being the natural structure of their partnership. Their feedback indicated that they definitely preferred this approach to an expert-novice model. One teacher stated: *"Even though I was identified as a mentor, we didn"tstick to mentor-mentee roles. I often learned from my mentee. I was able to offer advice and support at times. This was a two-way process. We shared experiences"*. The second teacher reflected this thinking as they commented: *"Since we have talked about this partnership as being able to be more equal and holistic, instead of the traditional expert-protégé model, I would have had a very different response to engaging in mentoring as a mentor. Now I would be happy to assume either role. As an experienced teacher entering a mentoring partnership that is equal, being a mentee isn"t an issue"*.

The second highest category also commented on by eight of the teachers focused on their perception that the peer mentoring model removed the potential for the relationship between the mentor and mentee to be dictatorial and hierarchical in nature. These teachers indicated in their comments that this consequence of the peer mentoring model was a definite benefit and were clear that they did not want to be involved in a hierarchical mentoring partnership. One of the teachers summarised the feelings of the ten: *"Mentoring should not be dictatorial. You reach agreement rather than one person being superior and making all the decisions. It is really important that it doesn't become another tick-box exercise"*.

The third most frequently mentioned category indicated that five of the teachers perceived the peer mentoring model as being particularly applicable for supporting the experienced teacher. The teachers regularly referred to the connection between a peer mentoring partnership and the experienced teacher benefitting from this structure. In addition to the identification of the experienced teacher requiring a peer mentoring model underpinning their mentoring partnership, a comment was made by one of the teachers who suggested that the progressive nature of mentoring, which they described as the development of the mentee over the time of the programme, generally led to an initial expert-novice model evolving into a peer mentoring relationship: *"A natural phase in the partnership is the need to ask "what will we do now?" This may be where the partnership evens out, although it may have commenced with an expert-novice model"*.

6.5.2 Question Two: Impact of Formal Requirements of the Research Study on the Mentoring Partnership

Question two in the third focus group meeting continued the theme of how the academic teachers perceived the impact of a formal mentoring partnership. During the one year mentoring programme, the teachers were required to meet in their dyad partnerships a minimum of once a month and their mentoring meetings were to specifically focus on the support of teaching and learning professional development.

In response to question two in the interview schedule, when asked to comment on how they had found the formal expectations of their partnership in terms of required number and regularity of meetings and their focus on teaching development in the mentoring meetings, the fourteen teachers provided a range of feedback based on their mentoring experience to date. Table 6.10 summarises the teachers" perceptions of how they believed the formal requirements of their mentoring partnership had impacted on their mentoring experience. Table 6.10 includes examples of the teachers" comments to further illustrate each of the comment categories.

Table 6.10: Impact of Formal Requirements of the Mentoring Partnership

Comment Category:	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Teaching and learning focus	7	**50%**
Meeting regularly	5	**35%**
Establishing trust and rapport	4	**28%**
Widened focus of the mentoring conversations	3	**21%**
Deciding relationship parameters early	3	**21%**

The most important response to question two involved the positive consequences of having to focus on teaching and learning development in the mentoring partnership meetings. Seven of the teachers perceived the requirement of a teaching and learning focus as a definite advantage to them gaining benefit from the mentoring. For example, one of these teachers claimed: "*We found our*

partnership very productive. We kept to the brief and explored teaching and learning issues". Another of the teachers supplemented this view of achieving positive outcomes in their partnership as they commented on how "*many aspects of our work got discussed but this enabled a holistic approach while keeping the purpose of teaching and learning clear*".

Although one of the seven teachers admitted that their partnership hadn"t followed a set agenda, they had "*chatted about our teaching experiences at each meeting*". A final comment made by one teacher summarised the opinions that are been voiced by the other teachers in support of the partnership requiring a teaching and learning focus: *"I think it makes sense to have it somewhat formal and discuss teaching situations as that"swhat the process is about – improving one"steaching. It hasn"t meant we haven"t talked about some other things but we have always been conscious of keeping it teaching based"*.

The second highest category mentioned by five of the teachers involved the advantage of having fixed times to meet in their partnership. Two of the five teachers who commented on this aspect stated that they wouldn"t have met as often if they were not expected to do so. These two teachers added that although they preferred the concept of having "*maximum choice*" in deciding how they used their partnership, they agreed that the formal expectation of regular meetings throughout the year programme meant they met and had productive meetings as a consequence. Another teacher in this group admitted that "*meeting regularly is been good thing to have to do but not always possible*".

The next most frequently mentioned category involved how the formal expectations of the partnership had contributed significantly to trust and rapport being established early in the relationship. Four teachers commented on how they had found trust in their relationship a critical aspect of their partnership and attributed this to meeting regularly and having a clear purpose for the mentoring. Two of these teachers talked about how their first meeting was spent "*getting comfortable with each other and familiar with our teaching areas*" whilst another of the teachers who was new to teaching recognised that "*I was in the deep-end in my teaching experience with no help – the mentor helped me with this*".

The fourth category was commented on by three of the teachers as they suggested that the expected structure of their mentoring partnership resulted in their conversations retaining a focus on teaching and learning but also broadening it to allow for other work-related issues to be discussed. These teachers indicated that they believed mentoring should have a teaching and learning focus but that this type of support can assist teachers in other areas of their practice in the institution. One of the teachers emphasised how they believed they had used the meetings productively because it wasn"t a "*casual situation*", adding: *"It has been good and yes we have met on a regular basis and while the focus has been teaching and learning, it has gone beyond that. The formal aspect has forced me to make it a priority"*.

The final category was mentioned by another three of the fourteen teachers, as they identified how they had benefitted from making decisions about the partnership parameters early in the relationship. They indicated that this was due to the expectation that their partnership have some formal structure. Making early decisions about the partnership structure and the mentoring roles and responsibilities were perceived by the three teachers as having helped establish clear expectations of each other and how the meetings would be used. One of the teachers described the formal aspect of their partnership as having "*created an evenness of where we were and how we were feeling*".

One of the fourteen teachers" comments was in contrast to the more positive feedback that had been provided in response to question two. They indicated that formalising the partnership had been to the detriment of their mentoring experience: *"How much we formalised our partnership I think was our downfall. The mentee wanted to really formalise this and have outcomes. I was happy for it to be more loose and fluid"*.

6.5.3: Question Three: Key Considerations for the Institution Establishing a Formal Mentoring System

Question three in the third focus group asked the teachers to comment on what they thought were key considerations for the institution if it decided to establish a formal mentoring system. The fourteen teachers in the sample offered a range of opinions. Their feedback focused on three separate considerations: i) how a formal

mentoring system would support teaching practice; ii) the advantages of informal features in a mentoring system and iii) how an institute-wide mentoring system needed to have a balance of formal and informal features.

6.5.3.1 How a formal mentoring system supports teaching practice

In relation to the first consideration identified by the teachers as an important aspect of an institution establishing a formal mentoring system, Table 6.11 summarises their perceptions of how a formal system would support teaching and learning practices of academic teaching staff.

Table 6.11: How a Formal Organisational Mentoring System Supports Teaching Practice

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Steady mechanism of support for new teachers	14	**100%**
Part of induction process	10	**71%**
Reduces workload issues: Allocation of hours	8	**57%**
Allocates specific support for teaching practice	6	**43%**
Strengthens commitment to professional development of teaching practice	3	**21%**
Process and outcomes are regularly evaluated	2	**14%**
Engenders cross-faculty perspectives	1	**7%**
Support mechanism for the teacher new to the institution	1	**7%**

The most important response to question three involved the provision of support for the new teacher as a result of the institution implementing a formal mentoring system. All fourteen teachers believed that a formal system was essential to supporting the ongoing professional development of the new teacher. One of the teachers indicated that they didn"t think a mentoring system should be "*compulsory*" but did "*recommend a formal system for new tutors*".

In connection with the comments identifying a formal mentoring system as an important mechanism for supporting new teachers, the second highest category was referred to by ten of the teachers who talked specifically about formal mentoring being an integral part of the institution"s induction process: *"If you are*

new into an organisation, you have to have someone who is set to help you with this induction process specifically, I think this would make a difference". One of these teachers further described their thinking regarding this category: *"It should be part of the PINZ* (probation and induction of new staff) *process for academic staff, so that all new teachers are assimilated into the mentoring model and treat it as normal practice"*.

The third most important response from eight of the teachers involved the issue of workload if mentoring was not "*formally recognised*" as a support mechanism for teaching staff. For example, eight teachers believed that the challenge of "*workload overload*" would be minimised if the institution formally recognised the benefits of teachers engaging in mentoring as a professional development activity. The challenge of workload facing staff who were prepared to get involved with a mentoring programme was seen as being circumvented to some degree by a mentoring system that formally recognised mentoring as a legitimate professional development activity. One teacher stated that they believed a mentoring system needed to have some informal features integrated into it but also believed that a formal element would ensure that "*hours would be allocated to do the mentoring and have time to do it adequately*". The acknowledgement of mentoring as a legitimate activity in the teacher"s timetable was emphasised by two of the teachers, one of them stating: *"Mentoring is a treat. I have plenty to do already so it would be easy not to do it if it wasn"t recognised by my manager"*.

The fourth category commented on by six of the teachers involved the allocation of specific support for a teacher"s teaching professional development. For example, two of the teachers identified that although they had "*a lot of people I can talk to generally*", they saw the advantage of "*having a mentor who can specifically help me with my practice*". Establishing a formal system for mentoring in the institution was perceived as providing this focused professional development support. One of the teachers added a more general view: "*There are lots of things going on in our lives so it would be good to have someone to talk to*".

The fifth category mentioned by three of the teachers indicated that a degree of formality in a mentoring system would strengthen the teachers" commitment to their professional development in teaching and learning. One teacher perceived

that formalizing mentoring and establishing it as an integral professional development activity for teachers would also increase a teacher"s commitment to the mentoring partnership itself.

Regular evaluation of the mentoring process and outcomes of this comprised the sixth category. This aspect was commented on by two teachers who indicated that they believed a level of formality would ensure that evaluation of the mentoring quality and subsequent outcomes in relation to changes of improvements in a teacher"s practice occurred. One of the teachers explained this as: *"Formalising the mentoring ties it down and also means its impact on teachers will be evaluated. What is the point if we don"t know whether mentoring works?"*

The remaining two categories were mentioned by one of the teachers. They perceived the opportunity for engendering cross-faculty perspectives on teaching and learning was a key advantage of a formal system being in place in the institution: *"I think it is useful to have mentoring as a relationship created with another faculty as it gives a different perspective on teaching"*.

The same teacher also talked about how they believed a formal system would ensure that as well as new teachers being supported in their practice, teachers who were new to the institution would also receive support from having to engage in a mentoring programme: "*Highly recommended for new tutors to the institution, not just new teachers*". They indicated that teachers at different stages in their teaching career could benefit from mentoring and that a formal system would ensure they received any identified support they needed.

An interesting comment made by one teacher indicated that not all teachers who required support in their teaching practice would necessarily view formal mentoring as necessary. They compared the concept of formal mentoring support to other teacher support processes that already existed in the institution: *"I suspect that it will be like peer evaluations, where those who need to evaluate their teaching treat it as a nuisance and those who are aware of its value will embrace it. I don"t think you will ever get wholehearted support from all academic staff"*.

6.5.3.2 Advantages of integrating informal features in an institution's mentoring system

The need for an institution"s mentoring system to incorporate informal features as well as formal was also raised as an important consideration by the teachers in response to question three in the interview schedule. Interestingly, although several of the teachers had commented extensively on the advantages of integrating formal features in an organisational mentoring system and how this would support teaching practice, some of the same teachers also mentioned reasons why a system should incorporate informal features as well. The frequency of comment in Table 6.12 depicts this overlap of feedback and summarises the teachers" perceptions of why a mentoring system should have informal features integrated within it.

Table 6.12:Reasons for Integrating Informal Features in an Institution's Mentoring System

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=14 % of sample
Creates resistance if people are made to do it	9	**64%**
Creates a more equitable relationship between mentor and mentee	7	**50%**
Avoids a management „top-down" mentality	5	**35%**
Isn"t tied up in other institutional accountability processes	3	**21%**
Formal support of teaching practice isn"t required: Mentors become points of contact when needed	2	**14%**

The most important response from nine of the teachers involved the issue of staff resistance to engaging in mentoring "*if they were made to*" do so. Mentoring was seen as having the potential to be "*inhibitive to a teacher"s development*" if it was a compulsory activity. As one of these teachers stated, "*The organisation should recognise that teachers have the ability to identify when they need assistance and how they access this*". One teacher described their feelings about how important an informal system would be for "*teacher buy-in*" to occur: *"You can"t avoid having it informal. For mentoring to work you must make it voluntary. I would not want a mentor or mentee who was „forced" into doing this"*.

Two other teachers also expressed what they believed the outcome would be if participation in a mentoring programme was compulsory for staff. These teachers emphasised that the outcome would be a great deal of resistance and possibly the wrong teachers being selected as mentors, because they hadn‟t volunteered for this role: *“I wouldn‟t make it compulsory. You would get resistance, especially by the older staff members who don‟t believe they need mentoring or would want to be a mentor”*.

The second highest category mentioned by seven of the teachers indicated a perception that an informal system would create more equity in the mentoring relationship. The theme of power balance and lack of hierarchy in the partnership had previously been mentioned in the teachers‟ responses to question two. For example, one of the teachers suggested that the mentor and mentee should decide the level of formality between them, thus “*reducing any hierarchy or power imbalance between the mentee and mentor*”.

The third most frequently commented category referred to how an informal system would help avoid management control of the process and level of choice available to the mentoring teachers. One of the five teachers who mentioned this issue asked the question, “*How can you make a formal mentoring system without it feeling top-down*?” Another more experienced teacher was clear in her belief that the institution did not need to “*impose*” a formal mentoring system on staff: *“I also think as professional teachers we are capable of setting our own goals for professional development, deviating from these if that suits our agreed purpose, while taking professional responsibility for the relationship and the content”*.

The fourth most frequently mentioned comment was advocated by three teachers who, although indicating that they supported having a more informal mentoring system in place, believed that a level of accountability was necessary “*so that the mentoring process isn‟t fluffy*”. However, they added that if mentoring was always tied up in management accountability, it would create a less equitable process and “*marginalise*” the purpose of mentoring: *“I would not like a mentoring scheme to become almost „compulsorised‟. This type of practice can tend to lose sight of the objective of mentoring and merely become a tick-box exercise”*.

The final category mentioned by two of the teachers involved the issue of whether mentoring was actually required by the teacher and that if not, the mentoring system should acknowledge this. These teachers advocated that mentors should be "*points of contact when needed*" rather than making mentoring obligatory. They admitted that they viewed this optional approach as being applied to the more experienced teacher.

6.5.3.3 A balance of formal and informal features of an organisational mentoring system

The third consideration identified in the teachers‟ response to question three of the interview schedule focused on how an institute-wide mentoring system needed to have a balance of formal and informal features. Two teachers referred to this concept as a "*blended*" approach and a "*semi-formal system*" to provide institute-wide mentoring support. There was an audible opinion across the group of fourteen teachers that a mentoring model should be formalised by the organisation, but balanced with an informal approach to the partnership process. As one teacher commented, *"People can access mentoring and there‟s a formal system set up to help them do this but it is voluntary"*.

A formal, structured programme that was supported by the managers was perceived as ensuring that mentoring happened. However, the teachers also indicated that as the teacher became more experienced in their teaching practice, participation in mentoring should be voluntary, where teachers had the choice as to how their partnership proceeded. Another comment from one teacher highlighted this blended model approach again: *"A semi-formal system would be good, where a new staff member is assigned a mentor, then once they are more established in the institution, they identify and choose their own mentor. I think as a more experienced teacher, it is important that I can pick my own mentor. You could have already developed a relationship with someone on campus that can then be acknowledged and formalised"*.

6.6 Summary of Stage Two Data Collection, Cycle Three: Focus Group Meetings with Academic Teachers

In summary, there was a collective agreement from fourteen of the academic teachers who completed the mentoring training questionnaire that training for

mentors and mentees was a critical component of a mentoring programme. Also, training was seen as needing to be provided for teachers before they engaged in a mentoring partnership. The key benefits of mentoring training focused on clarification of roles, the opportunity to consider potential challenges and strategies for dealing with these and realising the usefulness of the mentee in particular identifying their professional development goals which the mentoring could support them in achieving.

Key impressions of mentoring as identified by the teachers in the first three focus group meetings included the expectation that the mentee needed to establish goals for their development; that mentor and mentee roles needed to be clarified in the partnership and that the structure and focus of the mentoring meetings should be established early in the partnership. All of these elements were perceived as contributing to the building of trust and rapport in the mentoring relationship. Trust, maintaining confidentiality and mutual respect were highlighted as important influences on the relationship and consequent quality of the mentoring meeting interactions. A number of other influences were mentioned, such as willingness of the mentoring participants to share their experiences and expertise and commonalities in the mentoring teachers" disciplines.

There were varying opinions across the academic teacher group regarding how formal the mentoring partnership should be in terms of structure and process. Several teachers advocated a formal structure, citing reasons such as "*critical support mechanism for the new teacher*" and "*stronger commitment to the partnership*". Advantages of an informal structure were related to the teachers believing that there should be choice in the way a partnership functioned as well as the teacher having the autonomy to decide whether they needed mentoring support for their teaching.

Two specific mentoring models were mentioned, including the expert-novice model and the peer mentoring model. The expert-novice model was perceived as benefitting the new teacher whilst the peer mentoring approach was described as useful for the more experienced teacher or a natural transition within the mentoring partnership. The teachers agreed that a formal organisational mentoring model supported the new teacher and viewed this structure as an integral part of the

induction process. The teachers also highlighted how a formal programme model within the organisation provides a support mechanism for the teacher new to the institution.

The next section presents the findings from Cycle Four of this action research study, which comprised two further focus group meetings and individual summative interviews with the eighteen academic teachers at the principal institution.

CYCLE FOUR

Stage one data collection:

Focus group meetings with academic teachers

Cycle Four of this action research study involved the eighteen academic teachers in two further stages of data collection. The first mechanism for gathering data from the teachers comprised the final two of five focus group meetings which were conducted in the ninth month of the one year mentoring programme, during April and May 2008 respectively. The second mechanism involved the academic teachers completing an individual summative interview with the researcher.

The first section of Cycle Four presents the findings from the final two focus group meetings with the academic teachers. The fourth focus group was conducted as a mentee-only meeting (Appendix I, refer p. 440), whilst the fifth focus group was a mentor-only meeting (Appendix J, refer p. 441). The same interview schedule was used for the two meetings, made up of four questions related to specific topics for the data collection. These included:

i) Challenges in the mentoring partnership;
ii) Opportunity for mentoring group meetings;
iii) The concept of mentor-mentee matching;
iv) Future engagement in a mentoring programme.

6.7 Focus Group Four: Mentee-only

Seven teachers who had assumed a mentee role in the mentoring dyad partnerships attended the fourth focus group which was a mentee-only meeting. The following section presents the data from the mentee-only focus group meeting.

6.7.1 Question One: Challenges to Mentoring

In response to question one in the interview schedule, asking the teachers what challenges they had experienced during the mentoring programme, the seven mentee teachers identified a range of factors that they perceived had inhibited or encroached on the mentoring process and therefore impacted on their mentoring partnership experience. Table 6.13 summarises the range of challenges perceived by the seven mentee teachers.

Table 6.13: Perceived Challenges to Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=7 % of sample
Time constraints	6	**85%**
Job commonalities	4	**57%**
Meeting spaces	3	**43%**
Job Structure	2	**28%**
Scheduling meetings	2	**28%**
Institutional demands	1	**14%**

The most important response involved the issue of time constraints as having the largest impact on the teachers‟ mentoring experience. Six of the teachers talked about how constraints on their time had inhibited opportunities for regular meetings and the quality of the mentoring interaction. Four of the teachers voiced frustration at how much this lack of time impeded their commitment to the mentoring partnership and associated activities. They described the complexity of time availability as "*a real problem*" and "*lack of mutual time availability*". One teacher described how finding mutual time to meet was a constant challenge: "*We were always playing email ping-pong to find mutual time*".

Interestingly, an additional comment made by one of the six teachers was counter to the claims that time constraints were an issue. This teacher‟s view indicated that they believed the advantages a teacher could gain from mentoring superseded the challenges often facing a partnership: *"Time may actually be insignificant. The*

benefits of the relationship building and support of teaching and learning outweighs this logistic".

The second most frequently mentioned challenge referred to the issue of job commonalities. For example, four mentee teachers perceived too many commonalities between the mentor and the mentee as having the potential to negatively influence the conversations in the mentoring meetings: *"Too many commonalities in the job can be counter-productive in the meetings. Assumptions can be made if you have too much in common, especially if the partnership is long-term"*.

One of the four teachers attributed the issue of commonalities to whether the mentor and mentee were from the same faculty or department and how this could impinge on the quality of the mentoring relationship: "*It depends on whether you are from the same department. This could determine whether you feel able to discuss things out in the open*".

The next category identified that lack of meeting spaces was a key challenge for three of the teachers. "*Appropriate areas and space to meet*" were perceived as impacting on the ability for the partnerships to regularly meet and also what occurred within the meetings: "*You had to watch you didn"t limit the opportunity to bring something up by where you chose to meet*." One teacher explained how mentoring would sometimes occur spontaneously or, as they described it, "by chance". This teacher indicated that there were advantages and disadvantages in this situation: *"I happened to be in the staffroom when the mentor was also. Sometimes general topics ended up being talked about in transition wherever you happened to be"*.

The fourth highest category was mentioned by two of the teachers as they referred to how the challenge of their job structure influenced the opportunities for the partnership to meet. This challenge was described by the teachers as job demands taking them off campus and having to fit the mentoring meetings in between teaching timetables: "*Obviously we had to work our meeting times in between teaching*". One of the two teachers summed up their feelings about this particular challenge: *"Getting together is the challenge for us – we run in 55 different directions."*

The fifth category was commented on by two other teachers, mainly in response to the previous challenge of „job structure". These teachers referred to how they had struggled with scheduling their meetings at a time that suited both of them, resulting in their mentoring meetings often occurring at the end of the day. They emphasised how this schedule was "*exhausting*" because of the time of day the meetings had to happen. One teacher described this challenge as "*Having to schedule meetings at the end of the day was definitely counter-productive for our partnership*".

The final category was commented on by one of the seven mentee teachers. This teacher indicated that the demands on their time and the expectations of their workload were increasing: "*I have had increasing demands on my job from the organisation*". Their comment appeared to consolidate the feelings of the other mentee teachers in the meeting: *"It is not easy to make it a priority because it is not on your job list therefore not recognised as part of your job"*.

In addition to the identification of different challenges that the teachers had faced in their mentoring experience, other ideas were suggested regarding ways to circumvent these challenges. For example, one teacher talked about the need for "*transparency in the mentoring relationship*", where the purpose and roles of mentoring were agreed to by both participants. Another teacher believed that "*perseverance*" was critical, describing this as "*you have to own the process*".

6.7.2 Question Two: Group Support for the Mentee

In response to question two in the meeting interview schedule, when asked whether they thought it would be useful for the mentees to meet as a group during the period of a mentoring programme, as an additional support mechanism whilst they engaged in dyad partnerships, the seven mentee teachers indicated support for this concept. In their responses, the teachers commented on how they believed this type of support could be provided within the institution"s mentoring programme. Table 6.14 (refer p. 214) summarises the teachers" perceptions of how the mentee could be supported in their mentoring role.

Table 6.14: Group Support for the Mentee

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=7 % of sample
Combined mentor and mentee Community of Practice meetings	7	**100%**
Centrally coordinated programme	5	**71%**
Separate (mentor and mentee) meetings	2	**28%**

The most important response to question two indicated that all of the seven mentee teachers were in favour of having the opportunity to meet together as a group during a mentoring programme. Two of the teachers referred to this concept as a „Community of Practice", a term that was consequently adopted by the remainder of the group during the meeting. One teacher referred to how they had appreciated the focus group meetings as providing them with a chance to "*get together*" with the other participants and share experiences and any issues.

The concept of Community of Practice meetings for mentees was described by the seven teachers in conjunction with the concept of the meetings being combined, that is, both mentees and mentors participating. A variety of reasons for supporting this idea was offered by the teachers. For example, two believed that the group meeting concept would "*create a common bond*" and "*enhance networking opportunities*", whilst another teacher stated that they saw the benefit of the meetings as "*sharing a common goal*" with people in engaging in mentoring. One of the teachers commented that if the group meetings were to be an aspect of a mentoring programme, "*people should come prepared to share at the meetings. I couldn"t believe people didn"t prepare themselves for the last focus group meeting*". They also mentioned that the mentee should have the choice to attend the group meetings, adding "*I would definitely come to them though*".

Some caution was expressed by two teachers who suggested that there was the potential for the group discussion to change its focus from one of mutual support. Their comments also indicated that confidentiality was an important issue: *"I would be a little cautious. It could turn out as people comparing their experiences and partnership and get to good or bad comparisons".*

The second category identified by five of the mentee teachers indicated that additional support for teachers engaging in a mentoring programme would be provided if the programme was managed by a central person or "*central base*". These teachers emphasised that a central coordinator managing the communities of practice meetings was essential if the group meetings were going to work and be effective as supporting the mentoring participants. One teacher verbalised this thinking: *"The group meetings for mentees is a good idea but they would require a „chairperson" who organises the meetings, someone to steer this process. They need a programme plan developed with an initial point for the conversation"*.

The final category indicated that two of the teachers believed separate meetings for mentees and mentors would be more effective and provide a better support mechanism for the mentoring partners. Of particular concern if the meetings were combined was that people would not feel as free to openly talk about their respective partner or the partnership experience itself: *"I would be cautious if the group meetings were combined. When people talk about their mentors, I feel I would have to be careful about what I say"*.

6.7.3 Question Three: Factors that Influence Successful Mentor-Mentee Matching

In response to question three in the interview schedule, when asked what they thought about the concept of matching the mentor and mentee for the mentoring partnership, there was a range of responses from the seven mentee teachers. Their comments focused predominantly on what they believed were factors that contributed to a successful mentor-mentee match. Table 6.15 depicts the range of comments from the teachers regarding key factors that could influence a successful mentor-mentee matching process.

Table 6.15: Factors that Influence Successful Mentor-Mentee Matching

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=7 % of sample
Pool of mentors to choose from: Mentee choice	6	**85%**
Personalities	3	**43%**
Cultural considerations	2	**28%**
Different department/faculty	1	**14%**

The highest number of responses in relation to the factors that could influence a successful mentor-mentee match involved the importance of mentee choice and having the option of selecting their mentor from a "*pool of mentors*". Six of the seven mentee teachers suggested that a pool of mentors being available for the mentee to choose from would be a "*really good system*". In addition to this concept of a mentor pool, four of the six teachers who commented on this emphasised that the mentee should have a choice as to whom they selected from the pool, suggesting that one possible approach could be "*where the mentee puts down their choice of say, four mentors, then they are matched*". One mentee went further to suggest that two pools of mentors to draw from would be useful. However, as another teacher pointed out, this process would be "*difficult for new staff as they don"t know who to approach*". The theme of mentee choice was further described by a teacher as: "*We should have some choice. We"re asked to be independent in everything else here*".

The second highest category was mentioned by three of the seven mentee teachers as they referred to the influence of personalities and how these would "*inevitably impact*" on the matching process. One of the teachers felt that the success of their partnership matching had been "*more about different personalities than about different roles*". The third most frequently mentioned category focused on the issue of cultural considerations. Two teachers questioned whether the matching process had to be considered from a cultural perspective: *"Does matching sometimes have to be cultural? Maybe it"s about whether the person saw the cultural issues as important to them"*.

The final category was commented on by one of the teachers, who indicated that the success of the mentoring partnership would be influenced by the mentor and mentee coming from different departments or faculties: *"I think it is useful to have the partnership as a relationship created with another faculty, as it gives a different perspective on things. I don"t want my mentor to be someone I have daily contact with"*. An additional comment made by one teacher indicated their concern about potential issues later on in the mentoring partnership, arising from the matching of the mentor and mentee: *"If the partnership is not working because the match didn"t work well, there needs to be a mechanism to end it, but it doesn"t stop there. You need to find someone else"*.

6.7.4 Question Four: Future Participation in Mentoring

Given that the principal institution did not have a campus-wide mentoring programme functioning at the time of this study, the researcher was interested in finding out whether the academic teachers would be interested in participating as a mentor or a mentee in the future, if a formal mentoring programme was established; especially as they had now experienced mentoring for nine months of a one year programme.

In response to question four in the meeting interview schedule, in relation to future engagement in a mentoring programme, all seven mentee teachers agreed that they would be interested. They provided reasons for this decision as well as identifying certain criteria that they would want to see in place within a mentoring programme. Table 6.16 summarises the teachers" perspectives.

Table 6.16: Reasons for Participating in a Future Mentoring Programme

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=7 % of sample
Supports improved teaching practice	6	**85%**
Getting an objective point of view	3	**43%**
Involvement in mentoring not compulsory	2	**28%**
Mentee choice of mentor selection	1	**14%**

The highest category of response to question four in the interview schedule highlighted the perception from six of the seven teachers that they would engage in mentoring in the future because they had found mentoring to be very supportive of their teaching practice and believed they had made improvements in their teaching as a result. One of the teachers explained this: "*It's about „I want to deliver better to students",so that they deliver better to their future clients. Mentoring has helped me deliver better, so I would use it again*". Another teacher in this category commented on how the teacher"s self motivation was an integral influence on whether they used the opportunity of mentoring to support their practice: *"Yes, I would get involved in mentoring again, but you've got to want to learn formally about yourself, be prepared to think about new ideas, be open, be prepared to share some of your strategies"*.

The second most frequently mentioned category was commented on by three of the seven teachers. They perceived their mentoring experience as having provided them with an objective "*sounding board*" and "*expert*", which gave them an unbiased viewpoint in teaching and learning issues. One of the teachers stated: *"The mentor talked to me and gave me advice on my programme. Getting an objective point of view and having someone telling me my ideas would work was great"*.

The third category focused on the perspectives of two teachers who stated that they would be interested in mentoring again but this would be dependent on whether they had the choice to opt in or not. In addition to believing that a programme should be available for everyone in the institution, they also questioned how formal would a mentoring programme have to be, in relation to the issue of choice: "*The simple answer is yes, but it should be extended to everyone and it shouldn"t be compulsory. How formal would it have to be*? *Choice is important here*".

The final category was mentioned by one of the teachers as they emphasised how they would be interested in participating in mentoring again but would prefer to be able to select their own mentor (the eighteen academic teachers had originally been matched by the researcher for the purposes of the investigation): *"Yes, I would be interested but through a different selection process. I"d prefer to choose my mentor. You might head towards a senior person in the same faculty. I"d want that choice"*.

6.8 Focus Group Five: Mentor-only

Six of the teachers who had taken the role of mentor in the partnerships attended the fifth focus group which was a mentor-only meeting. As explained at the beginning of the section presenting the findings from the fourth focus group meeting which comprised the mentee teachers only (refer p. 211), the same interview schedule used in the mentee-only meeting was applied in the mentor-only meeting. The schedule was made up of four questions related to specific topics for the data collection, including:

v) Challenges in the mentoring partnership;
vi) Opportunity for mentoring group meetings;

vii) The concept of mentor-mentee matching;

viii) Future engagement in a mentoring programme.

6.8.1 Question One: Challenges to Mentoring

In response to question one in the interview schedule, asking the teachers what challenges they had experienced during the mentoring programme, the six mentor teachers identified a range of factors that they perceived had inhibited or encroached on the mentoring process and therefore impacted on their mentoring partnership experience. Table 6.17 summarises the range of challenges perceived by the six teachers.

Table 6.17: Perceived Challenges to Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=6 % of sample
Expectations of the mentor	5	**83%**
Time constraints	4	**66%**
Lack of management support and recognition	3	**50**
Meeting spaces	2	**33%**

The most important response from the six mentors in response to question one regarding any challenges they had experienced during the mentoring programme involved the issue of expectations of the mentor, from the mentee and/or from the institution. Five of the teachers commented that some expectations of their mentor role could be "*quite unrealistic*" and therefore present challenges for the quality of the mentoring partnership. Their feedback indicated that they felt a responsibility for providing effective mentoring, but how the mentor role was perceived by the mentee impacted on how much they could realistically offer the mentee: "*They have to accept the mentor isn"t the be-all-and-end-all. The mentor won"t necessarily have all the answers*".

The second highest category involved the challenge of time. The issue of time constraints was perceived by four of the teachers as having a significant impact on their mentoring experience and the level of commitment they could therefore give to the mentoring partnership. This issue was also identified as a key challenge by the mentee teachers, identified in the fourth focus group meeting (refer p. 211). The four mentor teachers commented particularly on the constraints associated with their time availability to meet regularly with the mentee, one teacher stating,

"*Finding time to reconnect has been difficult. I am really busy and have been struggling to find times when we can meet when we are both free*".

One teacher was adamant that they "*couldn"t be a mentor again because of time constraints. It just wouldn"t be realistic*", whilst another teacher questioned whether mentoring could be effective if both participants were tired or were constantly trying to "*fit it in*": *"We could only meet at the end of the day and both would be zoned out, difficult to concentrate. Amazing how fazed out you felt, but this was the only time convenient for both of us. Good to wind down, but not being productive as mentoring"*.

The third most frequently mentioned category identified by four teachers as a significant challenge for them was the lack of management support and recognition of their mentoring work. One of the teachers emphasised how they felt that higher level support in the institution was particularly important for them as a mentor: *"My timetable isn"t flexible so I really need my manager on board giving their support for the mentoring, therefore they buy into the programme"*. A more positive interpretation was offered by one of these four teachers regarding how the support of management could contribute to effective mentoring experiences and outcomes, rather than being viewed only as an inhibitor and a challenge: *"I think as long as you opted in and mentoring was acknowledged in your timetable and your manager allocated legitimate hours to it, it would be invaluable"*.

The fourth category was reflective of the findings from the mentees" feedback in the fourth focus group meeting regarding the issue of "*a lack of appropriate meetings spaces*" for the mentoring partnership monthly meetings (refer p. 211). Two of the mentor teachers mentioned this as a challenge for their partnerships, explaining how they had found the institution had very few spaces where the mentoring could occur, especially in relation to physical comfort, privacy which they indicated also impinged on the issue of confidentiality.

6.8.2 Question Two: Group Support for the Mentor

In response to question two in the meeting interview schedule regarding whether the mentor teachers thought it would be useful for mentors to meet as a group during a mentoring programme, the six teachers all agreed that this concept of additional support for the mentor would be beneficial. Their responses indicated

that mentors coming together periodically during the period of a mentoring programme would provide an important source of support for them. Additionally, the six mentor teachers talked about what they perceived would be the benefits of regular mentor-group meetings. Table 6.18 summarises the teachers" perceptions of the benefits that could be gained from group meetings and how the meetings would support mentors engaging in an institution"s mentoring programme.

Table 6.18: Group Support for the Mentor

Comment Category	**Frequency of Comment**	**n=6 % of sample**
Opportunity to share best practice and mentoring experience	6	**100%**
Opportunity to meet with people in the same role	4	**66%**
Enhances collegiality	3	**50%**

The highest number of comments highlighted the perceptions of the whole group, which indicated that a key benefit of the group meetings would be the provision of opportunities to "*share best practice and share our mentoring experience*". Interestingly, two of the teachers suggested that combined mentor-mentee meetings would be their preference, stating that this would mean "*the whole group can come together and share their experiences*", whilst the remaining four teachers indicated that separate meetings for the mentors and mentees would be more beneficial. These teachers felt that they would "*share more openly*" if they were in a mentor-only group.

The second highest category was mentioned by four of the teachers. Their feedback indicated that they perceived the group support concept as an "*opportunity to meet with people in the same role*". One of the four teachers clarified how they had appreciated the opportunities to meet together in the focus group meetings but would prefer to meet just with mentors if this structure was to be part of a future mentoring programme in the institution. They added: "*It's a chance to compare notes and talk with others who are having similar experiences because they are in the same role as me*".

The final category commented on by two of the six teachers referred to how they believed the group meetings for mentors would enhance collegiality across the

campus, pointing out how the mentors in the current research study were representative of different faculties in the institution and that they did not all know each other before the study. One of the teachers described their perception of increased collegiality as "*a widespread organisational socialising process with colleagues*".

6.8.3 Question Three: Factors that Influence Successful Mentor-Mentee Matching

When asked what they thought about the concept of matching the mentor and mentee for the mentoring partnership, in response to question three in the interview schedule, the six mentor teachers all indicated that they believed the matching process was an important component of a mentoring programme. Their feedback also identified four key factors that they perceived as determinants of effective mentor-mentee matching and how the matching process could influence the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership. Table 6.19 summarises the teachers" perceptions of the key determinants that would influence a successful mentor-mentee match.

Table 6.19: Factors that Influence Successful Mentor-Mentee Matching

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=6 % of sample
Different discipline	6	**100%**
Mentee choice	4	**66%**
Commonalities	2	**33%**
Personalities	1	**16%**

The most important category in response to question three indicated that all six of the mentor teachers believed that a mentor-mentee match which involved two separate disciplines was a significant influencing factor on the success of the match and therefore the mentoring partnership relationship. Two of the teachers commented that a match of the same disciplines would likely end up being a distraction, one of them observing: "*We had similar interests and these dominated the discussions rather than explore teaching issues*". Another teacher provided an additional description of the perception that different disciplines would be more beneficial: *"It is helpful to have the mentor and mentee from different disciplines.*

The teaching experiences are similar but you don"t get caught up in similar students" problems".

From a different perspective, one of the six teachers questioned whether quality teaching and learning discussion could occur if the mentor and mentee were too diverse, that is, from extremely different discipline backgrounds.

The second most frequently mentioned category focused on the importance of the mentee having a choice in the selection of their mentor. Four of the mentor teachers questioned who should manage the matching process and therefore how much choice would be available to the mentee or mentor. One teacher questioned whether there had to be a controlled matching process at all: "*It is very difficult for someone else to mix and match the partners. "Actually, does there need to be a formal process?*" whilst two of the teachers were vocal in their belief that the mentee should have the choice in selecting their mentor. As one of them stated, *"The mentee should be given the choice as to the gender, age or cultural background of the mentor. It seems we should not assume that people prefer to work with the same gender, age, etcetera".*

The third highest category was commented on by two teachers who indicated that the degree of commonality between the mentee and mentor was an important consideration in the matching process. One of the teachers talked about "*looking for synergy*" and commented that they would prefer to be matched with someone whom they had things in common with and who had similar ways of thinking. The other teacher conveyed a similar perspective, emphasising how they believed their mentoring partnership had been successful because they shared a number of similar interests and teaching experiences. This teacher indicated that commonalities at a personal and professional level influenced the ensuing mentoring relationship they had in the mentoring programme study.

The final category identified by one teacher referred to the influence of personalities as impacting on the process of mentor-mentee matching. The teacher commented on how they felt that the success of their partnership matching was "*more about different personalities working than about different roles or disciplines*". From another perspective, they added: *"How would it be if you didn"t like the person? If we didn"t get on, it wouldn"t work. Matching is critical here".*

The findings from question three in the interview schedule indicated that the six mentor teachers perceived the process of mentor-mentee matching as an important aspect of a mentoring programme. However, two comments from two of the teachers communicated an additional perspective that a "*perfect match*" could not be expected, either by the mentee or the mentor. As one teacher commented, *"There is never going to be a perfect fit. We have to understand that personalities influence and accept that the mentee can"tkeep choosing a mentor until they fit the right mold"*. The second teacher followed this statement with: *"To get the best results from mentoring, I suspect that matching would improve the chances of successful relationships. However, it would mean looking for common attributes between the mentors and mentees. You can"t expect this to always be easy"*.

6.8.4 Question Four: Future Participation in Mentoring

As explained in the findings for the mentee-only focus group meeting regarding future participation in mentoring (refer p. 217), the six mentor teachers were also asked if they would be interested in participating in a future mentoring programme, given their mentoring experiences over the past nine months of the research study.

In response to question four regarding the teachers" interest in future engagement in a mentoring programme, all six mentor teachers agreed that they would be interested. Table 6.20 summarises the main reasons identified by the teachers for their interest in engaging in a mentoring programme in the future.

Table 6.20: Reasons for Participating in a Future Mentoring Programme

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=6 % of sample
Share best practice	5	**83%**
Opportunity to help others	3	**50%**
Potential to be a mentee	2	**33%**

The highest category of comment indicated that five of the teachers believed they would participate in a future mentoring programme within the institution as they valued the opportunity to share best practice through mentoring with other teachers. One of the teachers explained that this opportunity would definitely inspire him to participate again as a mentor, however added a cautionary comment regarding the ongoing challenge of time constraints and workload issues: "*Yes I*

would. I am a little concerned that finding a regular timeslot which does not get swallowed up by meetings is an issue".

The second most important category involved the perception that mentoring provided the opportunity for teachers to help other teachers via the mentoring process. One teacher referred specifically to wanting to help new teachers in their professional development. The second teacher mentioned how they saw the main purpose of mentoring as helping other teachers through sharing their own experiences and being able to offer advice and guidance: *"Mentoring serves a purpose - you can share and compare. This serves a purpose – sharing notes, offering advice, helping others, helping each other"*.

The final category commented on by two teachers indicated that if they were to participate in a future mentoring programme, they would appreciate the opportunity to receive mentoring support for themselves if they needed it, rather than only ever being involved in a mentoring programme as a mentor. One of them questioned, "*Do really successful mentors have the ability and opportunity to unload? Be mentored? This is important*". The second teacher reiterated this perspective: *"Even though we are mentors and experienced teachers, we may want to be mentored ourselves further down the track. It could end up having a role reversal in the partnership"*.

An additional comment made by one of the mentor teachers emphasised the importance of having clear criteria in place for the identification of the mentor. They agreed that they would consider participating in mentoring again but stated that their decision would be partly based on integration of the criteria for mentor identification in a mentoring programme: *"Yes, I would consider being a mentor again, however the institution needs to determine who the good mentor is and define what the purpose of that role is if the mentoring is going to work"*.

6.9 Summary of Stage One Data Collection, Cycle Four: Focus Group Meetings with Academic Teachers

The fourth mentee-only and fifth mentor-only focus group meetings produced a range of feedback from the academic teachers. Potential challenges to the mentoring partnership that were commonly identified by both the mentee and mentor teachers included time constraints and lack of suitable meeting spaces for

the mentoring meetings. Interestingly, the greatest potential challenge mentioned by the mentor teachers was the expectations of the mentor by the mentee and/or by the organisation. One teacher expressed this issue as "*They have to accept the mentor isn"t the be-all-and-end-all*".

Both the mentees and the mentors agreed that a mentoring programme provided an additional benefit for meeting together as a group to share common issues and best practice. A number of the teachers referred to this group meeting as a community of practice, indicating that this concept would be a definite advantage if incorporated in a mentoring programme. The teachers also believed that a central coordinator managing this process would be ideal.

The availability of a mentor pool and the autonomy of the mentee to choose their mentor were identified as key influences on the success of a mentoring partnership match. Other demographic-related influences were also mentioned, such as the need for the mentor and mentee to be from different disciplines and having some commonalities in their teaching experiences and/or personal lives. There was consensus feedback from the mentees and the mentors that participating in a mentoring programme in the future would enhance and support improved teaching practice. Concurrent with this perception was the belief that involvement in a mentoring programme should be voluntary.

CYCLE FOUR

Stage two data collection:

Individual summative interviews with academic teachers

The second stage of data collection in Cycle Four involved the eighteen academic teachers completing an individual summative interview with the researcher during the months of August to November, 2008.

6.10 Individual Summative Interviews

Individual summative interviews with the academic teachers in the principal institution comprised the second data collection method in Cycle Four of this action research study. The interviews concluded the data collection phase of the investigation.

The following section presents the findings from the face-to-face interviews (Appendix E, refer p. 436) conducted with the academic teachers at the conclusion of their one year mentoring partnerships. Sixteen of the eighteen teachers completed the interview with the researcher, due to two of the mentee teachers having left the principal institution for specific reasons just prior to the interview process. The interview schedule included nine open-ended questions aimed at gathering the academic teachers‟ perceptions of their mentoring experience over the one year period.

The summative interviews served to consolidate the findings from the five focus group meetings that the teachers had engaged in to discover any new data additional to the focus group findings. Reflective of action research methodology, several interview questions were formulated in response to the findings from the previous data collection cycles, including the first part of Cycle Four which involved the mentor-only and mentee-only focus group meetings.

6.10.1 Question One: Intended Purpose for the Mentoring

In response to question one in the interview schedule when the teachers were asked what purpose they had identified for the mentoring, a range of feedback was provided. Across the group of sixteen teachers, their use of the mentoring support over the one year programme, via the dyad partnerships, focused on both professional teaching development and personal development areas. Also, there was an apparent difference between the mentee teachers‟ and the mentor teachers‟ responses in relation to their intended purpose for the mentoring.

6.10.1.1 Intended purpose for the mentoring: The mentees' responses

Table 6.21 (refer p. 228) summarises the eight mentee teachers‟ intended purpose for the support provided by the mentoring partnerships. Table 6.21 also indicates whether the purpose was for professional or personal development support.

Table 6.21: The Mentee's Intended Purpose for the Mentoring

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
General teaching and learning support	Professional	5	**62%**
Getting new ideas for teaching	Professional	2	**25%**
Assisted with career decisions	Professional	1	**12%**
Support for change in programme design	Professional	1	**12%**
Managing a „sounding board" role	Personal	1	**12%**
Achieving a research output	Professional	1	**12%**
Improving internal faculty communication	Personal	1	**12%**

The highest category of comments in response to question one in the interview schedule identified "*general support of teaching and learning practice*" as the purpose for the mentoring. Five of the mentee teachers referred to this, explaining how they believed that "*the focus on teaching and learning would make the meetings purposeful*". One of these teachers added how her key aim for the mentoring support had been to "*get general support for my teaching and confirmation of what I am doing*". Another of the teachers had decided that the mentoring could support them in improving their teaching delivery. They explained this purpose as "*having opportunities to get better at delivery, so we get more skilled students as a result*".

The second most frequently mentioned purpose for the mentoring referred to by two of the teachers identified that they had wanted to "*get new ideas from the mentor*" to support them in their teaching. The teachers acknowledged that as relatively new teachers, they perceived the mentoring partnership as an opportunity to increase their teaching skills and knowledge. Learning from the mentor was a common comment from both teachers.

The third of the remaining five categories which were commented on once by four of the eight teachers identified that assistance with career decisions had been an intended purpose for the mentoring support they would receive from the mentor. This teacher talked about "*getting a little bit of career stuff around making choices as to which direction to take*". The fourth category referred to by one teacher highlighted how their main objective for the mentoring had been to receive help

with making changes to their course curriculum. This teacher emphasised how the majority of the mentoring meetings she engaged in focused on helping her with this aspect of her teaching. She indicated that she was "*really pleased*" with the outcome, that is, the changes were made and approved successfully: *"My purpose? To get support for changing my programme. I used mentoring for advice on what would work etc with re-writing the new programme"*.

The fifth category of comment indicated that one of the mentee teachers had wanted help with how to manage other staff who often used them as a "*sounding board*" for issues or problems that were happening in the department. This teacher was relatively new to the institution and the teaching role and expressed concern about the position they were finding themselves in with regard to "*sorting other people's problems out*". They described their intended purpose as: *"Receiving support from the mentor as to how I managed being a sounding board for other staff who had a lot of stuff. I was finding this a difficult situation to sort out"*.

The final two categories were mentioned by one of the mentor teachers, speaking for the mentee in their mentoring partnership. The mentee in this scenario had withdrawn from the study prior to the summative interviews. However, the mentor teacher explained how the mentee had identified their purpose for the mentoring as two-fold. Firstly, the mentee had wanted to achieve a research output as a consequence of participating in the mentoring study. The mentor teacher also explained how their mentee had identified at the commencement of the partnership that they wanted to improve the communication processes within their faculty. The mentor teacher described this: *"She was very task-focused and wanted a research output as well as focus on internal faculty communication processes and how to improve these"*.

Interestingly, one of the mentee teachers questioned the emphasis placed on establishing a purpose for mentoring, for it to be acknowledged as a mechanism for teachers to engage in: "*Does mentoring always have to have a specific purpose? Can the relationship be open-ended or should it have action plans and structure?*" In contrast, another mentee teacher clearly believed a purpose for mentoring was required as they commented: "*It must be clear why mentoring is done; then people will buy in. The partnership decides this as much as the institution*".

6.10.1.2 Intended purpose for the mentoring: The mentors' responses

Responses received from the mentor teachers in response to question one regarding their intended purpose for the mentoring indicated that they perceived the predominant purpose for them to support the mentee"s teaching and learning development. Table 6.22 summarises the eight mentor teachers" identified purpose for the mentoring and the purpose of their role as mentors in the mentoring partnerships.

Table 6.22: Mentors' Intended Purpose for the Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
General teaching and learning support for the mentee	5	**62%**
Support mentee in whatever purpose they identified	3	**37%**
Problem-solving and dealing with issues	2	**25%**
Help with programme development	1	**12%**
Listen to the mentee	1	**12%**

The most important response from the mentor teachers in relation to their intended purpose for the mentoring focused on supporting the mentee in their teaching practice. Five of the eight teachers mentioned how they had expected to "*provide general teaching and learning support for the mentee*". One of the teachers further described the purpose of their mentor role as "*sharing my knowledge of teaching with the mentee to help them in their own teaching*".

The second most frequently mentioned purpose for the mentoring from the mentor teachers" perspective highlighted how three of the mentors believed their role was to *"be open to whatever the mentee wanted or needed support with*". The three teachers talked about how they had commenced the partnership with an "*open book*" approach, indicating that they had been open to whatever purpose the mentee had when the partnership started. One teacher stated, "*Whatever was on top for the mentee was fine. We weren"t going to limit this*" implying that they had employed this more informal approach in all of their mentoring meetings. Another teacher was more explicit about how the purpose was progressively decided upon by both partners: *"We left it wide open when we started so as we progressed, we talked about a number of things ranging from teaching practice to career counselling".*

The third highest category was commented on by two of the mentor teachers. Supporting the mentee in dealing with issues and working through problems they were experiencing in their teaching was explained by these two teachers as the predominant use of the mentoring meetings. One of the teachers talked about "*occasionally able to offer solutions from my experience when we discussed various areas of practice she was concerned about*", whilst the other teacher described the nature of the mentoring conversations they had regularly engaged in with their mentee: *"It was more about verbalising issues which would lead on to discussions. However, we remained very focused throughout the meetings"*.

The fourth category was referred to by one mentor teacher who explained how they had discovered their mentee‟s intended purpose for the mentoring meetings was to receive help with making changes and improvements to their curriculum. This teacher talked about "*helping them get their programme going*" and "*encouraging currency in their course materials*".

The final category was mentioned by one teacher who perceived a key purpose and intent of their mentor role was to "*listen to the mentee*". This teacher reiterated how they were "*open*" to what the mentee wanted to achieve from the mentoring support, rather than having specific expectations of the mentee or the mentoring purpose. They also mentioned how the partnership had commenced with a "*discussion at the start what would and wouldn‟t be included, to stop us going off on a tangent*".

An additional and less specific comment about the purpose for the mentoring was made by one of the mentor teachers who suggested that mentoring could have a more holistic purpose: *"Obviously many aspects of work get discussed but this enables a holistic approach while keeping the purpose of teaching and learning clear"*. Three other mentor teachers described a similar mentoring experience, referring to their partnership as having been "*social*" and "*holistic*" in nature. They believed this served the purpose of building trust, which then led to and supported a focus on the mentee‟s teaching practice. One of the three teachers indicated an inherent concern for the mentee‟s well-being, which they perceived as a responsibility of the mentor: *"The mentoring took a holistic perspective – what did*

the mentee value? What was important for them? At the end of each meeting, we would talk about how they could look after themselves before the next meeting".

Another teacher indicated that the social emphasis in their mentoring partnership was a pivotal part of the ensuing support of the mentee"s teaching: *"It also evolved into a more social aspect. We talked about families, commonalities, views, likes and dislikes. This then gave me a better insight into the person"steaching delivery, personality and the decisions they made about their teaching practice"*.

6.10.2 Question Two: Outcomes of the Mentoring Partnership

In response to question two of the interview schedule asking the teachers to identify any positive outcomes they had experienced as a result of engaging in the mentoring partnership, both the eight mentee and eight mentor teachers talked about benefits they believed they had gained. For different reasons, three of the teachers also mentioned they had experienced some negative outcomes. These examples of negative outcomes are summarised at the end of this section in relation to question two (refer p. 239).

6.10.2.1 Benefits for the mentor

The eight mentor teachers mentioned a range of benefits they perceived as having gained from engaging in the mentoring partnership as a mentor. Table 6.23 summarises the range of benefits as perceived by the mentor teachers.

Table 6.23: Outcomes of the Mentoring Partnership: Benefits for the Mentor

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Reflection on practice; becoming conscious of own teaching	8	**100%**
Learning something from the mentee for their own practice	6	**75%**
Actively engaging in further professional development	5	**62%**
Building relationships	4	**50%**
Development of skills as a mentor	3	**37%**
Development of a friendship	1	**12%**

The most important response to question two in the interview schedule identified that all of the eight mentor teachers perceived a positive outcome for them was the opportunity for re-focusing on the importance of critical reflection. There were a variety of descriptions that indicated the teachers believed that increasing or re-focusing on reflection was a significant outcome for their own professional development. As one teacher stated, "*You are exploring with someone else. When you think of your own teaching, you will always pick something up". It made me reflect on some of my experiences and made me think of how I had changed as a teacher*".

A strong connection was made between an increased awareness of critical reflection and how the mentee had been a catalyst for this. Two of the teachers referred to becoming "*more conscious*" of their own teaching and being "*invigorated by the process because we were talking about teaching and learning all the time*." Another teacher described how the opportunity for reflecting on their practice, via the mentoring partnership process, had resulted in more in-depth questioning of their teaching: *"As I am talking about teaching and ways of doing things with the mentee, this brings my own teaching to my consciousness and makes me question my taken-for-granted practices. It makes you think about your pedagogy"*.

The second highest category was referred to by six of the teachers as they talked about how they had "*definitely learned something from the mentee*" for their own teaching. These teachers mentioned how they had appreciated the "*exposure to other ways of doing things*" as a result of engaging with the mentee, indicating that they believed they could always learn something from the mentee: *"Initial meetings were good to find out how the mentee was working with staff. Understanding different persona and the strategies they take to meet a variety of student needs was useful. We worked through a whole range of similar issues but with different audiences"*. One of the teachers emphasised the importance of "*being open to learning from the mentee*", indicating a perception that the willingness to do so provided them with the opportunity to "*see something from a totally different perspective*". They added, *"I learn from our discussions as well. The meetings have been making me think of "why did I say that?" and*

"whereabouts in my experience did that come from?" and *"how do I know how to respond?" It is definitely making me reflect on myself"*.

The third most important response in relation to the positive outcomes experienced by the mentor involved active engagement in further professional development. Five of the mentor teachers described ways in which the mentoring had triggered their awareness and need for ongoing professional development. For example, two of the teachers found the mentoring had helped them re-focus on the importance of process and commented that the mentoring had "*highlighted again that relationships are at the core of teaching*". Another teacher identified their awareness of further professional development as managing new curriculum expectations: *"I started thinking of my own teaching and learning materials. It made me re-look at some of my own materials and re-write some of them"*.

The fourth most frequently mentioned benefit for the mentor as an outcome of engaging in the mentoring involved the opportunity for developing new relationships with people outside their own faculty. Four of the teachers commented on this, describing how they perceived the building of new relationships as "*a benefit has been to actually meet someone from another faculty and gain insight into how another faculty is run*". This was reflected by two of the teachers who felt that they had gained as much from the mentoring meetings as the mentee, seeing mentoring as "*very much a partnership*". One teacher also explained how they had been experiencing "*broader interactions generally with staff*", indicating that the mentoring relationship they had developed with the mentee had encouraged this. They further added how they saw the value of the mentoring as prompting them to re-establish and foster their own professional networks, captured in the following comment: *"I made a decision as a consequence of the mentoring meetings to get out more and experience other disciplines and teaching styles of delivery and other teaching environments; opportunity to share ideas and advice, particularly in relation to professional development, classroom management and teaching practice"*.

Developing skills as a mentor was commented on by three of the teachers. This fifth category of comment highlighted the three teachers" belief that they had extended their skills as a mentor as a result of the mentoring partnership. Their

comments indicated that they perceived this as a definite benefit as it had provided them with "*a diversity of feedback*" to consider in their own mentoring role. Believing they had learned a lot about themselves as a mentor was apparent from one teacher as they talked about how "*the mentoring is opening up my mind; it has been very refreshing. Seeing how receptive my mentee was, I realised I had something to offer that extends beyond teaching practice*".

The other two teachers referred to the benefits they had gained from the meetings with other mentors in the focus groups, describing how these meetings had provided them with the opportunity to think about what they needed to do as a mentor within their own discipline. One of them identified how they were now using their mentor skills in other facets of their work context: *"I have taken on the mentoring role informally with two other staff members and I'm not sure I would have done this without being involved in the programme as a mentor"*.

The final category regarding positive outcomes for the mentor from engaging in mentoring was mentioned by one of the mentor teachers who described how they had developed a new friendship with the mentee. They referred to their partnership meetings as being "*quite affirming*" and "*a sharing of like minds*", describing mentoring as a friendship: *"Mentoring becomes a friendship and then it becomes interchangeable. The mentee helps you as much as you help them"*.

An additional comment made by one of the mentor teachers indicated that they did not feel they had benefitted so much from the mentoring partnership but more from the focus group meetings and what they took from these back into their own practice. This particular teacher felt that the collegial meetings had helped them to "*find out what others were doing and how the mentoring process was going for them*".

6.10.2.2 Benefits for the mentee

Reflective of the feedback from the mentor teachers in response to question two in the interview schedule, the eight mentee teachers also identified a range of benefits they perceived as having gained from engaging in the mentoring partnership. Table 6.24 (refer p. 236) summarises the range of benefits as perceived by the mentee teachers.

Table 6.24: Outcomes of the Mentoring Partnership: Benefits for the Mentee

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Gaining confidence in teaching	7	**87%**
Development of teaching practices	5	**62%**
Opportunity to talk through negative or difficult issues	3	**37%**
Gaining a different perspective on teaching; other ways of teaching outside own faculty	2	**25%**
Reciprocal teaching observations	1	**12%**
Learning about institutional policies and procedures	1	**12%**

The most important response was received from seven of the mentee teachers, as they identified a positive outcome for them as gaining confidence in their teaching practice. These teachers attributed this increase in confidence to the mentor, in terms of the mentor"s skills and experience as a teacher, their willingness to share their own teaching experiences with the mentee, and the mentor"s interest in the mentee as a person as well as a teacher. Two separate comments emphasised this sense of the mentee gaining benefit from the mentor in terms of confidence building. One teacher stated: *"The mentor got my confidence up by assuring me I could do this, in the first few meetings we had. It helped me put a few things in perspective, especially around decision-making"*. This was followed by a second teacher who commented: *"Being with someone who is caring and enthusiastic, with totally different perspectives to mine. If I had been with someone similar to me, it probably wouldn"thave been as beneficial. I know I now have someone I can go and see any time"*. One teacher also explained how they felt less isolated and therefore more confident in experimenting with new teaching strategies: "*You are not an island, on your own, which is a real comfort. My mentor has encouraged me to try something new and give it a go*".

The second most frequently mentioned outcome from the mentoring that was perceived as a benefit for the mentee involved the specific development of teaching practices. Five of the mentee teachers stated that they had used the mentoring partnership period to experiment with new teaching ideas, so that they could talk through the results of these with their mentor. Two teachers described

how they had learned new techniques and tips for their teaching, whilst another teacher described their development as becoming more reflective, explaining how their mentor had encouraged them to think about reflecting on their teaching.

As well as having the opportunity to "*take time out and focus on teaching and learning*" and "*get confirmation of my teaching*", other areas of development in their teaching practice were identified by the five mentee teachers including how to do teaching plans; feeling relaxed about session planning; increase in content knowledge and trying out new strategies to meet a variety of student learning needs. The sense of change and development of their teaching practice over time was apparent in one of the teachers" comments: "*The mentoring has really changed my teaching and allowed me to relax. It has given me the confidence to do something differently from my past teaching style and experience*".

The third highest category was commented on by three teachers who talked about how they had benefitted from having the opportunity to discuss issues or problems in their teaching with their mentor. The three teachers felt that the mentoring partnership had been very supportive in this area, especially as they could talk about negative student evaluations and learn how to "*deal with difficult students*". Two of the teachers explained how the mentoring had given them "*time to talk about the negative stuff*" whilst at the same time getting strategies from the mentor on how to deal with this: *"Mentoring/a mentor brings you out, gives you a conduit to open up. You won"t always talk about the negative teaching experiences, but it is good to feel comfortable enough to talk with someone and not be judged".*

The fourth category was referred to by two of the eight mentee teachers. Having a mentor from another faculty was seen as significantly beneficial by the two teachers. For example, "*having someone totally removed to talk to*" had helped one of the teachers gain a different perspective on teaching and gave them the opportunity to find "*better ways of teaching outside of how the faculty has always done it*." Having a neutral person and place to talk through teaching issues was a prominent theme in the teachers" comments: *"I have come out a lot more confident making decisions about my teaching. I had quite a bit of fear of taking things to my programme coordinator or manager. I could take these issues to my mentor and they would help me decide. They helped me through a difficult patch".*

Interestingly, one of the mentee teachers felt that they had definitely benefitted from having a mentor from their own discipline: *"Because I had been given a mentor in my own field, I feel I could go into more depth with a new mentor in the future. It has made me think about the mentoring relationship and given me a comparison of what I would like to have and what sort of outcomes I would want to achieve from the mentoring"*.

The fifth category was mentioned by one teacher as they talked about the opportunity to engage in reciprocal teaching observations with their mentor as a definite benefit for them. The teacher explained how they had agreed with the mentor at the commencement of the partnership that observing each other"s teaching would be a worthwhile use of the mentoring meeting times: *"We observed each others" teaching. It was useful to talk about these in our meetings. It made me think about my assumptions. There is a definite advantage in reciprocal teaching observations"*.

The final category of positive outcomes from the mentoring was identified by one teacher who described how they had increased their learning about institutional policies and resources, which had resulted in a sense of independence and confidence: "*It made me think about how I could help myself – other people and resources I could access, rather than relying on someone else all the time*".

A general finding was revealed in two teachers" comments that still pertained to the benefits they believed they had gained from the mentoring. These teachers associated their positive experience with having identified their own learning goals at the beginning of the partnership, to the point where one expressed, "*I have had a couple of profound teaching experiences which I wouldn"t have had if I hadn"t thought about what I was going to take to the partnership*". A sense of excitement about having the opportunity for mentoring and the consequent impact on teaching practice was also vivid in their feedback: *"I am excited about having conversations about teaching. Mentoring motivates me. I find it exciting, stimulating and energising. It was great to bounce off new ideas and find out what the mentor thought. I am a better teacher as a result"*.

One of the teachers viewed their mentoring experience as quite limiting in terms of value and benefits for them professionally and also felt that the matching had been

very limiting. They identified that they were getting mentoring from other places rather than from the assigned mentor and felt this other avenue of support was more beneficial for them.

6.10.2.3 Open-ended findings: Negative outcomes of mentoring

In addition to the numerous positive outcomes from the mentoring that had been identified by the sixteen teachers in response to question two, three teachers also commented on negative outcomes they had experienced from engaging in the mentoring programme study. For example, one of the teachers discussed how it had been quite difficult when their mentee partner left the organisation before they had had a chance to start the mentoring partnership. The teacher explained how they were "*keen to be a mentor*" and then found there was no-one to mentor. They added however that once a new mentee had been organised, the mentoring experience for them had been "*nothing but positive*". (A new mentee had been identified and assigned to this mentor within the first two months of the one year programme period).

The second teacher discussed at length how they had struggled with feeling guilty because their mentee had left the organisation due to mental health reasons. They expressed this as "*I thought I had failed her. I haven"t mentored anyone who has run away before*". This teacher also mentioned how the main focus of the mentoring meetings that had occurred was focused on "*personal stuff*" and "*guiding her away from being negative*". At the end of the interview, they added how the mentee"s degree of stress meant that "*by the end of each meeting, because she was quite stressed, we"dtalk about how she could look after herself before the next meeting*".

The third teacher commented that they felt "*the mentor was not useful*", explaining that this was partly due to their partnership "*not meeting very often*". They indicated that they had other networks which they believed were more effective for supporting their teaching. Interestingly they also identified that "*even though we only met a few times, it was really surprising how dedicated that time was*".

6.10.3 Question Three: Uniqueness of the Mentoring Experience

Question three in the summative interview schedule asked the academic teachers to comment on what had been unique about their mentoring experience. The teachers identified a wide range of opinions in response to this question, including further references to benefits they felt they had gained. Their perceptions of the uniqueness of their mentoring experience are summarised in Table 6.25.

Table 6.25: Uniqueness of the Mentoring Experience

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Equality of the mentoring relationship	7	**44%**
Mentor and mentee from different teaching areas	6	**37%**
Safe relationship: confidentiality	4	**25%**
Fun, social element	3	**18%**
Open communication	2	**12%**
A new experience	2	**12%**
Reciprocal teaching observations	2	**12%**
The formal process	1	**6%**

The most frequently mentioned category in response to question three in the interview schedule identified that an equal relationship between the mentor and mentee was perceived as a unique experience for seven of the sixteen teachers. This was described by one teacher as having happened early in the mentoring partnership: "*The initial informal agreement that we would be on the same level, based on the first ten minutes of meeting together*". Shifting from an expert-novice to a peer mentoring relationship was emphasised by the seven teachers as being quite critical to the success of their partnership, one of the teachers who had originally assumed a mentee role clarifying the importance of this for them. Their comment also indicated how the structure of the mentoring relationship influenced their willingness to engage and share in the mentoring meetings: "*We were equals rather than mentor/mentee. This led to sharing of ideas rather than a one-way flow. In my own mind I wasn"tgoing to be a "mentee". My mentoring partner was happy with the shared role approach*".

The second highest category involved the perception that a mentoring partnership comprising different disciplines was a unique aspect of the mentoring experience. Six teachers discussed how they had not expected this feature of the mentoring partnership to have as much influence as it had. As one teacher explained, "*It was certainly different mentoring someone from another faculty. I'm used to mentoring in my own faculty*". Another teacher clearly believed this aspect of the mentoring had been unique for them: "*Complete context differences! A unique situation for me, that"s for sure*", whilst a third teacher explained in more detail how this experience had been of significant benefit for them as a teacher: "*Being with someone who is caring and enthusiastic with a totally different perspective from mine. If I was with someone similar, in a similar teaching area, it probably wouldn"thave been as beneficial. What you think is significant, they may not and challenge you to question this*".

Interestingly, one of the mentor teachers indicated that they felt a different discipline match could be counter-productive and a less satisfactory experience for both teachers: "*If I'd had someone from carpentry for example, I'm not sure how it would have gone. It makes you wonder if it"sbetter to have someone from the same faculty or similar area of work*".

The third most frequently mentioned category in relation to how the mentoring was a unique experience identified the importance of a relationship that felt safe and where confidentiality was respected. The four teachers who commented on this emphasised how they had appreciated the "*sense of safeness*" they had experienced in their mentoring partnerships. They talked about how their partnership had been "*a very safe relationship. We were very different but very respectful of each other and what was talked about in our meetings*". One of the teachers believed that the issue of confidentiality had a direct impact on how they engaged in the mentoring: "*You know it wouldn"t goany further; gave me confidence in this process*".

A mentoring partnership that was fun and social was the fourth highest category of comment about the uniqueness of the teachers" mentoring experience. Three of the teachers talked about how they had appreciated that the mentoring partnership ended up being quite social and "*a bit of fun*". One of the mentee teachers emphasised how this had been a unique and surprising experience for them: "*It was*

a bit of fun actually – out of our environments and having a chat. We became friends quite quickly, a nice „dick"." Another teacher who commented on the social element of their partnership again referred to how an equal mentor-mentee relationship had developed in their partnership. They related the social aspect of the partnership as influencing this "*level playing field*" outcome: "*It very quickly got onto a social level and we made familiarities there, which fostered and enhanced the same-basis relationship decision*".

The fifth category commented on by two of the teachers focused on how the degree of openness in the communication between the mentor and mentee had been "*quite a unique experience*". One of the teachers described this as "o*pen dialogue*", expressing how they had enjoyed this aspect of the partnership: "*That we could openly discuss everything from current affairs to what was happening in our lives was unique for me*". The other teacher indicated that the sense of open communication in their mentoring partnership had created a lack of barriers in the meeting discussions: "*The mentor was quite open about his teaching experiences; there were no real barriers at all*".

The sixth most frequently mentioned category in relation to what was unique about the mentoring experience identified that the mentoring had been a "*new experience*" for two of the teachers. They referred to how the research study had involved them in a situation that they normally would not have had the chance to do. One teacher described how "*this gave me an experience I otherwise wouldn"t have had. I don"t know if that was a good thing or a bad thing*".

The seventh category commented on by two of the sixteen teachers related to the opportunity for reciprocal teaching observations, reflecting one of the teachers" earlier responses to question two, which had asked what positive outcomes the mentee teachers had gained from the mentoring (refer p. 236). The same teacher reiterated the benefit they had gained from engaging in teaching observations with their mentor: *"We observed each others" teaching. There is an advantage in reciprocal observing. It was useful to talk about in our meetings and made me think about my assumptions"*. The second teacher also indicated that teaching observations should be an integral aspect of the mentoring process and partnership, as they commented: *"Unless you are observing their teaching, I don"tknow if we*

can have much idea about what goes on. I think it would be useful to incorporate teaching observations in the mentoring".

The final category of mentoring uniqueness from the academic teachers" point of view was mentioned by one of the mentor teachers as they talked about the level of commitment that was achieved by being engaged in a formal mentoring process: "*It was unique because the mentoring occurred through a formal process, not just a random occurrence. We committed to it because of the formal arrangement*".

6.10.4 Question Four: Changes Made as a Result of the Mentoring

When asked what changes they had made as a result of the mentoring they had engaged in over the one year period, the sixteen teachers provided a range of examples, identifying both qualitative and quantitative changes they had made. There were some variations as well as similarities in the feedback received from the mentee teachers and the mentor teachers. This section presents the findings from the eight mentee teachers" responses to question four in the interview schedule and the findings from the eight mentor teachers" responses.

6.10.4.1 Changes made by the mentee teachers

Table 6.26 summarises the key areas of perceived and tangible changes identified by the eight mentee teachers in response to question four in the summative interview schedule. Table 6.26 also specifies whether the comments represent the teachers" perceived changes in themselves or evidence-based tangible outcomes that they identified in their teaching practice.

Table 6.26: Changes Made by the Mentee as a Result of the Mentoring

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Increased confidence and confirmation of teaching skills	Perceived & Tangible	7	**87%**
New teaching strategies	Tangible	5	**62%**
Reflection on and evaluation of teaching practice	Perceived & Tangible	4	**50%**
Curriculum design and development	Tangible	2	**25%**
Improved student learning	Perceived	2	**25%**
Systems development	Tangible	1	**12%**

The highest response received from seven of the eight mentee teachers involved a perception that the mentoring had increased the teachers" confidence in their teaching and confirmed their teaching skills. There was a range of comments to describe this sense of "*much more confidence*" which indicated both perceived changes in themselves as teachers as well as reference to real changes they had made in their teaching. The confidence these teachers had gained in order to try out new teaching approaches was evident in their feedback. For example, one of the teachers talked about how they were "*really relaxed about session planning now. I don"t spend hours having to prepare*" whilst another teacher identified how their confidence as a teacher had led to a greater involvement in institutional activities: *"I think I make a reasonable contribution to the institution because I now feel more comfortable with doing so and going the extra mile as a result"*.

The second most important response involved the application of new teaching strategies as a perceived and tangible change made by the mentee teachers as a result of the mentoring support. The five teachers who commented on this change identified that they had all made some specific changes to their teaching approach and had included new strategies in the classroom. This was described by one of the teachers: "*I learned to tie down my teaching plans and I use powerpoint now. This has really changed my teaching and I am all prepared for next year*".

Another teacher described how they had "*changed my teaching approaches with Maori students*", adding that this action had been as a direct consequence of the discussions they had engaged in with their mentor. A sharing of teaching strategies between the mentee and the mentor was mentioned by one of the five teachers, their comment indicating that they perceived this as positively influencing student learning and outcomes as well: *"We both realised we had strategies for dealing with students who were struggling. Here was a way to improve student outcomes, by talking through these strategies"*.

The third most frequent response in relation to changes the teachers had made as a result of their mentoring experience involved improved reflection and evaluation of their teaching practice. Four of the eight teachers perceived this change as directly influenced by the mentor"s support and the "*opportunity and space*" to think about their teaching more. One teachers stated, "*It has definitely made me*

think about my teaching more and some of the changes I would like to make" whilst another teacher identified how they had implemented their own learning about critical reflection with the students: *"The mentor got me thinking about reflecting a lot more and I have now set up reflective journals as part of the student learning"*.

Changes the teachers had made to their curriculum and course materials comprised the fourth category of comment. Two of the teachers referred to how they had instigated changes in their programmes, including new assessment designs, planning and resource materials: "*I have introduced peer marking and I am changing the assessment processes I have always used*". One teacher talked about how the mentoring had provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their programme and consequently make changes to it: "*It has made me reflect on my own teaching and I have since made changes to the curriculum which have been approved, which is great"*. An additional comment was made that referred to how one of the teachers was now "*maintaining currency in my course materials*".

The fifth category referred to by two teachers indicated that they perceived changes in student learning outcomes as a result of the mentoring support they had received. One of the teachers believed that their increased knowledge and confidence in their teaching practice was benefitting the students as a result: "*I can identify potential pathways for students now. I can give them the bigger picture*". The other teacher talked more about the sense of students being more satisfied with the programme and how it was supporting their learning: "*Students are far happier in their learning and the programme is meeting their needs more*".

The final category mentioned by one of the mentee teachers focused on changes they had made in relation to administrative systems and processes that ultimately supported their teaching. This teacher expressed how the improvements they had made with these systems had significantly impacted on his teaching, also indicating that support staff in his department had benefitted as well: *"There is a better administrative process and better systems in place. These have improved not just for me but for the admin staff as well"*.

6.10.4.2 Changes made by the mentor teachers

Responses from the eight mentor teachers in relation to question four of the interview schedule reflected the feedback received from the mentee teachers as well as identifying some differences in perceived and tangible changes the mentor teachers had made as a result of engaging in mentoring. All eight teachers reported making changes as a result of their mentoring experience. Changes in their actual teaching practice and changes in themselves as a professional were evident in their feedback. Table 6.27 summarises the three key areas of perceived and tangible changes identified by the mentor teachers and indicates whether the comments represent the teachers" perceived changes in themselves or evidence-based tangible outcomes that they identified in their teaching practice.

Table 6.27: Changes Made by the Mentor as a Result of the Mentoring

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Critical reflective practice and evaluation of teaching	Perceived & Tangible	8	**100%**
New teaching strategies	Tangible	2	**25%**
Curriculum design and development	Tangible	1	**12%**

The most important response to question four in the interview schedule in relation to changes the mentor teachers had made as a consequence of the mentoring involved a perceived improvement in critical reflective practice and more in-depth evaluation of their teaching. Comments received from all eight mentor teachers were reflective of the feedback received from the mentee teachers in relation to this category. "*Highlighting for me that relationships are at the heart of teaching*" was identified as an important change for one of the teachers. Another three teachers described how the mentoring partnership had "*made me think about my assumptions as a teacher*" and provided a valuable mechanism for engaging in ongoing evaluation of different aspects of their teaching practice. As one of them stated, *"It is definitely making me reflect more. It has helped me re-focus on the importance of process. It makes you think about your pedagogy"*.

Another of the mentor teachers related their engagement in reflection to their mentor role, perceiving changes in themselves as a mentor and how they were translating this in their teaching context: *"It has made me think about mentoring, what I need to do as a mentor for others – the on-to-one coaching I do with staff members in my department"*.

The second highest category of changes made by the mentor teachers was identified by two of the eight teachers, as they referred to how the mentee had prompted them to consider different teaching strategies to meet student learning needs: "*The mentee highlighted different persona and strategies taken to meet a variety of student needs which I found useful*". Both teachers related the mentoring conversations with their mentees as the catalyst for the instigation of new approaches in their teaching. One of the teachers added that their mentee had shared some specific knowledge and skills which they had since developed and employed in their teaching: "*I"ve actually utilised the technology a lot more in the teaching side of things since starting the mentoring*".

The final category was mentioned by one of the mentor teachers as they referred to changes they had made in their course materials. Their comment also indicated that the opportunity to reflect on their current teaching had prompted them to make changes in this aspect of their practice: "*I have been thinking much more about my own teaching and learning materials. I have re-looked at these and since re-written some of them*".

Two of the mentor teachers made an additional reference to changes that they believed their mentees had in their teaching practice. These two teachers talked about the changes they had observed in the mentee"s development, for example, an increased ability to solve their own problems and a shift away from a negative teaching and student focus. Persevering with programme development was also highlighted by one of the mentor teachers: *"It encouraged the mentee to keep going, as she was ready to throw in the hat. It helped keep her enthusiasm for the programme development process, which is tedious and long-winded"*.

6.10.5 Question Five: Mentor and Mentee Characteristics

Question five in the summative interview schedule was divided into two sub-sections (refer Appendix E, refer p. 436). Section 5a asked the sixteen academic

teachers what they believed were the core characteristics the mentor needed to possess in order to influence the effectiveness of the mentoring they provided the mentee. Section 5b asked the teachers what they believed were the core characteristics that the mentee needed to possess in order to influence the effectiveness of the mentoring they engaged in. The findings presented for questions 5a and 5b are categorised into two further sub-sections:

Section 5a (i):

i) Core mentor characteristics as perceived by the eight mentor teachers;
ii) Core mentor characteristics as perceived by the eight mentee teachers.

Section 5b (ii):

iii) Core mentee characteristics as perceived by the eight mentor teachers;
iv) Core mentee characteristics as perceived by the eight mentee teachers.

Interestingly, a number of other comments were made in response to question five, specifically in relation to the teachers" perceptions of the core characteristics of the mentor. These additional comments focused on considerations of mentor selection and how an organisation could identify effective teachers as mentors. These data are presented as section 5a (iii) in the presentation of findings for question five of the summative interview (refer p. 255).

6.10.5a (i) Core characteristics of the mentor as perceived by the mentor teachers

In response to the first section of question five regarding the core characteristics of the mentor, the eight mentor teachers described a wide range of mentor attributes, qualities and skills that they perceived as important for the mentor to possess in order to influence the mentoring experience. Table 6.28 (refer p. 249) summarises the core characteristics of the mentor as perceived by the eight mentor teachers.

Table 6.28: Core Mentor Characteristics: The Mentors' Perceptions

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Building trust and rapport; confidentiality	8	100%
Effective, non-judgemental communicator	7	87%
Commitment to doing the mentoring	5	62%
Responsibility to continuing own professional development	4	50%
Managing the balance of power in the mentoring relationship	3	37%
Non-critical of the mentee"s values and beliefs	3	37%
Wisdom and experience	3	37%
Provide feedback and acknowledge the mentee"s development	2	25%
Knowing your philosophical underpinnings	2	25%
Role clarity	2	25%
Genuine and authentic	1	12%
Knowledge of the mentee"s background	1	12%

The highest category of comment regarding the core characteristics that the mentor needs to possess, as perceived by all eight mentor teachers, involved the ability to build trust and rapport with the mentee. The teachers perceived the maintaining of confidentiality as a critical aspect of the mentor"s behaviour that directly influenced trust and rapport in the mentoring relationship. They believed that this created a professional and personal relationship which consequently established clear boundaries within the partnership. One of the teachers explained: *"Establishing trust helps build a social relationship between the mentor and mentee and makes connections. You need to have the experience of how far you get involved though. Know your boundaries if you are going to keep confidentiality and be able to draw the lines as you can"t afford to soak up all their problems"*.

The second most frequently mentioned characteristic perceived by the mentor teachers as important for the mentor to possess identified effective and non-judgemental communication. Seven teachers referred to this characteristic as being a "*critical mentor trait*". The emphasis on the mentor having good listening skills was apparent in a number of the teachers" responses. One teacher defined effective communication as "*good listening skills*" and "*able to actively listen and respond accordingly*". Another teacher believed that the mentor needed to have the "*ability to listen and give/accept constructive criticism*". The ability of the mentor to "*explain clearly and in a relevant manner*" was perceived by another of the seven

teachers as influencing the outcomes of the mentoring, as they added, "*otherwise it just doesn"tgo anywhere*". This teacher perceived themselves in the mentor role as "*a catalyst for the mentee"s thought processes*."

The third highest category of mentor characteristics identified the importance of the mentor being "*committed to doing the mentoring*". Five of the teachers referred to this, indicating in their comments that if the mentor was not interested in assisting other teachers in their practice, the time invested in the mentoring would be wasted. Two of the teachers talked about how commitment from the mentor directly impacted on the level of support they provided the mentee and the outcomes the mentee would gain as a result.

The fourth highest category, commented on by four of the teachers identified that responsibility taken by the mentor to continue their own professional development was a core characteristic that impacted on the mentoring support they provided. The four teachers believed they had a responsibility to be continuing their own professional development as much as influencing the mentee"s professional development through the support they provided. "*Being flexible enough to learn from the relationship*" was mentioned by one of the teachers, whilst another teacher believed that the mentee and the mentoring partnership provided conduits for the mentor to continue developing professionally. Reflecting this point, one of the teachers indicated that they believed this was up to the mentor to access this professional development opportunity: *"You always learn something. I learned from the mentee. I go in to give, then you always receive. You have to be open to helping others and open to your own development as a consequence".*

The fifth category of comment referred to by three of the teachers focused on the mentor having the ability and intention to manage the balance of power in the mentoring relationship. One of the teachers talked about "*knowing when to go forward and when to step back*", further explaining how they believed this attitude of the mentor "*could be detrimental or positive depending on the mentor"s individual persona*". Providing the mentee with the freedom to develop their own teaching style and having respect for the mentee"s opinions were mentioned by two of the teachers as actions that indicated the mentor"s intention for ensuring a power balance in the mentoring relationship. One of the teachers stated: *"You have to be*

careful of the relationship becoming a dependency with a strong sense of rescue. All the time, you need to be aware of giving the mentee choices, then stepping back. I acknowledged early on that their worldview may not fit my worldview, but this person does have a problem they need help with".

The sixth most frequently mentioned core characteristic of the mentor referred to by three of the mentor teachers focused on the ability of the mentor to be open to the mentee"s perspectives and non-critical of their values and beliefs about teaching. As one of the teachers explained, "*The mentee"s ideas may not fit with my worldview but this person has a problem and that"swhat I am there for, to help them with this*".

The seventh category highlighted a perceived core characteristic of the mentor as possessing wisdom and having experience in the teaching profession. Three teachers commented on how they believed the mentee benefitted most from having a mentor who had "*wisdom and experience in the academic environment*". A comment made by one of the teachers indicated their reflection on this question: "*Just because you are old doesn"t mean you are wise*".

The eighth core characteristic of the mentor as perceived by two of the mentor teachers involved the mentor"s skill in providing feedback to the mentee and having the intention to acknowledge the mentee"s development. For example, one of the teachers stated, "*It was good to be able to give feedback from a mentor"s point of view on aspects where I could see room for improvement*". The other teacher focused more on the importance of the mentor being competent in how to give feedback in ways that also acknowledged the mentee"s development in their teaching. "*Acknowledging the mentee and their willingness to try out the mentor"s suggestions*" was an apparent perception of important mentor"s skills by both of these teachers.

The next category of comment identified that two of the teachers believed the mentor needed to know their philosophical underpinnings and be able to articulate these. The teachers emphasised the importance of the mentor "*having the theory and the practice*" if they were to be effective in supporting and guiding the mentee"s professional development. Their comments indicated that the mentor"s

ability to articulate their teaching philosophy helped the mentee to consider their own beliefs and values about teaching in more depth.

The ability to clarify the mentor‟s role comprised the tenth category, perceived by two teachers as a core characteristic of the mentor. They described this characteristic as enabling the mentor to maintain a balance in the partnership in terms of the level and acknowledgement of responsibility to the relationship by both the mentor and the mentee and ensuring that expectations of the mentor was clarified early in the mentoring partnership. When describing the mentor‟s need to clarify their role for the mentee, one of the teachers talked about how they believed it was important "*not to over-guide the process*". The second teacher explained their view in more detail: *The mentor needs to have the experience as know how far you get involved, draw the line and can"t afford to soak up all their problems. The mentor"s role also involves knowing where you can help the person get help"*.

The eleventh category commented on by one teacher indicated that the mentor needed to be genuine and authentic in their intentions and actions if they were to effectively influence the mentoring and the support they provided the mentee. They talked about the mentor being "*confident and knowing themselves*" as underpinning attributes of an authentic mentor.

The final category referred to by one of the teachers highlighted how they perceived a core characteristic of the mentor was having a willingness and interest in the mentee and finding out about the mentee‟s background. They believed that this intent on the mentor‟s part was integral to the effectiveness of the ensuing and ongoing mentor-mentee relationship: "*It may help the partnership if you have knowledge and experience in the mentee"s field and preparing beforehand by finding out a bit about them*".

6.10.5a (ii) Core characteristics of the mentor as perceived by the mentee teachers

In addition to the eight mentor teachers‟ responses to question five regarding the core characteristics of the mentor, the eight mentee teachers also identified a wide range of mentor attributes, qualities and skills that they perceived as important for the mentor to possess. Table 6.29 (refer p. 253) summarises the core characteristics of the mentor as perceived by the eight mentee teachers.

Table 6.29: Core Mentor Characteristics: The Mentees' Perceptions

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Effective communicator	7	**87%**
Open-minded	5	**62%**
Teaching experience and willingness to share their expertise	4	**50%**
Commitment to the mentoring: passionate about the mentor role	3	**37%**
Confidentiality; providing a safe environment	2	**25%**
Providing meeting structure and boundaries	2	**25%**
Balances power in the relationship	1	**12%**

The highest response in relation to what the mentee teachers believed were the core characteristics of the mentor to influence the effectiveness of the mentoring support they received involved the skills of effective communication. Seven of the eight teachers defined this category in several ways. For example, one of the teachers talked about the mentor needing to be a "*good communicator and able to recognise the body language of other people*". The ability to give "*positive feedback*" thereby "*helping someone constructively*" was mentioned by another teacher, which was further described as the mentor being "*responsive*" and "*able to react and provide feedback to the mentee*". Five of the teachers believed the mentor had helped them gain more confidence as a teacher by being non-judgemental and providing assurance: *"My mentor has given me confidence – talked to me, gave me advice on my programme and provided another point of view. It was good having someone telling me my ideas would work"*.

Effective listening skills were identified by three of the seven teachers as they referred to the mentor "*being a good listener*", indicating that good listening was a key aspect of the mentor"s communication and interactions with the mentee. Asking strategic questions and having a "*listening ear*" were also suggested by one of these teachers as an indication of the mentor being an effective and active listener.

The second highest category regarding the mentor"s core characteristics continued the theme of effective communication. Five of the mentee teachers talked extensively about the mentor needing to be "*open-minded*", one of the teachers perceiving this characteristic as also being "*open to the mentoring process and not*

thinking that they know it all". Another teacher defined open-mindedness of the mentor as "*being willing to share*" and having "*openness in their communication and approach to the mentoring*".

The third most frequently mentioned characteristic that the mentee teachers perceived as important for the mentor to possess referred to the mentor having extensive teaching experience and a willingness to share their expertise with the mentee. Four teachers commented on this characteristic, one of them indicating that the mentor needed to "*have a bit of street cred and been around a bit*" in order to support new or experienced teachers with their own teaching practice development. Another teacher believed that the mentor could help them with their teaching practice if they "*had experience and had respect of their industry*" as well as a willingness to share their expertise.

One of the comments referring to the mentor"s expertise and teaching experience indicated that one of the mentee teachers perceived this characteristic as critical for their mentoring experience to be successful and have outcomes for their practice: *"It is key that the mentor has the capabilities plus the attitude to share in and therefore influence the mentoring experience. They need to have a balance between being process and task-focused, as well as wisdom from years of experience"*.

The fourth category commented on by three of the teachers referred to a core characteristic of the mentor being committed to the mentoring and "*passionate about their role*". This description was embellished by one teacher as the mentor being "*caring and enthusiastic and as passionate about the mentor role as their job*". The willingness to "*be prepared to put time and effort in and got to want to do it*" was perceived important attributes of the mentor by another teacher. An influence on the mentee"s personal experience in the mentoring partnership as well as professional development was attributed to the degree of commitment by the mentor. For example, two of the teachers talked about how they believed the mentor"s interest in their role of supporting the mentee in their professional development impacted on their sense of safety and ability to talk about their teaching with the mentor: *"They were interested in what I was doing. They helped me grow and made me feel comfortable, where I felt I could start sharing"*.

Maintaining confidentiality that contributed to providing a safe and secure environment for the mentee was the fifth category of core mentor characteristics. Two of the teachers explained how the mentor"s ability to keep the mentoring conversations confidential made them "*feel comfortable where I could share about myself as well as my teaching*". One teacher emphasised how they had appreciated knowing that they could bring anything to the mentoring meetings and this would be kept private: *"I had no fear of reprisal. I could take things to the mentor which I couldn"t take to my programme coordinator. I am looking for constructive feedback, not negative feedback"*.

The sixth category referred to how the mentor "*should provide structure to the meetings*". The two teachers who commented on this characteristic as being important for the mentor to possess perceived that as well as providing structure, the mentor should establish "*good boundaries*". One of the teachers added, "*We need boundaries I think. I don"t know how I'd get on if we were good buddies too?*" The second teacher provided a more comprehensive explanation and proffered a question at the same time: *"Whose responsibility is it to manage the partnership? The mentor needed to structure our talks more and provide structure within which we met. We just talked for two hours sometimes. Is that mentoring though?"*

The final category was commented on by one teacher as they talked about the mentor having the ability to balance the level of power in the mentoring relationship. This teacher expressed their belief that the mentoring partners should have "*mutual respect and trust*", adding that the mentor"s approach to the partnership significantly influenced the development of this: *"The best thing he did was make it a level playing field. A good mentor would be a good teacher where they encourage that we learn together and not be the boss or the bearer of all knowledge"*.

6.10.5a (iii) Mentor selection processes

In addition to the identification of the core characteristics of an effective mentor as perceived by the eight mentee and the eight mentor teachers, a number of other comments from both teacher groups were made in relation to question five in the summative interview schedule. These comments focused on the issue of mentor

selection and how effective mentors were identified in the organisation. Although this had not been a specific question in the interview schedule, the amount of data warranted a separate section to present this additional finding regarding mentor selection. Table 6.30 summarises the teachers" perceptions of ways in which effective teachers could be identified within the organisation who would be effective mentors.

Table 6.30: Mentor Selection Processes

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Self selection: Voluntary	3	**18%**
History with the organisation	3	**18%**
Teacher and student evaluation	2	**12%**
Reliant on peer reviews	1	**6%**

The first category of comment in relation to the teachers" perceptions of how a mentor could be identified and selected to participate in a mentoring programme referred to the teacher self selecting or volunteering to be a mentor. For example, three of the teachers mentioned how they believed any mentor selection process needed to contain an element of "*teacher self selection*", so that there was less dependence on the organisation deciding "*the right match*". This view was qualified by one of the teachers as they questioned, "*Does the „picked" person really want to be a mentor?*" Their comment indicated a perception that not all teachers make good mentors, as they added, "*You could never expect a good mentor not to volunteer, but conversely, just because they volunteer doesn"t mean they are a good mentor*".

Another teacher offered a description of how they perceived the effectiveness of a mentor self selection strategy: *"Self selection would mean a person acknowledges their own strengths and has the willingness to put the effort into being supportive for the gain of the mentee, rather than being aligned to what can be termed „committee sitters" who get nominated for selfish reasons and their own outcomes".*

The second highest category identified that a teacher‟s history with the organisation was perceived as a mechanism for the organisation determining who would make an effective mentor. Of the three teachers who mentioned this aspect of mentor identification and selection, one of them expressed some uncertainty about a "*reliance on the teacher"s history in the organisation*" being a determinant of their effectiveness as a mentor, suggesting that "*some individuals may have previously „hidden" skills*". They also posed the question, "*How does an organisation know what a person"s involvement is outside the workplace?*" again indicating that the teacher‟s history within the organisation was only one aspect of the whole person. This was further evident by their final comment: "*A good manager may know, although likely the larger the organisation, the less is known of the private individual"s pursuits.*"

The third category commented on by two of the teachers involved the use of "*lecturer evaluations and student feedback*" as mechanisms that could help to determine teacher effectiveness. Their responses indicated a perception that this process for establishing teacher effectiveness would naturally translate into the teacher being an effective mentor.

The final category was mentioned by one teacher who commented on the degree of informality often involved in the process of mentor selection. The teacher believed that a reliance on informal processes for identifying the mentor would be detrimental to the success of a mentoring programme: "*I don"t think there are formal processes in place at all. Mentor selection often relies on peer review and word of mouth, which isn"t ideal*".

6.10.5b (ii) Core characteristics of the mentee as perceived by the mentee teachers

In response to the second section of question five regarding the core characteristics of the mentee, the eight mentee teachers described a wide range of attributes, qualities and skills that they perceived as important for the mentee to bring to the mentoring partnership in order to influence the mentoring experience and support they received as a consequence. Table 6.31 (refer p. 258) summarises the mentee teachers‟ perceptions of the characteristics a mentee needed to possess and bring to the mentoring partnership to affect change for themselves.

Table 6.31: Core Mentee Characteristics: The Mentees' Perceptions

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Prepared to discuss issues and difficulties in their teaching	7	**87%**
Willingness to participate in the mentoring	5	**62%**
Open to change	3	**37%**
Reflective	2	**25%**
Have confidence to ask for help	1	**12%**

The highest category of essential mentee characteristics indicated that the mentee teachers believed the mentee needs to be prepared to discuss issues and difficulties in their teaching with the mentor. Seven of the eight mentee teachers described this as the mentee being prepared to learn from the mentor by talking through problems and being open to the mentor"s feedback in response: *"You"ve got to want to learn, formally, about yourself. Be prepared to think about new ideas, be open, be prepared to listen and be prepared to share some of your struggles"*.

One of the teachers commented that the mentee "*should be willing to share*" and "*not be scared of saying something even if it"s wrong*". The need for the mentee to ask for and listen to the mentor"s feedback and then make judgements for themselves was a prevalent theme in the teachers" comments. As one of the teachers stated, "*Be open to their feedback and take it on board. If you don"t like it, fair enough*". Another teacher explained in more detail how they thought it was the mentee"s responsibility to use the mentoring meetings to help themselves in their professional development, asking for the mentor"s advice and listening to their feedback: *"Be able to be confident and able to say I need help with something. To get feedback. To be honest with what I am doing. Be prepared for being observed in my teaching and getting peer feedback on this"*.

The second most important comment in regard to core mentee characteristics highlighted that four of the teachers perceived the mentee as needed to be willing to participate in the mentoring. They described this as "*willingness to share*" and "*have a desire to be mentored*". One of the teachers also mentioned how they had given their mentor advice as much as received advice from their mentor, adding "*don"t be afraid of doing this either. We both certainly took stuff on board*".

Another teacher associated the concept of the mentee"s willingness to participate in mentoring with the mentee taking some responsibility for the meetings and ensuring the mentoring partnership met regularly: "*If you don"t hear from them, take the initiative to meet. It"s not just up to the mentor*". Overall, the teachers" feedback indicated that the mentee would not benefit from the mentoring if they did not perceive the value of this type of professional development support and actively engage in the mentoring process.

The third highest category was commented on by three teachers who referred to the mentee needing to be open to change. The teachers" responses complemented other comments that had been made regarding the mentee needing to be prepared for meetings and actively participating in the mentoring process. For example, "*Be willing to re-consider your own teaching even when someone disagrees with you*" was mentioned by one teacher who also believed it was important to "*not take things too personally; it"s about your teaching*". All three teachers" comments indicated a perception that the mentee needed to be open to changing their ideas and teaching approaches in order to gain some benefit from the mentoring and to "*try out the mentor"s suggestions*".

The fourth category was mentioned by two of the mentee teachers, their feedback indicating that a core characteristic of the mentee was to be reflective and think about their teaching practice within and as a result of the mentoring support. As one of the teachers commented, "*Be reflective. Being able to look at yourself and see what it is you actually need*". Their feedback indicated that the mentee"s ability to reflect enabled them to receive support from the mentor that was targeted at meeting their professional development needs. The other teacher related the concept of mentee reflection directly with their own actions in the mentoring partnership they had participated in over the one year programme: *"We should have met more and taken time to write the reflective journal. Time for that reflection would have been useful. I could have used this in the classroom"*.

The final category was identified by one teacher who believed that the mentee needed to ask for help from the mentor and feel confident in doing so. They talked about "*giving yourself time to develop this confidence as the relationship*

develops", indicating a perception that as the mentee gains more confidence, their ability to ask the mentor for help increased as a result.

6.10.5b (ii) Core characteristics of the mentee as perceived by the mentor teachers

In addition to the eight mentee teachers‟ responses to question five regarding the core characteristics of the mentee, the eight mentor teachers also identified described a range of attributes, qualities and skills that they perceived as important for the mentee to bring to the mentoring partnership in order to benefit from the mentoring support they received. A number of their comments were reflective of the mentee teachers‟ perceptions. Table 6.32 summarises the mentor teachers‟ perceptions of the core characteristics a mentee needed to possess and bring to the mentoring partnership to benefit from this experience.

Table 6.32: Core Mentee Characteristics: The Mentors' Perceptions

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=8 % of sample
Be open to other perspectives	7	**87%**
Be prepared and willing to participate in mentoring	6	**75%**
A willingness to be reflective	5	**62%**
Good listening skills	3	**37%**
Keep confidentiality	2	**25%**
Accept the mentor isn‟t the sole teaching expert	1	**12%**

When asked what they believed were important attributes of the mentee and their expectations of what the mentee brought to the partnership, the highest number of responses involved the mentee needing to be open to other perspectives. This was defined by two of the mentor teachers as "*being receptive to the mentor‟s suggestions*" and "*acceptance of another person‟s point of view*", with one teacher offering an alternative perspective that indicated a perception that the mentee needed to accept the mentor‟s "*take on things*": "*The mentee needs to accept that they can‟t keep choosing until they find the right mold*". Understanding that personalities can influence the mentoring interactions was also suggested by one of the teachers as an important mentee trait.

The second highest category indicated that a core characteristic of the mentee from the mentor teachers‟ perspective was to be prepared for the mentoring meetings and be willing to actively participate in the mentoring interactions and process. The six teachers who mentioned this characteristic were adamant that the mentee would only benefit from the mentoring if they actively and willingly engaged. Two of the teachers described this attribute as the mentee coming to the meetings prepared to work on improving their practice, one of them commenting, "*At least be willing to participate and not be afraid to ask for guidance*". This teacher‟s comment also indicated a perception that as well as being willing to engage in the mentoring process, the mentee needed to "*take action and make some decisions for themselves*".

A willingness to be reflective was the third highest category of mentee characteristic, mentioned by four of the teachers. These teachers believed that it was more difficult for the mentor if the mentee didn‟t come to the meetings with some reflective preparation and clarity of expression, so that the mentor could understand what the mentee was thinking and wanting support with. As one of the teachers stated, "*They"ve got to be willing to want to be reflective in their teaching and want to improve that*". All of the teachers felt that if the mentee was not prepared to do this, it generally resulted in the mentor "*ending up having to do a lot of digging*". One teacher clearly articulated their belief that the mentee needed to "*be focused with an idea of what their issue is*" and engage in reflective practice if they (the mentee) were to benefit from the mentor‟s support: *"From the mentor"s point of view, if the person hasn"t come with some reflective preparation, it is much more difficult for the mentor. They need to be able to communicate effectively without just coming and sitting"*.

The fourth most frequently mentioned core mentee characteristic identified the ability and willingness of the mentee to listen. Three of the teachers referred to how the mentee‟s ability to listen directly influenced the outcomes of the mentoring. Two teachers additionally explained how they believed that both the mentee and the mentor needed to possess this skill in order to effectively influence the mentoring experience and the outcomes from this. One of these teachers referred to how "*both people need to be prepared to listen and take on board each other"s perspectives*", whilst the second teacher perceived the mentee and mentor

having "*an open-minded attitude with the ability to listen and give/accept constructive criticism*".

Keeping confidentiality was identified as the fifth category as a core mentee characteristic. Two mentor teachers referred to this, believing that "*confidentiality goes without saying*". One of the teachers indicated in their comment that the issue of confidentiality directly impacted on the level of trust in the mentoring relationship and was the responsibility of both the mentee and the mentor: *"Trust that when we are talking about things in the meetings, these discussions will stay within the relationship rather than being externally discussed"*.

The final category was commented on by one of the mentor teachers as they expressed the importance of the mentee"s expectations of the mentor needing to be realistic and informed. As well as identifying that they felt "*some people have tremendously high expectations of the mentor*", this teacher believed that the mentee needed to "accept the mentor isn"t the be-all-and-end-all and won"t have all the answers. Additionally, their comment indicated a perception that it was important for the mentee to acknowledge the mentor"s needs as well: *"On the day, the mentor may have their own problems and can"t just switch this off. There is never going to be a perfect exchange, is there? I suppose it"s two-ended"*.

In addition to the more specific comments the sixteen academic teachers made with regard to essential mentor and mentee characteristics, the teachers identified some mutual attributes and traits that they perceived as being applicable to both the mentor and the mentee. For example, mutual responsibility for the mentoring partnership and equality of roles and position within the partnership were emphasised by the teachers. A shared role, a willingness to share that was two-way and a preparation to learn together were other comments made across the group. Mutual respect for each other and their respective disciplines was also mentioned, one of the mentor teachers regarding this as an opportunity to share different experiences with each other. They summed this up in their feedback: *"Both parties need to be committed to the task at hand, not just talking about it. Both the mentor and mentee need to commit to the process"*.

6.10.6 Question Six: Demographic Influences on the Mentoring Experience

After the initial identification of the eighteen academic teachers who would be engaging in the one year mentoring programme study, the teachers completed a checklist which asked for specific information about themselves in relation to their engagement in the mentoring programme study (Appendix N, refer p. 446). The checklist aimed to assist the researcher with the partnership matching process as well as allow for some participant choice in this process. One of the key elements in the checklist was a focus on demographics involving four key factors: gender, age, professional discipline and ethnicity. The eighteen teachers were asked if they had any preferences for each of these factors prior to commencing the mentoring partnership. At the same time, they were asked whether they would prefer to choose their own partner or be matched by the researcher.

Sixteen of the teachers agreed that they were happy for the researcher to complete the matching process for them. Two teachers who were to assume the mentee role stated that they would prefer to be matched with a same gender mentor. One of the two teachers also identified that they would like to have a mentor who was older and more experienced than them.

In response to question six in the summative interview schedule which asked the sixteen teachers who completed the interview whether any of the demographic characteristics of their partnership had influenced their mentoring experience, the teachers identified a range of demographic factors that they believed had influenced the mentoring. In addition to the teachers" identification of these demographics, their responses also highlighted their perceptions of how the demographics had influenced.

Table 6.33 (refer p. 264) summarises the teachers" identification of different demographic features of their mentoring partnership that they perceived had influenced the mentoring experience and how these demographics had been an influence. Examples of the teachers" comments provide an illustration of how they believed the specific demographic impacted on their engagement in the mentoring.

Table 6.33: Demographic Influences on the Mentoring Experience

Comment Category	Category Example	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Discipline/Roles	Different discipline gives a different perspective	13	**81%**
Gender	Gender mix doesn"t influence/Same gender match was important	9	**56%**
Commonalities	Level of familiarity with each other	5	**31%**
Age	Similar age group	4	**25%**
Ethnicity	Understanding another culture	3	**18%**
Environment	Where you meet makes a difference	1	**6%**

The most important response to question six regarding the demographic features that had influenced the mentoring experience involved whether the teaching discipline of the mentor and the mentee was the same or different. Nine of the thirteen teachers who commented on this indicated that a different discipline mix in the mentoring partnership had enhanced the effectiveness of the mentoring process and the activities they had engaged in. "*Getting a different angle on things from a different faculty*" was mentioned by one teacher whilst another teacher who had assumed a mentee role in the dyad partnership stated: *"Being in totally different fields has been better. The mentor has been a sounding board as well, not just understanding because they are in a similar field. Also, you may want to vent about someone or something and you can"t do this with someone in your department"*.

One of the mentee teachers questioned whether they would have benefitted from having a mentor from a different discipline: "*I wonder how I would have got on if I had a mechanic or builder. I'm not sure really*". Interestingly, this teacher also commented that they had shared a "*similar job role and values*" with their mentor, which they perceived as beneficial for the relationship as "*we didn"t have to do a lot of explaining*". This additional reference to the influence of roles was a common connection with the focus on teaching disciplines in the thirteen teachers" responses. One of the mentor teachers referred to how roles of a more social nature had influenced the development of their mentoring partnership in the early stages:

"Family roles – being parents. We could compare these things and understand each other"s role in this. They"re also things that identify a person"s learning and the experiences they bring to the mentoring relationship".

As well as social and personal roles influencing the mentoring partnership, one of the mentee teachers referred specifically to the benefits they believed they would have gained if there had been similarities in job roles between themselves and their mentor, stating: *"Roles definitely. I think it could work if you are in different roles if you had a particular issue to focus on or get help with. In terms of longer ongoing mentorship, it makes more sense if you are in similar job roles. There were lots of things I was running in to that the mentor couldn"t advise me on. Actually, I wouldn"t even think of going to them".*

In contrast to the teachers who had commented on the benefits of a mentoring partnership being comprised of different disciplines between the mentor and the mentee, two of the teachers perceived the similarities in the disciplines within their partnership had been a key positive influence. One of these teachers explained: *"Our similar teaching areas helped because we were both experiencing the same reactions from people we are teaching. We"re both using and teaching using technology and striking similar problems to talk through in the meetings".*

The second most frequently mentioned demographic that was perceived as having influenced the mentoring experience involved the issue of gender. The nine teachers who commented on this demographic articulated a mixed view of how or whether gender had influenced their mentoring partnership. Four of the teachers felt that gender had not significantly factored in the success of their partnership. One of these teachers identified that the effectiveness of their mentoring experience had been mainly due to "*personal chemistry, I think because we were both male*", whilst another teacher who had been in a mentee role did not think gender was an issue "*at all*", adding "*I think what is more important is how the mentor creates that safe environment rather than what gender they are*".

In comparison to the four teachers who did not perceive gender as an influencing demographic, three of the nine teachers clearly indicated a preference for a same gender match: "*It may be that man-to-man is better than man-to-woman*." One mentor teacher in this group of three explained how they believed the mentoring

relationship had "*developed quickly as a result*". Another of the three teachers who had been a mentee in their dyad partnership was adamant that the same gender mix had made a difference to their mentoring experience, especially as they were also a relatively new teacher in the institution at the time of the mentoring study: *"Definitely good talking with a bloke and having respect for him. He has experience, is a bit older and there"s no bullshit. The mentor being another male and being older than me made a lot of difference for me"*.

The degree of commonality between the mentor and the mentee comprised the third highest category of comment from the academic teachers. Five teachers mentioned this demographic in reference to how they perceived it had influenced the mentoring, providing a range of opinions as to whether too many or too few commonalities within the mentoring partnership had impacted on the mentoring relationship. For example, one of the teachers talked about how they believed the degree of commonality in their mentoring partnership had helped to form and build the relationship whilst maintaining a focus on the purpose of the mentoring: *"Commonality helped to form the relationship, so when we got to talk about work, we were able to open up with each other and critique each other"s teaching practice*".

Another mentee teacher referred to how the level of familiarity between themselves and their mentor had been a major influence on their involvement in the mentoring partnership. They explained that "*we weren"t complete strangers and that helped. I liked it because I had that comfort level straight away*". There were also comments regarding commonalities in the job structure or ways of teaching and thinking. One of the five teachers felt that too many commonalities in the job could be counter-productive and "*assumptions can be made if you have too much in common*". Discovering commonalities in their personal lives appeared to be a significant factor in how two of the teachers perceived the success of the mentoring they had engaged in. For example, these teachers indicated that because of the commonalities they shared as two women with families, this had influenced their partnership process: "*The other commonality we had was the juggling women have to do, for example, commitment to families, students, pressure of study. Having this in common made quite a bit of difference I believe"*.

The implications of age as a significant demographic impacting on the mentoring experience illustrated the fourth category which was commented on by four of the sixteen teachers. The teachers all talked about how the similarity in age group between themselves and their partner had been an important influence on the mentoring experiences as a result. For example, three of the teachers quickly identified "*similar age group*" as their first response to question six. Interestingly, one of the teachers who had been a mentor in their partnership indicated some ambivalence as to whether this demographic was important: "*Possibly age. Not too much difference in age I think made a difference*". In response, another teacher who had assumed a mentor role expressed a certainty that similar ages made a distinct difference in the mentoring partnership: *"Definitely I think age group. Similar ages would be better. Someone very young may not relate to you so well"*.

The fifth most frequently mentioned category of demographic factors perceived by the academic teachers as impacting on their mentoring experience involved ethnicity. Three teachers commented on ethnicity as an influencing factor in their partnerships, although one of the teachers stated that "*it didn"treally impact, but it did give us the occasional interesting point to talk about*". They also added that they could see ethnicity as "*a possible consideration in the mentoring partnership*". Another of the teachers who had assumed a mentor role admitted: "*The mentee was from another culture. I had to get my head around if her focus on negative issues was a cultural thing*".

The final category in relation to demographic influences on the mentoring experience was mentioned by one teacher who indicated that the environment had been a key factor determining the effectiveness of their mentoring experience, in terms of the access to spaces which were conducive to engaging in mentoring meetings. This teacher talked about how the environment could "*make or break the whole thing*". They were particularly concerned with the physical environment needing to be "*visual, especially as ours was a male-female match*". In some contrast to this last comment, the teacher added, "*I wouldn"t be comfortable however in a very public area*". They also believed that the mentor needed to "*set the scene*" in relation to asking the mentee "*how they wanted the room to be and how they want to do this*".

6.10.7 Question Seven: Influence of the Organisation

When the academic teachers were asked how the organisation could influence mentoring in question seven of the interview schedule, they provided a range of responses. Their comments focused on how they believed the organisation could value mentoring as a teacher support mechanism, which they believed would consequently impact on a teacher‟s mentoring experience. Table 6.34 summarises the sixteen teachers‟ perceptions of how an organisation can demonstrate the valuing of mentoring.

Table 6.34: How the Organisation Demonstrates Value of Mentoring

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Time allocation	13	**81%**
Reward and recognition	11	**68%**
Support of managers	8	**50%**
Teacher professional development is part of the organisational culture	6	**37%**
Built into workload	3	**18%**
Space and accessibility	3	**18%**
Degree of accountability	2	**12%**

The most important response from the academic teachers in response to question seven involved the issue of time allocation. Thirteen of the teachers perceived that allocating adequate time for the mentors and the mentees to engage effectively and regularly in mentoring would "*make it beneficial, by giving total teaching hours to it*". One of the teachers believed that the organisation could recognise and value mentoring as a professional development activity by allocating time. As they stated, "*Mentoring often doesn"thappen because people are time poor. Time to do mentoring means people can and will commit to it and commit to that time*". Another teacher who had assumed a mentee role explained: "*For me, it was still having the release time because of working in a team, someone else has to do my shift. There needs to be recognition that this is a legitimate use of my time*".

Another teacher who had commented on the aspect of time allocation as a way for the organisation to value mentoring focused more on how they had managed the

scheduling and "*fitting in*" the mentoring meetings during the one year period. They explained how their partnership had "*met at convenient times*", adding "*obviously we had to work out meeting in between our teaching*".

The second highest category commented on identified that eleven of the teachers perceived the organisation could demonstrate valuing mentoring through rewarding and recognising the investment of time and expertise by the mentor and the mentee. Six teachers emphasised that the mentor in particular should be recognised for their involvement in a mentoring programme: "*Being a mentor is actually someone"sjob. There should be a reward for being a mentor, for example it could be a KPI in their performance agreement*".

One of the six teachers felt strongly that managers should recognise the mentor"s role and acknowledge that "*people put themselves out to be a mentor*". Their comments indicated that the recognition or reward for the mentor role stemmed from their managers" acknowledgement of this: *"Managers should recognise this is a legitimate use of time that should be put into the teacher"sjob description. This would help manage the peaks and troughs inherent in the job"*. Recognition through performance appraisals and progression scales were additional vehicles perceived by three of the teachers as a demonstration of valuing mentoring by the organisation.

The third most frequently mentioned category of comments built on the theme of management support for the mentor, identified in the second category. Eight of the teachers who referred to this described a number of ways in which they perceived the support of managers could acknowledge and value mentoring, including, "*mentoring is recognised as being a positive and important thing to do*", "*mentoring is seen as valid*" and "*mentoring is acknowledged in my teaching timetable*". Two of the teachers perceived management support as acknowledging mentoring as a legitimate job activity, as one of them explained: "*We don"thave to do mentoring by meeting in the lunch breaks all the time*". Consideration of the mentoring teachers feeling safe to engage in a mentoring programme was mentioned by one of the mentor teachers. They emphasised how this had been an important aspect of their agreement to become involved in the project: "*The*

organisation has to make it safe for people. You know you have the support from higher level people before you get involved as a mentor".

Creating a culture of teacher professional development comprised the fourth category. A clear indication from six of the teachers who referred to this aspect was that "*mentoring should be part of the institution, that"s part of being a teacher*". The teachers discussed how they believed a culture of cross-campus communication being "*encouraged and nurtured*" by the organisation would significantly impact on the value placed on mentoring as one of the mechanisms to support this. One of the teachers talked about how they believed mentoring was an "*essential vehicle for encouraging campus-wide relationships*". An additional comment was provided by another teacher who believed that "*the organisation would have to encourage rather than dictate the mentoring process*".

The cultural climate of the organisation was perceived as a major challenge that impacted on mentoring, commented on by two of the teachers. They suggested that mentoring could be one mechanism that contributed to creating a positive climate. One of them emphasised this point: *"Any move by the organisation that creates an atmosphere where communication between faculties is improved has to be good, so I believe that the organisation should formally adopt the process and make it available. The organisation would have to encourage rather than dictate the process"*.

The fifth most important category commented on by the three of the teachers in relation to how they perceived the organisation could demonstrate valuing of mentoring involved the issue of building mentoring into an academic teacher"s workload. One teacher talked about how the time they invested in mentoring should legitimately factor in their workload calculation, suggesting that this would also reduce the pressure of managers" expectations: "*When you"re busy, they"re always wondering why you are going off to meetings. If it was just part of my workload, they wouldn"t worry*". Another teacher associated the issue of mentoring as a normal workload expectation with the opportunity for the teacher to be formally acknowledged for their involvement in a mentoring programme: *"Realistically building mentoring into teachers" workloads would be seen as a*

form of professional development and the teacher would be given credit for it. That would value it".

The sixth category was mentioned by three teachers who indicated that adequate space being accessible within the organisation was a way for the organisation to show that mentoring was a valued activity. The teachers perceived that access to spaces for mentoring meetings was a vital component of a mentoring programme, one teacher stating, "S*paces being available is important, especially because of the confidentiality thing*". Other comments from the three teachers focused on the need for privacy and spaces which would also contribute to teachers feeling safe to participate in mentoring: "*We need adequate spaces for us to meet. There really aren"t enough spaces for people to meet privately. This would contribute to making mentoring safe for people*".

The final category was mentioned by two teachers whose responses to question seven indicated a perception that value of mentoring by the organisation could be determined by the expected degree of accountability to management by the teachers engaging in mentoring partnerships. One teacher used the term "*confidentiality*" to describe their feelings that "*what is said and done in the mentoring is not shared outside that, especially not having to be accountable to managers*". The other teacher perceived the potential for a negative mentoring outcome if the mentoring teachers had to report back to their manager: *"Legitimisation by management usually comes with increased accountability, for example, filling in forms and accounting for what you are doing. That could sometimes detract from the purpose and enjoyment of mentoring. Mentoring should not be tied up in accountability processes"*.

6.10.8 Question Eight: Potential Impact of Mentoring on the Organisation

In response to question eight in the interview schedule, the sixteen academic teachers provided a variety of comments in relation to how they perceived their mentoring experience and outcomes from this may have impacted on the organisation. Table 6.35 (refer p. 272) identifies the teachers" perceptions of how they potentially impacted on the organisation as a consequence of engaging in mentoring.

Table 6.35: Potential Impact of Mentoring on the Organisation

Comment Category	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Additional support mechanism for teachers	10	**62%**
Effective teaching practices	8	**50%**
Collegial networking	5	**31%**
Positive impact on student learning	4	**25%**

The highest category of comments referred to how mentoring had provided support for teachers in addition to other existing professional development mechanisms within the organisation. The ten teachers who referred to this indicated that extra support for teachers via mentoring had to have a "*positive impact*" on the organisation, one teacher commenting that the mentoring had "*helped to make peer evaluation more meaningful*". Another teacher who had been a mentor in their mentoring partnership perceived significant benefits had been gained by their mentee because of the mentoring support they were able to access. As they stated, "*It was probably very good for the mentee to have someone to talk to, good for their mental health*".

As well as perceiving that the mentoring had provided additional teaching support by instigating "*more informal education in all sorts of areas across the campus*", one teacher who had assumed a mentor role in their partnership discussed how their mentee had benefitted from the mentoring support, indicating that as a result the organisation ended up retaining an effective teacher: *"It encouraged the mentee to keep going as they were ready to throw the hat in. It helped them keep enthusiasm for the programme development process which led to sound programme changes"*.

The second highest category of comment involved the perception that an increase in teacher effectiveness as a consequence of teachers engaging in mentoring had a direct impact on the organisation. Comments from eight of the teachers were closely aligned with the highest number of responses received regarding the impact of mentoring providing an additional support mechanism for teachers. Comments such as "*I think they will get a better service from me*" and "*I am more effective and more relaxed in my teaching now*" indicated that two of the teachers perceived

they had improved in their teaching and the organisation benefitted as a consequence. One teacher felt that their mentoring experience and outcomes had influenced the organisation because "*I am talking about teaching with others more*" and "*obviously the changes I have made will have an influence*".

Knowing more about their role as a teacher and perceiving that they are a "*better teacher as a result*" was mentioned by one of the mentee teachers. They talked about how role clarification had been a positive outcome for them from the mentoring as they now knew "*what should be expected and what boundaries to put in place with students*". A final comment in this second category was made by one of the mentor teachers who talked about the impact of the mentoring support on the mentee"s teaching development: *"From my point of view, if changes can be made in someone"s teaching and you"re getting good student evaluation as a result, that obviously impacts on the organisation. It also supports teachers doing the Certificate in Adult Education"*.

An increase in collegial networking across the campus was the third highest category, commented on by five teachers. These teachers perceived collegial networking as having a significant impact on the organisation, explained as "*impacting on the culture*" and "*changing the way people help each other*". One of the teachers believed that the mentoring had provided an opportunity to "*build relationships with other groups and department across the campus*", expressing how they had appreciated the chance to meet other teachers whom they normally would not have interacted with on a day to day basis. A teacher who had been a mentor in their partnership provided a comprehensive view of how they believed the mentoring had influenced the organisation as a whole, making a number of references to the opportunities for cross-campus communication: *"Improved communication between faculties at all levels. Stress reduction for people who are able to establish a relationship that creates an atmosphere for communication. Better awareness of the similarities and differences between faculties"*.

The final category which was mentioned by four of the sixteen teachers focused on the impact of mentoring on student learning. They talked about their students being "*more satisfied*", one teacher emphasising that they had "*far less student complaints to deal with now*". Their feedback indicated that the mentoring support

they had received had resulted in changes and improvements in student learning, which ultimately impacted on the organisation as well. One of the teachers who had assumed a mentee role indicated that their own teaching development had definitely impacted on student learning: *"Yes. We"ve got a fantastic programme now which has taken a while to develop. Students are far happier in their learning and the programme is meeting their needs more".*

6.10.9 Question Nine: The Future Place of Mentoring in the Organisation

The data collection in Cycle Four, which comprised the final two of five focus group meetings and individual summative interviews, had predominantly focused on ascertaining the academic teachers" perceptions and identification of outcomes as a result of engaging in a mentoring partnership over the one year mentoring programme. The final question in the summative interview schedule, question nine, asked the sixteen teachers to now consider the potential future of mentoring in the organisation, having reflected on their own mentoring experience over the programme period. The teachers provided a wide range of opinions in response to question nine. Whilst some of the teachers focused their response on how mentoring could be provided in terms of the structure and processes of a mentoring programme, other teachers commented on the benefits they perceived would be gained if the organisation implemented a mentoring programme in the future.

All sixteen teachers advocated for mentoring to be an organisational teacher support mechanism in the future. Table 6.36 (refer p. 275) summarises the teachers" responses in relation to how mentoring could be provided and their perception of the benefits if a mentoring system was established. Table 6.36 also indicates whether the category of comment referred to the structure of a future mentoring programme or a perceived benefit.

Table 6.36 The Future Place of Mentoring in the Organisation

Comment Category	Category Type	Frequency of Comment	n=16 % of sample
Formal system but includes choice at the mentoring partnership level	Structure	10	**62%**
Compulsory for new teachers	Structure	7	**44%**
Voluntary for all teachers	Structure	5	**31%**
Centrally coordinated	Structure	4	**25%**
Available for experienced teachers	Structure and benefit	4	**25%**
Mentoring participants are rewarded and recognised	Structure and benefit	3	**18%**
Another professional development mechanism	Structure and benefit	3	**18%**
Choice in the mentor selection process	Structure	2	**12%**
More reflective teachers	Benefit	2	**12%**
Allocation of time and space	Structure	2	**12%**
Inclusion of group meetings	Structure	1	**6%**
One year programme time frame	Structure	1	**6%**
Opportunity to have different mentors	Structure	1	**6%**

The highest number of responses in relation to question nine, the final question in the interview schedule, involved the issue of whether a mentoring system should be formal or informal in structure. Ten of the sixteen teachers who mentioned this indicated that the organisation should support teacher development by providing a formal mentoring structure but the mentoring participants should have the choice as to how formal or informal their partnerships were. A comment by one of the teachers summarised this perception: *"Definitely a place for it. More informal than formal though. People can access mentoring and there"s aformal system set up but it"s voluntary to participate in"*.

Three of the ten teachers were emphatic that the mentoring system "*doesn"t become another tick-box exercise*", indicating that as much as they appreciated the potential for mentoring to be formally recognised and supported by the organisation, they did not want to be beholden to "*excessive management accountability*". A question posed by one of the teachers suggested that the

decision about level of formality and informality of a mentoring system was problematic: *"Mentoring should happen here, yes. The thing is, what about the logistics in how formal you make it, or should it happen naturally and people choose how they do mentoring?"*

An additional perspective regarding how formal or informal a mentoring system should be was provided by one teacher which indicated a perception that other professional development systems existing in the organisation were not evaluated to ascertain their effectiveness on teacher development: "*They put these different things in place but they don"t necessarily measure what happens from them. What happens if it"s not measured?*"

The second highest category involved the consideration of mentoring being compulsory for all new teaching staff in the organisation. The seven teachers who commented on this indicated a certainty that a mentoring system should be actively engaged in by all new teachers, including teachers new to the organisation, and that mentoring became a natural and expected component of the new teacher"s induction. Five of the teachers focused their opinions on how they believed the teacher new to teaching would benefit by having to engage in mentoring, evident by comments such as, "*It would be essential for new starters*" and "*Definitely new teachers need to have mentoring provided for them*".

Two of the teachers referred specifically to how mentoring would be beneficial for the teacher who is new in the organisation. One of these teachers talked about how mentoring could provide support for the teacher who was new to the organisation or in a new job role: *"I hope mentoring will play a really important role. It allows others to learn about the organisation, the culture of the organisation and to come on board quicker. Really helpful for someone in a new role in the organisation too"*. The second teacher further qualified this thinking, indicating that they also advocated for mentoring as a support for the new teacher: *"I personally would like to see it available, certainly to any new lecturer. But not just for new lecturers. If you"re new into a faculty, you"ve actually got to establish relationships. If you have someone who is set to help you with this process specifically, I think this would make a difference. We have an induction programme but it"s not focused on your own discipline group"*.

The third category mentioned by five of the teachers focused on the issue of whether a future mentoring system in the organisation should be voluntary for all academic teaching staff to engage in. Comments from all five teachers indicated that they were in favour of the organisation establishing a mentoring scheme in the future but with some conditions. For example, one of the teachers claimed: "*We need mentoring but we should be able to choose to do it*". Another teacher clearly believed that "*Yes, it should be supported and encouraged but it should never be made compulsory"*.

The degree to which teachers should be able to choose how or whether they engage in mentoring was associated with earlier responses from the teachers when they discussed whether a mentoring system should be formal or informal. Two of the teachers indicated that they believed mentoring should be "*informal and loose, so people can choose how they do this*". Having agreed that mentoring "*should have a place*" one of the teachers indicated a degree of uncertainty about mentoring being a compulsory activity: *"I"mnot sure it should be compulsory because I don"t think that will work. Some people who think „Idon"twant to do it" may subconsciously sabotage"*.

The fourth category mentioned by four of the teachers indicated a perception that the success of a future mentoring system would be influenced by how this system was managed. This was highlighted by a question from one of the teachers as they asked, "*Does it happen anyway or do we need something or someone in place to ensure it happens?*" Interestingly, they then referred to existing systems of teacher support, asking a second question, "*I know we have some structures in place to support teachers but do we even know what or who they are?*"

Two of the teachers were adamant that any future mentoring system would require a person to coordinate it, one of them describing this as, "*It needs to come through a contact person to access people in other parts of the campus*". The other teacher"s response indicated a similar perspective: "*Someone needs to drive it, a „person broker". You know, someone who knows the game*". Another teacher who had assumed a mentor role in their dyad partnership provided a comprehensive statement that indicated their perception of the need for a mentoring programme to be centrally coordinated: *"I think we need a base where we can go and request a*

mentor to help with a specific teaching area or general support. This person sets up the meeting and asks if the person is prepared to be a mentor".

The fifth most frequently mentioned category, commented on by four of the teachers, identified that a future mentoring system needed to be accessible to experienced teachers as well as teachers new to teaching. Responses from four of the teachers indicated that experienced teachers can gain as much benefit from mentoring. One of the teachers, who was also an experienced teacher, was adamant that "*just because you"re experienced doesn"t mean you"re not going to benefit from mentoring*".

There was a perception from these teachers that experienced teachers would generally have different needs as compared to a new teacher, but mentoring could still assist them in other areas of their teaching practice. For example, one teacher talked about how mentoring "*might be valuable for someone who has been teaching for a while, especially if they don"t have a team*". The benefit of making mentoring available for experienced teachers to access as well as new teaching staff was apparent in one teacher"s comment: *"Good for staff who have been here a while. Helps them to be consciously reflective and challenge what they have done over the years. We forget that experienced staff are expected to do new things"*.

Recognising the value of mentoring and rewarding teachers who invested time in a mentoring programme comprised the sixth category of comment. Three teachers referred to this, suggesting a number of ways in which the organisation could recognise and reward mentoring activities and mentoring participants. For example, one of the teachers stated, "*It needs to be recognised as a valid thing to do and seen as a positive thing to do*". Another teacher agreed with this statement and added, "*Reward could be allocating hours to it so teachers can be involved*."

The third teacher questioned the lifespan of a mentoring programme if recognition of its value and strategies for rewarding the mentor in particular were not integral in the programme structure. This teacher clarified that they didn"t believe a reward needed to be financial but could be applied in other ways: *"If officially recognised for the mentor, there would be time release. It doesn"t have to be a financial reward. It could be promoted as professional development and a personal growth thing"*.

The seventh category commented on by three of the teachers indicated a perception that mentoring could legitimately be seen as another professional development mechanism for academic teaching staff within the organisation. Two of the teachers talked about the "*option*" of mentoring as a professional development activity, commenting that a mentoring scheme would be a "*great option for professional development*". One of these teachers believed that a mentoring system would be useful "*as an evaluation tool for career progression*". A response from the third teacher indicated that they also perceived mentoring as a professional development tool that the organisation should have in place, emphasising the importance of how the mentoring relationship provides another conduit of support for the teacher: *"We operate in a very hierarchical system. Where do you go to get help? There"s a different power relationship in the mentoring partnership to the institution"s power base. Mentoring can be on a much more equitable basis, not tied up in accountability processes".*

Having choice in the mentor selection process comprised the eighth category, commented on by two of the teachers. One teacher emphasised the importance for them of being able to "*pick my own mentor*", qualifying this response with "*you could have already developed a relationship with someone on campus*". Additionally, this teacher perceived that a formal mentoring system established in the organisation would "*acknowledge that mentoring relationships already exist and formalise this so that it happens*". Another teacher, who was also an experienced teacher, expressed how they would like the organisation to acknowledge professional autonomy, recognising the academic teacher as having the ability to decide when or if they needed mentoring support: "*Would be useful to access a mentor when I needed to and choose who this was*".

The ninth category identified the benefit of more reflective teachers in the organisation as a consequence of implementing a mentoring system. The two teachers who referred to the benefit of developing more reflective teachers by providing a mentoring support system believed that both new and experienced teachers would benefit from this. As well as a starting point to encourage new teachers to learn how to reflect on their practice, one of the teachers added, "*people who have been here a while should be given time to reflect on their own teaching*". The second teacher associated increased reflective practice by the teacher with the

teacher also "*enjoying*" a degree of variety in their job: "*Have a release from the day to day drudgery, as well as helping you become more reflective*".

The tenth category commented on by two teachers identified a perception that if a mentoring programme was to be implemented in the organisation in the future, teachers would require "*realistic and adequate space*" and time to participate. One of the teachers expressed this as "*the organisation needs to make space for the mentoring relationships to exist*", indicating that space availability meant that as well as physical location, mentoring needed to have a legitimate place in the organisation.

The remaining four categories were each commented on by individual teachers. As illustrated in Table 6.36 (refer p. 275), the comments made reference to a range of opinions regarding both how mentoring could be provided in the organisation and the benefits if mentoring was to be provided for teacher support and development. For example, one of the mentor teachers expressed how they had "*really enjoyed and benefitted*" from the focus group meetings they had attended during the one year programme and stated that inclusion of a Community of Practice concept would be an important aspect of a future programme. They emphasised how "*Communities of Practice should definitely be established as part of the process. The group process was actually more useful for me than the partnership*".

Another teacher who had assumed a mentor role referred specifically to the time-frame of a mentoring programme. This teacher indicated that a one year period was a "*more realistic and practical*" time frame if the mentoring was to have any significant impact on supporting the new teacher in their teaching practice. Interestingly, they also described their idea of a longer-term plan for the timing of a mentoring programme structure, indicating that mentoring was a useful support mechanism for all teachers: *"Every three years, everyone is involved in a mentoring relationship for six months and given time allocation; it"s not just assumed"*.

The final category commented on by one of the mentee teachers indicated that the opportunity to have different mentors to meet different teaching development needs would be a useful mechanism to have integrated in the mentoring programme structure. This teacher talked about the benefits they had gained from

their mentor but added, *"Having a different mentor means you can get different ideas and perspectives and have a different mentoring experience. I think there should be the opportunity for that"*.

6.11 Summary of Stage Two Data Collection, Cycle Four: Individual Summative Interviews with Academic Teachers

In summary, the academic teachers who attended the fourth and fifth focus group meetings identified a number of challenges that they had experienced during the one year mentoring programme. The predominant challenge appeared to be time constraints, although workload issues and job structure were also high on the barrier list, fairly synonymous with the problem of „time". The lack of appropriate meetings spaces was also raised as an issue.

When asked what additional support the mentee and mentor would benefit from whilst involved in a mentoring partnership, the teachers were all in favour of regular group meetings as an integral feature of a mentoring programme, believing that this group sharing opportunity provided an additional and useful support mechanism for both mentees and mentors. In relation to the concept of matching the mentee with a mentor, the teachers advocated a high degree of mentee choice in the matching process, suggesting that a pool of mentors for mentees to choose from would be a useful option. Additionally, a predominant opinion from the teachers who had assumed a mentor role was that a mentoring partnership would be more successful if the mentee and mentor were from different teaching disciplines.

All of the teachers agreed that they would be interested in participating in a mentoring programme in the future. They perceived this as an opportunity to continue sharing best practice, offer support for the new teacher and, from the mentor teachers" perspective, have the opportunity to receive mentoring themselves. One of the teachers was adamant that clear mentor criteria would need to be in place if a future mentoring programme was to be successful.

Extensive findings resulted from the summative interviews conducted with the academic teachers at the conclusion of the one year mentoring programme. When asked what their intended purpose for the mentoring had been, the teachers who had assumed a mentee role identified general teaching and learning support,

programme design and getting new ideas for other ways to teach. Interestingly, the mentor teachers identified similar purposes, including teaching and learning support for the mentee, helping the mentee with programme development and also helping the mentee with problem-solving.

Numerous outcomes and consequent changes made in their teaching practice as a result of the mentoring were identified by the teachers. For the mentee teachers, they perceived an increase in their confidence as teachers and an increase in their awareness of the need to reflect on their practice. Tangible changes were also mentioned, such as specific changes made to course design and implementing new teaching strategies in the classroom. From the mentor teachers‟ perspective, they believed they had benefitted from becoming more conscious of their teaching and engaging in evaluation of their practice. One of the teachers had also made extensive changes to their programme.

There were some similarities between how the mentors perceived the required attributes and skills to be an effective mentor and the mentees‟ conception of this, that is, how they perceived the mentor‟s effectiveness as a mentor. Important mentee characteristics to ensure they benefitted from the mentor‟s support were also identified. Building trust and having a strong commitment to the mentoring relationship were identified as critical mentor attributes by the teachers. In addition, the teachers perceived the mentee as needing to be willing to engage in the mentoring process and be open to other perspectives on teaching offered by the mentor. In addition to mentor attributes being identified, some of the teachers referred to considerations for mentor selection. A combination of self selection and the organisation managing the process of identifying and selecting mentors was talked about. There was support for voluntary selection by the teacher interested in mentoring others, as well as examples of organisational measures, including peer reviews, level of achievement on the promotion scales and student evaluation results.

Several demographic features of the mentoring partnership were commented on in terms of how they influenced the effectiveness of the relationship between the mentee and mentor. The predominant perception from the teachers indicated that different teaching disciplines and job roles were important, as this provided

different perspectives and a sense of safety in discussing problems and issues. There were mixed views as to whether gender influenced the quality of the relationship, some of the teachers believing it had made no difference whilst others emphasising that they had definitely preferred a same gender match.

Ways that the organisation could demonstrate value of mentoring as a support mechanism for academic teachers included allocation of time, recognising teachers" involvement, in particular the mentor and support from managers. The teachers concluded that if mentoring was valued and recognised in these ways, teacher professional development would be a natural part of the organisational culture.

Cycle Four represents the final section in this chapter. Additionally, the researcher maintained a reflective journal (Appendix L, refer p. 444) during Cycles Two, Three and Four which provided additional data that contributed to the findings. In particular, the journal entries regularly highlighted the ethical considerations regarding the place of the researcher in a qualitative study.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six have presented the findings gathered from twenty-six research participants representing the three separate participant groups in this study: five academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role twelve years ago in the principal institution; four mentoring programme coordinators in higher education institutions within New Zealand and Australia; and eighteen academic teachers engaging in a one year mentoring programme in the principal institution. The following chapter, Chapter Seven, discusses the implications of these findings, summarising five key themes and providing a synopsis of the themes as they were derived from the data analysis.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The central purpose of this thesis was to investigate the influence of mentoring on academic teachers‟ teaching and learning professional development in the higher education context and contribute to the growing research-based literature on mentoring. The intention was to determine whether mentoring was a concept only or an actual practice which supported teaching practice development for academic teachers in the higher education context. This chapter attempts to discuss the links between academic teachers‟ professional development in teaching and learning and mentoring as a mechanism that supports this. An overview of the study‟s objectives and methodology is provided as well as limitations of the study. Additionally, a metaphor for mentoring is suggested, as a way to communicate the findings and "Converge a great deal of meaning in a single phrase" (Patton, 1990, p. 402).

The findings from this current study have produced three key considerations for the future of mentoring and its evidence-base in the literature. Firstly, the study has identified findings reflective of the literature on mentoring in the higher education context. Secondly, the findings have provided a number of contrasts to the current mentoring literature and thirdly, the results of this study make a significant addition to the body of knowledge concerning mentoring in higher education contexts.

After extensive data analysis and multiple categorisation of the findings, five key themes were identified. This chapter provides a synopsis of these five themes and offers recommendations for future research and practice in the mentoring domain. Each theme is discussed in terms of its significance to the original research question and relevant subsidiary questions, as well as the implications for mentoring practices in the higher education context. These themes reflect a number of propositions and theoretical conceptualisations originally suggested by the researcher in Chapter Three of this thesis (refer p. 53).

One of the unique outcomes of this research is the creation of a process model for mentoring that is evidence-based and can be applied contextually. Very few process-oriented models for mentoring are suggested in the existing mentoring literature across the three disciplines of health, business and higher education which were explored in Chapter Two (refer p. 7). A separate section in this chapter is dedicated to the discussion and proposition of a model for mentoring informed by this research.

Since the early 1990s, the mentoring literature has purported a lack of single model development that addresses every aspect of mentoring (Allen and Eby, 2007; Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Gibb, 1994b; Walker et al., 2002). Bozeman and Feeney (2007) believe that there is a lack of meaning stipulated for mentoring in order to shift it from being a suggested concept only. Undertaking an applied action research study involving three distinct participant groups has enabled this researcher to identify and examine numerous aspects that comprise mentoring and produce a model that legitimately addresses each of these. In its pictorial form, the proposed model gives some indication of the elements which comprise a mentoring process. However, to provide a more comprehensive picture and therefore attribute meaning to the practice of mentoring, each element is described in more detail. By doing so, the concept of mentoring metamorphoses into a reality.

7.1 Research Objectives and Methodology

The commencement of an exploratory action research study arose from a professional need to understand whether teachers in the higher education environment gained any benefit or improved their teaching practice as a consequence of actively engaging in mentoring. In the study‟s principal institution, where a large proportion of the research was conducted, the researcher had the responsibility for providing mentoring support to new and experienced academic teachers. The researcher‟s mentoring role had developed in response to the institution identifying that the existing induction process for new teachers did not specifically provide teaching development assistance on a „case-by-case‟ basis. At the time of initiating this current investigation, the researcher‟s mentoring role was not substantiated by either theoretical or research-based evidence that the mentoring support provided made a difference to teaching practices within the institution.

The investigation therefore sought to explore the concept and practice of mentoring as a support mechanism for academic teachers and their teaching practice in the higher education context. In addition to investigating how mentoring supported an academic teacher‟s practice, the findings highlighted the need to also consider the quality of the mentoring interactions and the key factors that determine this quality. Of particular interest in the study was an exploration of the various models that guide the purpose, process and structure of mentoring and the research participants‟ own opinions of which model best supported their engagement in mentoring and contributed to a positive and constructive experience and outcome as a result.

As a consequence, the central research objective for this investigation involved determining how mentoring provides a support mechanism for teaching practice by academic teaching staff in the higher education environment. Five subsidiary questions were then formulated from the central question:

1. Which academic teachers are helped most by mentoring?
2. What is involved in establishing an institute-wide mentoring system for academic teachers?
3. What institutional systems and processes are required to support mentoring?
4. Does mentoring contribute to change and improvement in the teaching practices of academic teachers?
5. What are effective mentoring models to underpin the provision of mentoring for academic teachers?

The research design informed the conclusions made about mentoring and informed the development of a mentoring model proposed later in this chapter. The data analysis provided the identification of core content and process factors inherent in mentoring. Twenty-seven participants across the three participant groups engaged in the study, involving five academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role in the principal institution twelve years prior to the commencement of this research study; four mentoring programme coordinators in higher education institutions, including two New Zealand polytechnics and two Australian universities, and eighteen academic teachers who were currently employed in the principal

institution at the study‟s commencement who engaged in dyad mentoring partnerships over a one year period.

A dual theoretical approach to underpin mentoring was developed by the researcher in this study. The theories of humanism and constructivism were inter-linked in the belief that mentoring provides for and supports both the professional and personal development of the teacher. Qualitative action research methodology was applied to the investigation as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning that the individual teachers or groups ascribed to mentoring, with which the researcher then made interpretations of the meaning of these data (Creswell, 2009). As described in Chapter Four, this research study undertook a qualitative inquiry approach, using iterative, inductive processes (refer p. 75) to collect and analyse data from the three participant groups. This iterative approach meant that the researcher went through "Repeated cycles of data collection and analysis to generate hypotheses from the data" (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994, p. 38).

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with the five past mentors at the principal institution and with the four mentoring programme coordinators at the New Zealand and Australian higher education institutions. Data were also gathered from the eighteen academic teachers at the principal institution via an online evaluation questionnaire conducted following the teachers‟ participation in three mentoring training workshops and a series of five focus group meetings during their one year mentoring programme and individual summative interviews at the conclusion of the one year programme.

The results of the study are based on an applied research approach. Applying the action research cycle of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation in response to the data collected from the interviews with the past mentors, programme coordinators and the eighteen teachers enabled continual review and refinement of the research objective and subsidiary research questions. The additional method of collaborative inquiry was applied to the collection of data from the five focus group meetings attended by the academic teachers over the one year mentoring programme period. The action research methodology also presented the opportunity for the academic teachers to become change agents in their own practice and potentially change agents in their institution. The nature of the

research study engaging academic teachers in dyad mentoring partnerships and the application of action research methodology enhancing the outcome of change agency became an emancipatory pathway for each of the eighteen teachers involved in this study.

Although the findings presented in this thesis are not conclusive evidence that mentoring significantly influences teaching practice professional development, the findings gathered from the twenty-seven research participants were underpinned by their actual experiences and, for the eighteen academic teachers, by an in-action investigation of mentoring as it influenced their teaching practices over a one year period.

7.2 Limitations of the Research

Eby et al. (2008) contend that suppositions about mentoring as a valid practice remain reliant on additional research that compares mentored teachers to non-mentored teachers. Interestingly, Wanberg et al. (2003) counter this view, as they believe that this type of investigation would require a "Highly controlled experimental research design" (p. 49), resulting in improbable findings. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) believe that validity of mentoring as a professional development mechanism for teachers requires further research which explores the possible negative effects or outcomes of mentoring. Given that this study did not include an investigation into either of these contended areas for further research, this does not preclude the reader from drawing their own conclusions about the significance of mentoring as a mechanism to support teaching practice, nor does it preclude the reader from applying the findings from this study to their own context. The study does however aim to provide another lens through which mentoring can be viewed.

Wang (2002) questions whether positive outcomes for the mentee teacher can be uniquely attributed to mentoring. This question is reflected in Ingersoll and Kralik"s (2004) study which examined the impact of mentoring and induction programmes on teacher retention. These authors point out how external factors influencing the teacher"s experience cannot be controlled yet must bear some influence on the teacher, additional to or in detriment of the support the teacher receives from mentoring. This researcher acknowledges the limitations highlighted by Wang (2002) and Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) as pertinent to the findings from

the current study. However, outcome-evaluation processes were an integrated component of the research method design employed in the study, in an attempt to identify whether the mentoring support provided through the dyad partnerships resulted in tangible outcomes for the eighteen academic teachers in terms of any changes or improvements they made in their teaching practice. As discussed later on in this chapter, the findings from this study indicate that mentoring, as a unique teacher support mechanism, does effect change in teaching practice. Other factors external to the mentoring experience that may have also influenced these evidenced changes are explicated by this research.

Actual change made by the eighteen teachers as a result of engaging in a mentoring partnership was not directly observed by the researcher. The findings of mentoring having an impact on a teacher‟s practice were based on the academic teachers‟ perceptions and constructions of the ways in which they believed they had changed or improved their teaching as a result of engaging in mentoring partnerships over a one year period. The data would have been richer had they included researcher observations of the teachers as they operated in their own teaching contexts during the one year programme. As Murrihy (2009) states, "Observation of teaching could provide further data to triangulate with the data from the interviews" (p. 354). In this instance, triangulation could have been strengthened by incorporating observations of the teachers‟ practice during the one year programme.

External factors which impact on a teacher‟s practice need to be considered within the examination of whether or how mentoring supports teaching and learning in an organisational context. This current study was unable to control other influences on the academic teachers at the time of their engagement in the study. For example, the researcher had no control over the teachers‟ respective faculties or the culture of these environments. Also, the researcher had no influence over the academic teachers‟ respective managers‟ or colleagues‟ support or otherwise of their teaching practice. Whilst the findings in this study identify that mentoring supports the individual teacher and contributes to a sense of teacher empowerment, the afore-mentioned external influences could have impacted on the overall mentoring experience for the eighteen academic teachers. As Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) point out in their study on whether mentoring and induction programmes increase teacher retention, the inability of such studies to control other factors in the

teacher‟s world could impact on the outcomes of the investigation. The authors found it important to assume that the type of environment in which the teachers were employed would have an effect on the outcomes such as a teacher‟s job commitment "Regardless of the existence of an induction or mentoring programme" (p. 15).

7.3 A Metaphor for Mentoring

"Mentoring is a place, a partnership and a community."

In the research domain, "Metaphor should serve the data, not vice versa" (Patton, 1990, p. 402). This research study has attempted to find a way of shifting the perception of mentoring from a variable concept to a tangible entity. Hindered by the mentoring literature that identifies conceptual problems and extensive debate associated with mentoring, the creation of a metaphor for mentoring enables the concept to be accessible to a wider audience. Also, the use of metaphor helps to validate the provision of mentoring as a support mechanism in multiple contexts.

A metaphor for mentoring was created in this study as a way to encapsulate the humanistic element underpinning mentoring, as identified by the researcher in their conceptual and theoretical framework (refer Chapter Three, p. 53). Mentoring is therefore assigned meaning through the collective metaphor of „place, partnership and community‟. The term „place‟ is awarded a range of definitions in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Sykes, 1982) including "An area devoted to a specified purpose"; "A particular passage or point reached" and "Assign to an identity". In the context of this study, mentoring partnerships involving the eighteen teachers were engaged in within the designated area of a higher education institution; the practice of mentoring represented a passage of activity with an expected outcome within the parameters of the research study; and identity was assigned to the actual practice of mentoring and the identity of the eighteen academic teacher participants.

Whilst the greater part of the findings centre on constructivist forms of teaching practice outcomes achieved from engaging in mentoring, such as critical reflection, improving teaching practices and making practical changes to teaching resources, the nature of mentoring as also supporting more subtle, personal development outcomes is an integral aspect of the mentoring process and needs to be

acknowledged as such. The metaphor presented here provides for both of these dimensions.

7.4 Key Findings: The Determinants of Mentoring

A synthesis of the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of health, business and higher education combined with the findings from the twenty-seven research participants has resulted in the identification of five themes that are identified as key determinants of the process and practice of mentoring. These themes have enabled the researcher to formulate several key propositions to articulate the findings, inclusive of corroborating the current research findings with existing literature on mentoring; substantiating mentoring as a mechanism for supporting teaching and learning professional development of academic teachers in the higher education context; identifying ongoing gaps existing in the mentoring literature and further highlighted in the data gathered from the three participant groups; confirming the requirement of establishing the purpose of mentoring if this practice is to be acknowledged by the organisation as a valid professional development mechanism; and suggesting strategies for enhancing the quality of mentoring practices and providing mechanisms that help legitimise mentoring as an integral support mechanism within an organisation‟s teacher development infrastructure. The five key themes based on a consolidation of the findings include:

1. The purpose, benefits and challenges of mentoring;
2. The mentoring process;
3. Organisational influence on establishing a mentoring system;
4. Evaluation of the outcomes of mentoring;
5. Key mentoring models.

The findings also identify continuing gaps in relation to three key aspects of mentoring that have implications for the implementation of a mentoring system within an organisation and significant implications for determining whether mentoring supports the teaching practices of academic teachers. These gaps include: the need for establishing criteria for effective mentor selection based on identified standards of teaching and learning quality; evidence-based outcomes of mentoring to measure the impact of mentoring on a teacher‟s practice; and

systemic evaluation of a mentoring system in order to justify the provision of mentoring in an organisational context as a valid professional development support mechanism for academic teachers.

Collectively, the five themes culminate in the proposal of a mentoring model that is theoretically and contextually framed. The proposed model builds on the researcher's initial conceptual framework for mentoring and depicts an integration of the research findings. It aims to provide a tool for higher education institutions and other organisations to consider the implications of implementing a mentoring system with the purpose of supporting teaching professional development which in turn contributes to or initiates a sustainable professional development infrastructure. The model is discussed in the final section of this chapter.

7.5 The Purpose, Benefits and Challenges of Mentoring

Findings from the three participant groups in this study indicate multiple perceptions of the purpose of mentoring for the teacher, the range of benefits that teachers can gain from engaging in mentoring and the potential challenges the mentoring participants can experience.

7.5.1 The purpose of mentoring

The purpose of mentoring as a professional development support mechanism is promulgated in the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of health, business and higher education which were initially examined in Chapter Two of this thesis. The purpose of mentoring as supporting the beginning teacher is a prevalent focus in the higher education literature (Boreen et al., 2000; Ganser, 1997; Rowley, 1999) although there is a general consensus that there is no widely accepted definition or purpose of mentoring (Clarke, 2005). Mentoring as a mechanism for induction and orientation of new staff is also a predominant theme in the literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business (Ganser, 1997; Klug & Salzman, 1994; Singh et al., 2002) whilst Sweeney (1994) talks of the more altruistic goal of mentoring as valuing teachers.

The findings from across the three research participant groups reflected a predominant focus on the provision of mentoring for supporting the new teacher in their teaching practice. However, there were some similarities and differences

identified. Whereas the past mentors and academic teachers referred to both professional and personal development support of the teacher, the programme coordinators focused primarily on how mentoring served the purpose of supporting professional development. For example, all of the coordinators emphasised how mentoring had a predominant purpose of supporting the improvement of teaching practices across their institutions. Professional development as supported by mentoring was also described as pertaining to different academic activities including induction of the new teacher, building research capabilities and assisting with career decisions. Two of the coordinators also identified that a key purpose for establishing a mentoring programme in their institutions was to provide a mechanism for supporting the leadership development of female academics.

In comparison, the past mentors referred to the support of both professional and personal development of the teacher as the over-arching purpose of the mentoring they provided. All of the past mentors commented on how they had supported new teachers in areas of classroom management and experimenting with teaching techniques as well as helping teachers manage conflict with work colleagues, build cross-campus relationships and build self-confidence. The five teachers explained how personal development support had been a prevalent focus in their mentoring meetings.

Feedback from the academic teachers in their summative interviews identified similarities and differences between the mentee and mentor teachers in regard to their intended purpose for the mentoring. The similarities included general support of teaching and learning practices and assistance with programme and course design. The differences highlighted a clear distinction between the mentee teachers perceiving mentoring as supporting their academic practice and the mentor teachers viewing their purpose as "*listening to the mentee*" and supporting the mentee in whatever purpose they had identified. For the eight mentee teachers, general teaching and learning support was the most common purpose, whilst a range of other professional and personal development support identified by the mentee teachers included help with career decisions, improving faculty communications and achieving a research output.

A consequence of academic teachers engaging in mentoring, whether the structure of this is group mentoring, or dyad partnerships as in this current study, is the creation of a more professional organisational culture (Sweeney, 2003). Sweeney (2003) advocates this phenomenon of the development of an organisation‟s culture as an expansion of the definition and purpose of mentoring. Determining the purpose of mentoring is the pretext for establishing mentoring within the organisational context. The researcher‟s conceptual framework for mentoring (refer Figure 1, p. 55) contributed to an expansion of the definition and purpose as it advocated mentoring as a significant mechanism for a teacher‟s learning and a way for the teacher to contribute to the culture and development of the organisation.

The inter-connection between the organisation and the individual teacher was a prominent feature in this conceptual framework. Analysis of the data collected from the academic teachers identified that their mentoring experience in the dyad partnerships had enabled them to contribute more actively to organisational activities and achievement of strategic teaching and learning goals. This finding helps to qualify the researcher‟s conceptual framework which consequently legitimises the development of the proposed mentoring model presented in the final section of this chapter.

Mentoring with a designated purpose of supporting teacher professional development can actively contribute to an organisation‟s strategic desire to be a place where collaborative learning and teaching is common practice. The findings from this study corroborate the assertion made by Wildman et al. (1992) that any definition or conception of mentoring should be defined by those who carry it out, not imposed by means of organisational or political pressure. This distinction was emphasised by the academic teachers as they advocated for the institution to support the implementation and coordination of a campus-wide mentoring system as long as mentoring did not become another "*tick box exercise*". The teachers were adamant that if mentoring was dictated by accountability to managers, its effectiveness and their willingness to engage in mentoring would be compromised.

7.5.2 The benefits of mentoring for the mentor and mentee

Common perspectives regarding the benefits of mentoring for the mentor are evident in the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business. For example, the mentee is seen as a catalyst for the mentor"s professional development (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; Huling & Resta, 2001; Mills et al., 2005). Mills et al. (2005) add that the mentee contributes to the mentor engaging in self reflection and evaluation of their own practice. Until recently, the mentoring literature provided minimal evidence of the benefits for the mentee teacher. Instead, an implicit assumption that the mentee will naturally benefit from engaging in mentoring has persisted.

Benefits gained from mentoring for the mentor and the mentee were identified by all of the research participants in this current study. The five past mentors commented on the benefits they believed they had gained as mentors as well as identifying explicit benefits they believed the mentee teachers had gained from their support. In relation to their own gains, the past mentors highlighted how mentoring had provided them with the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their teaching practice, one mentor commenting that they had definitely learned from the mentee. Two additional benefits referred specifically to the support they had received from each other as mentors and the bonus of developing skills as a mentor.

It was evident from their feedback that the past mentors believed the mentees had also benefitted from the mentoring in terms of their professional and personal development. For example, all five mentors talked about how a prevalent focus of their support was helping teachers work through appraisal and promotion advancement processes. This finding was indicative of the political and cultural changes that were occurring in the institution at that time. Receiving feedback and getting confirmation of their teaching were two additional benefits the past mentors perceived as key gains for the mentee teacher. Personal development benefits included increased self-confidence and the provision of "*space away from the teaching environment*". The two mentors who mentioned space away from teaching as a mentee benefit defined this as "*non-teaching related mentoring*",

believing that this type of mentoring was still very supportive of the teacher and an important aspect of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism.

The benefits of mentoring for the mentee was the focus of the programme coordinators‟ feedback during their semi-structured interviews, although one of the New Zealand polytechnic coordinators mentioned how experienced teachers were increasingly participating as mentees in their programme and realising the benefits of receiving support for their teaching practice as a result. Mentee benefits as perceived by the coordinators covered a range of academic practice support such as increasing research capabilities, help with promotion advancement, developing independence and "*self-ownership*" and learning the skills of being a mentee including learning how to find a mentor. This last benefit indicated that the coordinators‟ respective institutions acknowledged the importance of teachers accessing and utilising mentoring as an essential professional development activity.

Teachers who engage in critical reflection have been identified as a cornerstone of effective and quality teaching, leading to quality student learning. For example, Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) believe that "Learning only occurs when events are interrogated through critical reflection or discussion" (p. 86). Feedback from the mentor teachers identified that a key benefit for them had been the opportunity for ongoing reflection on their practice and an increasing consciousness of their teaching. Development of reflective skills and becoming more reflective were also identified by the mentee teachers as benefits they believed they had gained.

A few authors in the literature refer to mentoring for the more experienced teacher, acknowledging that experienced teachers have different needs from those of newly qualified teachers (Fabian & Simpson, 2002; Gibb, 1999; Gibson, 2004; Rymer, 2002). This study found that mentoring is not restricted to only supporting the new teacher but can support teachers at different stages in their teaching and at different levels of teaching. Six of the eight mentor teachers were adamant that they had learned from the mentee, describing this as "*Exposure to new ways of doing things*". The mentor needing to be open to learning from the mentee was emphasised in their comments. The mentor teachers also emphasised how the mentoring experience had provided another avenue of professional development.

Gibb (1999) uses the term „learner" rather than „mentee" in his description of mentoring roles which helps to acknowledge the mentor as a learner also in the mentoring process.

Data collected from the mentee teachers in relation to the perceived benefits they had gained identified overwhelmingly an increase in their self confidence as teachers. Seven of the eight mentee teachers commented on this, attributing this benefit to the support they had received from the mentor in terms of the mentor"s willingness to share their skills and knowledge. Development of teaching practices was identified by five of the teachers as a benefit from the mentoring support they had received. This was described as experimenting with new teaching techniques and gaining a different perspective on teaching outside their own faculty. Three teachers also mentioned how they had been supported in working through issues and problems they were experiencing. It was evident from the data that the mentee and mentor teachers perceived mentoring as an opportunity to share „success stories", not just focus on issues or negative experiences and helping the mentee problem-solve these.

Additional findings in relation to the benefits of mentoring for the mentee and mentor resulted from one of the summative interview questions which asked the academic teachers what they felt had been unique about their mentoring experience. Several teachers" responses translated as further benefits they had gained from the mentoring. For example, engaging in a relationship that had a social element as well as a professional development focus was identified as beneficial, by both the mentor and mentee teachers. One teacher described this as having "*fostered and enhanced same-basis relationship decisions*". Two of the teachers who had been the mentor and mentee in one of the partnerships described how they had conducted reciprocal teaching observations. Both teachers emphasised the benefit of this practice, the mentee teacher claiming that it had made them think about their assumptions.

Seven teachers expressed how they had appreciated the sense of equality in their mentoring relationship, believing this had created a two-way process of sharing rather than the mentor controlling the process. Interestingly, a number of the mentoring partnerships which commenced as an expert-novice structure had

gradually shifted to a peer relationship approach. This shift in the mentoring relationship was attributed to the mentee having gained more experience and confidence in their teaching during the one year programme.

7.5.2.1 The benefits of mentoring for the organisation

Kanuka (2005) believes that the individual teacher and the organisation benefit from mentoring as a mechanism that contributes to the creation of a culture of collaboration and sharing of ideas across the organisation. As well as articulating the gains they had made from engaging in a mentoring partnership, the academic teachers referred to ways in which they believed the organisation had benefitted as a result of their own professional and personal development. For example, question eight in their summative interviews asked the teachers what they believed was the potential impact of mentoring on the organisation. As well as identifying the advantage of mentoring providing an additional mechanism for teachers" professional development, the teachers believed that the organisation would nurture and retain effective teachers if they supported their teaching practice.

The academic teachers also aligned increased quality of teaching practice to the institution achieving the strategic goals for teaching and learning. Collegial networking across campus and teachers positively impacting on student learning were two additional benefits the teachers believed the institution would gain if mentoring for teachers was implemented.

The opportunity to test the reality of proclamations made by authors and researchers in the mentoring literature regarding the organisation benefitting from providing mentoring as a mechanism to support teacher development is provided by the undertaking of this action research project. Zachary (2000), for example, talks about the need to ground the mentoring relationship in learning if mentoring is to be of benefit to the individual participants and the organisation as a whole.

The findings from this study clearly identify the mentees" and the mentors" learning as being at the core of the mentoring partnerships that occurred over the one year programme. The findings also demonstrate through the teachers" feedback how their learning could contribute to the wider organisational culture.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) contend that:

> Developing a teacher mentor programme without first thinking carefully about the concept of mentoring is to run the risk of developing a programme that is incomplete, lacks integrity and duplicates programmes that in some form have already been tried. This should be embedded in a definition of mentoring that captures the essence of the mentoring relationship. (p. 33)

7.5.3 The challenges of mentoring

A taxonomy is provided by Eby et al. (2000) identifying fifteen types of negative mentoring experiences which were derived from 277 surveys administered to mentees in a large university in the United States. As well as challenges of dysfunctional mentor behaviours, Eby et al. (2000) discovered that poor mentee-mentor matching and a lack of mentor skills can also contribute to a mentee experiencing negative mentoring. In the current study, only one of the academic teachers, who had assumed a mentee role in the dyad partnerships, indicated that they had found the match of mentor was not a good „fit", predominantly because "*the mentor was not useful for my needs*". This mentee teacher also identified that their mentoring partnership had not met often, claiming that this had also influenced the unsatisfactory outcome of their mentoring experience.

Two further incidences illustrative of negative mentoring experiences occurred during this study. In one partnership, the mentee teacher left the organisation before the partnership had commenced meeting. The mentor teacher expressed disappointment as they were "*keen to be a mentor*". This teacher was assigned a new mentee in the early stages of the one year programme. The second mentor teacher had faced a situation where their mentee was coping with mental health issues which had impacted on the focus of the mentoring meetings. The mentee teacher eventually left the organisation, also leaving the mentor teacher feeling guilty and as if they had failed the mentee.

In addition to these specific examples of challenges facing mentors and mentees, other challenges identified by the academic teachers in the mentee-only and mentor-only focus group meetings focused predominantly on mentoring programme structure and process issues. Overwhelmingly, time constraints were perceived as the most significant challenge for the teachers. The academic teachers

described the challenge of time constraints as impinging on the partnerships being able to meet regularly. Four teachers talked about how it had impeded their commitment to the mentoring relationship and activities associated with the partnership.

A challenge specific to the mentor teachers involved the issue of the mentee"s expectations of the mentor. Five of the six mentor teachers who mentioned this challenge felt that mentee expectations could be "*quite unrealistic*", perceiving this as impacting significantly on the quality of the mentoring outcomes. Other challenges identified by the mentor teachers included a lack of management support and recognition of the mentor"s role, particularly in relation to inflexible teaching timetables and allocation of time to provide mentoring. For the mentee teachers, too many job commonalities also presented a challenge as they felt the level of similarity in the mentee"s and mentor"s teaching disciplines increased the likelihood of assumptions being made or impinged on the mentee feeling safe to discuss work issues. A lack of adequate spaces to meet was also raised as a challenge that impacted on the mentoring to occur.

Time constraints and workload expectations were the most important challenges to mentoring identified by three of the four higher education programme coordinators. The coordinators described these issues as significant influences on teachers choosing to engage in the mentoring programme and/or committing to meet regularly once a mentoring partnership was established. One of the coordinators commented that the increasing workload issue was having a wider impact on teachers being able to participate in other professional development activities, of which mentoring was one.

7.5.4 A future perspective of mentoring in the organisation

An addendum to the discussion about the purpose and benefits of mentoring involves a future-focused perspective from the academic teachers regarding the place of mentoring in the future and their intent to participate in a mentoring programme if one was implemented in the institution. Question four in the fourth mentee-only and fifth mentor-only focus group meetings asked the teachers whether they would participate in a mentoring programme if one was established in the future and if yes, what were their reasons for doing so.

From the six mentee teachers‟ perspectives, all were in agreement that mentoring had supported improvement in their teaching practice; therefore it had a definite place in the institution. The teachers were clear that the individual "*had to be willing to want to learn formally about themselves*" if mentoring was to have a purpose. The opportunity to get an objective point of view from an "*expert teacher*" had been a benefit of the mentoring that they would appreciate again if the chance to engage in mentoring in the future was available. Apropos of these reasons, three teachers identified certain conditions they felt would need to be in place if they were to participate in mentoring again. Two of the teachers emphasised that participation should not be compulsory whilst the third teacher advocated for the mentee being able to choose their own mentor, not have this process managed by someone else.

The ninth and final question in the teachers‟ summative interviews continued with this theme of future mentoring in the organisation. A wide range of responses resulted, identifying how a mentoring system should be structured as well as the benefits the institution would gain by establishing a mentoring system. In relation to the structure of a future system, ten of the sixteen teachers reiterated the need for the institution to provide and support teachers through a formal system but that there had to be teacher choice in how they engaged in mentoring at the partnership level. This focus of the discussion had been emphasised by the teachers earlier in the study during the third focus group meeting where they had strongly advocated a formal mentoring system with a high degree of mentoring participant choice in whether or how they participated.

Other features identified by the teachers as important components of a future mentoring system included a compulsory programme for new teachers, a programme that was centrally coordinated, inclusion of community of practice meetings and mentoring being available to experienced teachers as well. Based on the benefits they believed they had gained from the mentoring in this study, the teachers viewed a future mentoring system as developing more reflective teachers, supporting teachers at different stages in their teaching career and providing another mechanism of support for teacher professional development.

7.6 The Mentoring Process

Reflective of the literature regarding the process of establishing a mentoring system within an organisation and the features that need to be considered as comprising this system (Angelini, 1995; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kram, 1985), this study has identified that mentoring is a multi-faceted activity, consisting of a number of dependent and interdependent variables including: i) how a mentoring programme is structured; ii) mentor and mentee selection processes; iii) the mentor-mentee matching process; iv) mentoring training; v) establishing the mentoring relationship; vi) additional support mechanisms for mentors and mentees and vii) mentor and mentee activities.

7.6.1 Structure of a mentoring programme

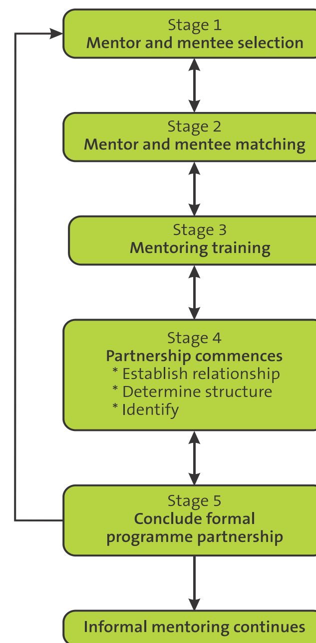
Short (2002) and Darwin (2010) believe that mentoring needs to be a flexible activity that can meet a variety of teacher development needs and not be constrained by regulated time-frames. Darwin (2010) in particular advocates that the mentoring relationship should be able to change in response to the mentee‟s changing needs and that mentees need to have access to different mentors at different times dependent on their identified goals for professional development. Kram‟s (1985) four-phase model for mentoring is reflective of Darwin‟s (2010) thinking as her model aims to define the progressive nature of the mentoring relationship. A fluid, iterative process acknowledges that mentoring does not have to have a „start‟ and „end‟ point for the teacher but rather can support the teacher at various stages of their career development.

Based on the findings from the mentoring literature collated in Cycle Two which involved an extensive literature review of mentoring in the higher education, health and business contexts, and data from the interviews conducted with the past mentors and higher education programme coordinators, also collected during Cycle Two, Figure 5 (refer p. 303) suggests a foundational framework of a mentoring system process, depicting a suggested sequence of stages that comprise this system. The data from these three sources involved in Cycle Two informed Cycle Four of the investigation which included the researcher‟s original programme design for the one year mentoring programme that the eighteen academic teachers participated in. Figure 5 suggests the foundations for the structure of a formal

mentoring programme design within an organisation aiming to establish mentoring as a professional development support mechanism. Figure 5 also provides an underpinning structure for the researcher‟s proposed mentoring model which is discussed in Chapter Eight of this thesis.

Figure 5

Structure and process of a formal mentoring programme



Two specific features in Figure 5 require further explanation. Firstly, the model indicates that mentoring can be an ongoing professional development support mechanism. As evidenced by the data from the programme coordinators and later corroborated by the academic teachers, the end of a formal mentoring programme does not necessarily imply or mean that the mentoring relationship, established over the formal programme period, has to also end. The fourth phase in Kram‟s (1985) model focuses on „redefinition‟, which she explains as a phase of indefinite extension of the mentoring relationship which may mean an end of the relationship or a move towards a peer or collegial relationship. Both the programme coordinator in one of the New Zealand polytechnic and the academic teachers reported that often the mentoring participants continued to meet for mentoring after the set programme had concluded.

The second feature of note in this foundation process model for a mentoring programme is the depiction of the programme stages and the programme in its entirety being iterative in nature. This again indicates that mentoring does not definitively begin and end in a specified time-frame. The iterative nature of the mentoring process is illustrated by the cyclical arrows at the bottom of the diagram which show the connection between the formal conclusion of a mentoring programme to the commencement of another programme. An assumption of this iterative process which is not shown in Figure 5 (refer p. 303) is that the mentee and/or mentor may re-engage in the next programme being offered, thereby implying an organic process for ongoing professional development. This assumption is based on one of the comments made by the programme coordinator in the New Zealand polytechnic: *"The partnerships can continue outside the one year programme if they wish to. However, we encourage the mentees to reapply as needs change and so we can allocate them a different mentor"*.

Additionally, the two-way arrows shown as connecting the first four stages in the programme process signify that the mentoring participants can shift backwards and forwards between each stage depending on their needs. This also acknowledges that there will be times when the mentoring partnership does not work out and a new mentor or mentee may need to be selected, therefore a new match is established. For example, one of the mentee teachers left the organisation after the mentoring partnership had been established. The teacher who had assumed the mentor role in this partnership was "*keen to be a mentor*" and subsequently a new mentee teacher was selected and allocated to this partnership.

At the formal conclusion stage of the mentoring partnerships in this current study, the academic teachers had established and continued to build a collegial network that translated in and outside their immediate teaching area, faculty or department. They had made connections with the other mentor and mentee teachers engaged in the study, which provided them with further options to continue a mentoring relationship outside the formal organisational structure if they chose to.

There is prolific discussion and debate in the mentoring literature regarding the advantages and disadvantages of formalising a mentoring system within the organisation. Whilst informal mentoring relationships are premised on mutual

discovery of common interests and relationship building, formal mentoring relationships are generally organised and sponsored by the organisation (Hansman, 2002). Harper and Sawicka (2001) found in their research with early career academics that formal mentoring contributed to reducing teacher isolation. Additionally, Darwin (2000) believes that a reliance on informal mentoring "leaves many people waiting patiently and powerlessly for a person to materialise" (p. 205). In Klug and Salzman‟s (1991) study of comparing formal induction programmes with informal buddy systems, they found that a lack of structure, no set meeting times and no guidelines for the mentor resulted in confusion for both the mentee and the mentor.

Although the past mentors had identified that there had been no formal mentoring programme in place during their time as mentors in the principal institution, they did comment on different structural features of the mentoring processes that had occurred. Once again, all five mentors stressed how mentoring support had been dependent on the staff education and development (SED) manager who controlled the whole process. The SED manager determined how many teachers engaged in mentoring partnerships and how long these relationships lasted. They emphasised how the lack of a formal structure resulted in a lack of acknowledgement from managers that mentoring provided a support mechanism for teachers‟ professional development. A phrase that could be used to describe this situation is „mentoring by chance‟.

One of the New Zealand polytechnics identified that they did not offer a formal mentoring programme for teachers. In comparison, three of the four programme coordinators described their mentoring programmes as quite formal although there were informal features inherent within this. For example, they related the formal features as pertaining to the administration and coordination functions within the programme whilst teacher participation in the programme was on a voluntary basis. Specific features of their programmes were also detailed by the coordinators related to programme duration and the frequency of participation by the mentors and mentees.

Of the three institutions which had an established mentoring programme, two offered a six month programme whereas the third coordinator described the

provision a year long programme. A question that arises from this investigation focuses on how often do people need to engage in mentoring to avoid a surface learning experience? Holahan et al. (2000) question whether a one year programme is long enough and suggest that a more intensive period of training and mentoring support is necessary before teachers can be reasonably expected to demonstrate a change in their teaching practice. The literature also highlights that one-off professional development activities, particularly if reactive in nature, have short-term impact on change in practice (Zuber-Skeritt, 1993). Interestingly, the coordinator in the institution which provided a year long programme explained how teachers could reapply as a mentee for the next programme, commenting that often by the third time engaging as mentees, these teachers remained in the programme assuming a mentor role.

If mentoring is to be treated as a multi-purpose, flexible and iterative mechanism for teacher support at any stage in their career, it cannot be systematised to an extent where the teacher must „fit‟ the process rather than the process meeting the teacher‟s needs „at that time‟. Another example provided by the programme coordinator in one of the New Zealand polytechnics identified that given the formal structure of their year long programme, if a mentee could not be matched with an appropriate mentor, they had to wait until the following year, when a new programme commenced. The main premise given by the programme coordinator for this constraint appeared to be attributed to the size of the institution and the large academic teacher cohort.

As well as the frequency of engagement, another consideration is the ways in which people can engage in mentoring that supports ongoing benefits for their teaching practice professional development. An example of this is the concept of incorporating mentor and mentee communities of practice in the mentoring programme structure. This concept is discussed later in this chapter (refer p. 325).

7.6.2 Mentor selection

There is abundant discussion in the mentoring literature regarding the need to determine the purpose of the mentor‟s role and identify core mentor attributes in order to decide the criteria and process for mentor selection. There are also minimal evidence-based findings of strategies for mentor selection that have

proven effective. Within this discussion there is a direct link between effective mentor selection and the effectiveness of the mentoring they provide in this role.

Carter (2000) identified that much of the literature on mentoring strongly suggests that contextualised learning or workplace learning mediated by mentors has the potential to assist beginning teachers in their development of an appropriate body of practical professional knowledge. Based on his findings, Carter (2000) contended that learning in the workplace largely depended on transmission of a defined body of mentor (practitioner) knowledge which could serve to severely limit and make parochial the learning of individuals and entrench existing practice regardless of its effectiveness. Carter"s (2000) premise that a reliance on the teacher as mentor transmitting their inculcated knowledge with limited or no measures to quantify or qualify this will prove problematic if the mentee"s learning is dependent on the mentor"s support. Carter"s (2000) contentions also help to emphasise how important it is to establish criteria in order to determine effective mentor selection. These criteria in turn help to specify essential mentor attributes.

An informal, voluntary mentor selection process was a predominant finding in this study. For example, the past mentors talked about being randomly approached by staff or assigned a mentee by the staff development (SED) manager. These teachers attributed the latter selection process to the SED manager having unilateral decision-making power; it was up to him what mentor traits were desirable and selecting experienced teachers with these attributes as mentors accordingly. When the past mentors referred to the existence of a "*common pool of mentors*", they mentioned how this pool consisted of "*the same teachers who were always called upon*". This comment was reflected in the feedback received from two of the higher education programme coordinators, who admitted that they struggled to find enough teachers willing to be mentors in their programmes, adding that as a consequence "*the same teachers are asked to be mentors each year*". These comments from both the past mentors and programme coordinators indicated a sense of conflict between acknowledging the need for teachers to be willing to participate as mentors and the challenge this presents in terms of how many and who ends up engaging in the mentoring programme.

The theme of mentor self selection was also evident in the feedback received from the academic teachers. However, in comparison with the past mentors and programme coordinators, the academic teachers" perceptions of mentor selection as a voluntary process was opinion-based rather than premised on current practice. One of the justifications for advocating a voluntary process was voiced by one teacher who suggested that not all good teachers made good mentors, as they stated, "*You could never expect a good mentor not to volunteer, but conversely, just because a teacher volunteers doesn"t mean they are a good mentor*". Another teacher further qualified this thinking in their comment, "*Does the picked person really want to be a mentor?*"

Other more specific suggestions of criteria that could be used for effective mentor selection were provided by two of the programme coordinators as they talked about having created mentor profiles. The coordinators did not elaborate on the criteria inherent in the profiles but indicated that teachers who met the criteria evidenced a required level of awareness regarding the mentor role and how they, as mentors, could support the mentee teacher. Several of the academic teachers also identified some specific mechanisms which they believed could serve as criteria against which the potential teacher-mentor was judged, for example, the teacher"s history with the organisation, teacher and student evaluation results and peer reviews. With regard to a teacher"s history in the organisation, one of the teachers talked about how an organisation should not rely on this alone, emphasising that in particular, consideration should be given to the teacher"s involvement outside the workplace as "*they made have hidden skills*". It was obvious from the teachers" discussion that reliance on only one of these mechanisms would not be sufficient as an effective mentor selection process.

Holahan et al. (2000) suggest that the most successful mentors are talented, highly motivated and well-respected teachers. Based on their findings, they identified that a critical attribute of the mentor to effectively influence the mentee"s development was their exceptional teaching skills and high regard among one"s peer group. The five past mentors in this study described themselves as being well known and acknowledged for their teaching expertise and professional standing in the institution. They believed this was the underpinning reason for the SED manager to assign them a mentor role. The higher education programme coordinators and the

academic teachers, however, did not identify „high regard by peer group" as a feature of an effective mentor characteristic in their identification of what they believed were essential and/or desirable mentor skills and attributes.

Building trust in the mentoring relationship was perceived by the past mentors as the most important mentor attribute. They described this as fundamental to the quality of the relationship and the mentoring support, referring to confidentiality and the mentor being "*willing to share things about themselves*". In response to question five in the academic teachers" summative interview, which focused on asking both the mentor teachers and the mentee teachers what they believed were essential mentor attributes in order to support the mentee effectively in the mentoring partnership, the mentor teachers also identified building trust throughout the mentoring relationship as a critical skill of the mentor. The mentee teachers, in comparison, identified building trust as an important attribute but indicated that the most important attribute from their perspective involved effective communication skills, which they described as "*a good communicator*" and "*responsive and able to provide feedback to the mentee*".

L"Hommedieu, Menges, and Brinko (1990) make a provocative statement that feedback which is consultative and provides interpretive guidance is an effective communication approach for provoking change. This description of communication further develops the significance of the mentor possessing effective communication skills as a core attribute.

Question five in the summative interview aimed to identify mentor attributes from both the mentees" and the mentors" perspective and produced important data to build on the existing mentoring literature which predominantly focuses on the mentee identifying important mentor attributes as the basis for mentor selection (Smith et al., 2005) or merely lists mentor attributes with no apparent research basis to substantiate them (Andrews & Wallis, 1999; Clutterbuck, 2004; Hezlett, 2005). One approach to enable a shift away from reliance on extensive lists of mentor skills and attributes by which to determine mentor selection is to create a mentor typology. Typologies help to classify a range of data for analysis of that data. As Karcher (2010) explains, a typology can be useful for generating agreement among experts within a field, however, they caution that a disadvantage

of typologies is potential bias, such as omission of newly emerging categories that may be important but not widely recognised or accepted.

Plamondon (2007) claims that "Successful mentorship requires a balance of skills, attributes and qualities" (p. 6) and highlights Rowley‟s (1999) identification of six qualities of a good mentor, depicted in a typology of „Essential Qualities of a Good Mentor‟. In the context of this study, a typology could be created to summarise the list of mentor attributes that were consistently identified by the research participants. This typology would help to condense that list of mentor attributes as well as the plethora of mentor attributes offered in the literature.

A mentor attribute typology would also provide a more targeted tool for an organisation‟s mentor selection process. For example, Figure 6 suggests a typology based on the findings from this study, which identified a wide range of mentor attributes espoused by the research participants they perceived as either critical or desirable for the mentor to possess in order to effectively influence the quality of the mentoring support they provided for the mentee. An important feature of the typology suggested in Figure 6 is the achievement of a balance of all three classifications for the selection of the mentor.

Figure 6. Example of a Mentor Attribute Typology

Professional Competence	Knowledge	Interpersonal Skills
Teaching expertise	Content-specific	Builds relationships
Commitment to doing mentoring	Wisdom	Builds trust
Provides feedback	Knows philosophical underpinnings	Non-judgemental communicator
Invests in own professional development	Pedagogically sound practice	Genuine and authentic

Identification of desirable mentor traits is only one mechanism however for establishing a robust mentor selection process. For example, Gibb (1999) identifies a number of „pre-conditions‟ for the successful implementation of formal mentoring programmes which also underpin the process for identifying the mentor. These pre-conditions include:

- Identified standards of teaching, prescribed in promotion scales, manager assessment policy and process, peer observation policy and process; and

- A definition of teaching and learning quality, including strategic objectives and a quality learning model.

Building on Gibb"s (1999) pre-conditions and based on the findings of the current study, this researcher identified a framework for mentor selection that incorporates both organisational criteria and individual mentor attributes. Two key questions underpin the design of this framework:

1. What are the organisationally-based criteria against which the teacher as potential mentor can be selected?
2. What teacher skills and attributes are deemed necessary for determining quality teaching and learning in the organisation?

In answer to the first question, a range of organisational systems and processes are suggested as comprising the selection criteria, including:

- Performance agreements;
- Engagement in teaching and learning professional development;
- Student evaluations;
- Peer and manager observations;
- Research portfolio;
- Promotion scales;
- Ongoing development of a teaching portfolio;
- Documented scholarship of teaching and learning;
- Level of activeness/engagement in organisational teaching and learning pursuits/projects;
- Refereed evidence of teaching best practice.

Ballantyne, Borthwick, and Packer (2000) make an important point about the use of student evaluations as a tool for determining teacher effectiveness. In the context of using different academic tools for establishing mentor selection criteria, the use of student evaluations would necessarily be two-fold. As one of the tools for mentor selection, student evaluations should be used to identify that the quality of desired mentor skills and attributes are assured as well as evidence that the teacher as the potential mentor has acted upon evaluation feedback in further development of their teaching practice.

With regard to the second underpinning question, Gibb (1999) contributes to the answer in his suggestion of pre-conditions needing to be in place prior to the implementation of a formal mentoring programme. That is, the organisation needs to define teaching and learning quality and have in place a strategy such as a quality learning model that guides decisions about teaching and learning. If a critical mentor attribute is, for example, „demonstrated excellence in teaching", this should be a pre-requisite of the teacher as mentor, based on this attribute being identified as a core teacher attribute in the organisation"s quality learning model.

One of the mechanisms that are incorporated in the suggested framework for mentor selection includes documented refereed evidence of the teacher"s best practice. Based on a definition of „teaching best practice", which would be identified as a core teacher attribute in the organisation"s quality learning model, inherent in this evidence should be the teacher"s ability to articulate the theoretical underpinnings to their practice and cite examples to substantiate this. Milton (2004) contends that an essential mentor characteristic is the ability to articulate their theoretical belief system. This contention was evident in the past mentors" responses and feedback from the academic teachers. For example, one past mentor believed that the mentor needed to have a sound philosophical foundation to their teaching, as they commented, "*The mentor needs to know what their philosophical underpinnings are as a teacher in adult education and as a mentor*". Based on data collected from the summative interviews with the academic teachers, a number of the teachers also believed that this mentor attribute was essential. Two teachers talked about the mentor being able to articulate their teaching philosophy, emphasising the importance of the mentor "*having the theory and the practice*".

The use of personality and psychometric tests to identify the mentor is a growing area of discussion in the mentoring literature. These additional resources to help select the mentor are also being advocated as a means to investigate the influence of mentor and mentee personality traits on mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Goran, 2001; Niehoff, 2006; Rose, 2003; Seong-Kook & Min-Jeong, 2007; Smith et al., 2005;). Neither personality nor psychometric tests were used in this investigation as a mechanism for initial identification of the academic teachers who would be assuming a mentor role in the dyad partnerships.

As explained in the introduction chapter of this thesis (refer p. 1), the potential mentor teacher participants in this investigation were identified by the researcher and invited to participate in the study. In the absence of a personality test, for example, to aid the mentor selection, the integration of an evaluation tool within the mentoring programme structure would alternatively provide a mechanism for checking the progress and effectiveness of the mentoring at regular intervals throughout the mentoring partnership time-span, regardless of the programme time-frame. Both the mentee"s and the mentor"s perspective would be included in this evaluation, to provide an equality-driven approach and encourage legitimacy of the results.

This researcher incorporated an outcome-oriented evaluation question in the summative interview schedule used with the academic teachers. Further discussion of the importance of evaluating mentoring outcomes and suggested strategies to achieve this evaluation is provided in section 7.8 of this chapter (refer p. 332). It is suggested that the integration of evaluation strategies for determining the outcomes would provide opportunities to assess whether the mentor-mentee relationship is working.

The significance of effective mentor selection and how this process within a mentoring system can impact on the effectiveness of mentoring to support teaching practice has been magnified by the findings from the study. This has indicated that further investigation into effective mentor selection processes, of which psychometric and personality testing could be considered, would be beneficial.

7.6.3 Mentee attributes

In addition to the importance regarding the identification of mentor attributes to influence the effectiveness of mentoring and to use as a tool for mentor selection, Wanberg et al. (2003) refer to how mentee characteristics can determine the quality of mentoring support the mentee receives and the outcomes of this. Plamondon (2007) points out however, that little research has been done to explore the qualities and competencies needed to be an effective mentee. The findings in this study produced a significant focus on the importance of mentee attributes and how they influenced the quality of the mentoring partnership and the support a mentee received as a consequence. In particular, during their summative interviews, the

academic teachers identified a range of mentee attributes they perceived as important to the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership and the outcomes the mentee achieved as a result.

Clutterbuck (2004) refers to the need for reciprocity of behaviours, believing that the behaviour of the effective mentor needs to be reflected to a degree by the mentee for a mentoring partnership to be successful. Of the three research participant groups involved in this study, the academic teachers identified specific attributes they believed the mentee needed to possess in order to influence the mentoring support they received. For example, the most important attribute commented on by the mentee teachers was the mentee being prepared to discuss issues and difficulties in their teaching and "*not be scared of saying something even if it is wrong*". A willingness to participate in the mentoring and being open to change and the mentor"s feedback were also highlighted as influential mentee attributes. Interestingly, these attributes were also rated highly by the mentor teachers, as they talked about the mentee needing to be open to other perspectives and being prepared to "*take things on*" and accept that they can"t keep choosing a mentor until they find the right mold. Having a willingness to participate in the mentoring partnership and being reflective were also regarded as important mentee attributes.

Perhaps a more significant finding from this study than how mentee attributes determine the type of mentoring they receive and the outcomes they achieve as a result was the academic teachers" belief that the most effective and sustaining mentoring partnerships were those in which the mentee had identified goals for their professional development which the mentoring partnership could support them in achieving and were prepared to regularly reflect and work on these. This action taken by the mentee had been initially identified in the teachers" feedback during the second focus group meeting and was again raised as significant in the summative interview. For example, one of the mentor teachers emphasised the importance of the mentee being focused and coming to the mentoring meetings "*with some reflective preparation*", not expecting the mentor to all the work.

This indicates that an essential step in the mentoring process is goal identification by the mentee, particularly if this action is carried out prior to the partnership

commencing and also in discussion with the mentor in the first mentoring meeting. Chiles (2006), in her analysis of how mentors do mentoring in the context of formal mentoring meetings, concludes that the most goal-focused mentoring programmes were the only programmes where both the mentor and the mentee almost entirely focussed on work-related business. The findings in this current study are congruent with Chiles" (2006) findings as the data indicated that the most successful mentoring partnerships involving the academic teachers were those where the participants had focussed on teaching and learning development and where the mentee in particular had established their learning goals at the commencement of the partnership.

7.6.4 Identifying the mentee

One of the subsidiary research questions in this study asked who benefits from mentoring support. The higher education programme coordinators were the only participant group to directly comment on who the mentee was in their mentoring programmes. For example, both the new teacher and the experienced teacher were identified as potential mentees, one of the coordinators stating that more experienced teachers were applying to be mentees rather than taking on a mentor role. In the university which had established five different mentoring programmes, the mentee was identified as being a post-doctorate graduate, a female academic or a new teacher, each mentee identity being commensurate with one of the five specific mentoring programmes.

Although the academic teachers did not answer this question directly, numerous comments during the focus group meetings and in their summative interview indicated that as well as the new teacher being an obvious mentee, experienced teachers could also benefit from mentoring support, particularly teachers new to the institution or commencing a new job role. A poignant question asked by more than one mentor teacher was "*who mentors the mentor?*" indicating that they believed the mentor needed support in this role.

7.6.5 The mentee-mentor matching process

The concept and process of matching the mentee with a mentor for the ensuing mentoring partnership is a significant section of discussion as a result of this study. Bozeman and Feeney (2007), for example, propose a "Goodness of Fit model" (p.

465) which bases the mentoring relationship on the fit between mentor and mentee preferences and the content of knowledge transmitted between the mentoring partners. Darwin"s (2004) mentor profiling tool, „The Dimensions of Mentoring Profiler", was developed to identify key characteristics of the mentor and mentee, Darwin (2004) believing this leads to more successful partnership matching. Use of the profiler tool enables both the mentor and the mentee to be clear about the purpose and expectations of the relationship.

There was a contrast of experiences with and approaches to the matching process across the three participant groups. For example, whilst the five past mentors explained how mentor-mentee matching was predominantly managed by the staff education and development (SED) manager, three of the four higher education programme coordinators identified that self-matching was the most common approach. These coordinators believed that the success of the mentoring partnerships relied on the level of mentee choice in the matching process. As one of them commented, this approach was preferable to "*a forced marriage*". However, there were similarities between the past mentors and programme coordinators as they both described how a pool of mentors was in place from which the mentee could select their mentor. This concept was viewed positively by the participants as they talked about the mentor pools" "*usefulness for buddying up*" and "*beneficial for the success of the partnership*".

The fourth programme coordinator described how the matching process was coordinated by a central mentoring group, reflecting the approach experienced by the past mentors with regard to the SED manager managing the process. They explained how the matching process potentially resulted in a teacher waiting for a year until the next programme round commenced if they could not be successfully matched with a mentor. As the coordinator claimed, "*our priority is that we don"t match people just for the sake of matching*". This example was very much in contrast with the programme coordinators who had described their programmes as being based on a self-matching process.

The findings from the academic teachers" feedback during the mentor-only and mentee-only focus group meetings varied from the past mentors and programme coordinators, mainly due to the matching process having been managed by the

researcher. Although all of the teachers were asked at the outset of the one year programme period if they preferred to select their own mentoring partner, all of the teachers deferred to the researcher in managing this process. On average, the mentoring partnerships had met seven times at the time of these focus group meetings. The highest number of responses from the mentee teachers with regard to their preference of the mentee-mentor match focused on how the mentee should have a choice in the selection of their mentor and that a mentor pool should be available to choose from. Four of the teachers suggested a variation on this concept as they talked about the mentee choosing more than one mentor from the pool and a central coordinator then matching them.

In her review of the mentoring literature, Long (1994) explored the influence of personalities on the success of the mentoring partnership match, identifying that personality conflict where the „chemistry‟ between the mentor and mentee is not good is a key variable in the breakdown of a mentoring relationship. She also points out that even if the match is compatible, “The tyranny of distance or incompatible work schedules” (p. 4) can disrupt the mentoring process.

The second most important factor that the mentee teachers perceived as influential was personalities, one teacher believing that the success of their relationship had been due to the personality match. An additional finding from the data collected during the mentor-only focus group meeting identified that successful matching depended largely on the mentor and mentee being from different teaching disciplines. Two of the teachers who had been matched with mentees from similar teaching contexts had found that this had created a lot of distraction and their “*similar interests had dominated the discussions rather than exploring teaching issues*”.

A conclusion that can be drawn from these findings and based on Ghaye and Ghaye‟s (1998) study for example is that the matching of mentors and mentees is an influential variable on the success of the mentoring partnership, the mentoring partnership being a central structure of an organisation‟s mentoring programme which impacts on how a teacher is supported in their academic practice.

7.6.6 The demographics of a mentoring relationship

The mentoring literature highlights a range of demographic characteristics likely to impact on the mentoring relationship. Bland, Taylor, and Shollenberger, (2006), for example, comment on how interpersonal styles vary across gender and race and suggest that the mentor-mentee relationship with different backgrounds of gender, race and ethnicity benefit from open discussions about the differences in worldviews and experiences.

The matching of the mentoring partners in this current study resulted in a mix of ethnicity, culture, age and gender demographics comprising the partnerships that met over the one year programme period. Five partnerships were of same gender, three of mixed gender; two partnerships were of different ethnicities; four partnerships comprised very different age ranges whilst four were partnerships of similar age groups. Four partnerships also comprised a different cultural mix.

Different demographic features of the mentoring relationship were identified in the academic teachers" summative interview responses. The teachers identified a range of demographics that they believed to be important influences on the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership and the matching process that initiated this partnership. The most influential demographic identified by the teachers was the similarity or difference in the teaching disciplines and therefore perspectives of the mentor and mentee. Nine of the thirteen teachers who commented on this believed that a different discipline mix had enhanced the effectiveness of the partnership as it had provided an opportunity gain another perspective from a different faculty. There was a sense in the teachers" feedback that the differences in teaching roles and disciplines also provided a sense of security as one mentee teacher explained: "*Being in totally different fields has been better. You may want to vent about someone or something and you can"t do this with someone in your department"*.

While mentoring relationships between individuals of different generations, ethnic backgrounds, cultures, colour, and special needs are encouraged in higher education, mentoring relationships between genders and between individuals with same-sex orientation are sometimes held to a different standard, with potential criticism exacerbated by the power differential often associated with mentoring (Metros & Yang, 2006). Darling, Bogat, Cavell, Murphy, and Sanchez (2006)

identify that few studies have evaluated gender differences in mentoring relationships. In this current study, the influence of gender in the mentoring partnerships was minimally referred to by the teachers. There was a mixed perception from the nine teachers who commented on gender, four teachers stating that gender had not factored in the success of their partnership. In comparison, one mentee teacher who had identified in the beginning of the study that they wanted to be matched with a same gender mentor affirmed that this had definitely been an important factor for them. Similar ages of the mentee and mentor was perceived as an influencing feature, mentioned by four of the teachers.

According to Darling et al. (2006), understanding the individual characteristics of the mentee is central to understanding their needs and the mentoring processes and resources required to meet these needs. They suggest that the meaning of ethnicity is deeply embedded within a particular historical and cultural context, and believe that "Differences in values can have a profound effect on the fit of mentees, mentoring programmes and these cultural contexts" (p. 768). The three teachers who commented on this demographic feature offered mixed perspectives in regard to whether they felt ethnicity had been an influencing factor on the effectiveness of their mentoring partnership. Whilst one teacher felt it hadn"t really impacted, all three teachers believed that ethnicity could be a "*possible consideration in the mentoring partnership*".

The mentor-mentee matching process that was undertaken by the researcher in this study appears to have resulted in minimal issues of demographic influences on the mentoring partnerships that continued through the one year mentoring programme. Darling et al. (2006) advocate the need for further research about the ways in which race, ethnicity, gender or culture influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships.

7.6.7 Mentoring training

There is a continual thread in the mentoring literature across the three strands of health, business and higher education regarding the interconnection between mentoring as a teacher support mechanism and an organisation"s achievement of their vision and strategic goals for quality teaching and learning. Important to this discussion, mentoring training is referred to in the literature as being integral to the

effectiveness of the mentoring provided and acts as a conduit for the organisation to communicate the expectations of how mentoring can contribute to the achievement of quality teaching and learning. Simmons (1999), for example, advocates that mentoring training provides a mechanism for communicating to both the mentee and the mentor how mentoring fits into the organisation"s goals and existing programmes of professional development.

Prevalent in the findings from results of an evaluation questionnaire completed by fourteen of the teachers at the conclusion of the training workshops was their belief that the provision of mentoring training was an essential component of a mentoring programme if one was to be established in the institution. This was expressed by two of the mentor teachers as "*creating shared perceptions of the purpose of mentoring*" and "*engendering commitment to the programme*". Daresh and Playko"s (1993) study of the essential skills and knowledge a mentee needs to bring to the mentoring relationship found that training opportunities for mentees were as important as training being provided for mentors. They found that mentees benefitted from training in effective communication skills and understanding the nature of an effective mentoring relationship. Simmons (1999) also believes that mentoring training is vital for mentees so that they do not end up taking a passive role in the mentoring process.

In the original method design of this investigation, mentoring training for both the mentor and mentee teachers was provided prior to commencement of the one year mentoring partnerships. The training workshops covered a range of content with the aim to expose the teachers to key components and considerations of the mentoring process and practice that they would be engaging in as mentors and mentees, as well as becoming familiar with the expectations of their respective roles. The workshops also provided them with the opportunity to contribute to decisions about the shape of a possible mentoring system in their institution in the future. Given that the literature offers significantly fewer references to the need for mentee training, this researcher determined to explore whether training for the mentees as well as for the mentors had an impact on the ensuing dyad partnerships.

Extensive feedback gathered from the teachers via the evaluation questionnaire identified that the mentees felt they had definitely benefitted from receiving

training before embarking on a mentoring relationship. It was also apparent from their feedback that the training had assisted them with preparing for the mentoring partnership in terms of considering their professional development goals, their role as a mentee and learning about the expected developmental process of a dyad partnership.

For a mentoring partnership to be effective, section 7.6.3 (refer p. 313) identified that one of the key determinants of this is for the mentee to have identified goals for their learning that can be supported by mentoring. The training opportunity prior to the mentee teachers‟ engagement in the mentoring partnerships provided a conduit for them to begin identifying their learning goals. This controlled environment had the benefit of communicating to the mentee that their goals needed to be aligned with teaching and learning professional development, and helped them connect these goals with the organisation‟s expectations. The mentor can also be encouraged to consider their own goals for the mentoring as these teachers may wish to develop their teaching practice and use the mentoring opportunity to do so. This was apparent in the feedback provided in the training workshop evaluation questionnaire, where a number of the mentor teachers claimed "*I learned from the mentee too. Mentoring is as beneficial for my learning as it is for the mentee*."

Another element of mentoring training that was highlighted in the evaluation questionnaire results as an influence on the overall mentoring experience was whether training should be a combined mentor-mentee event or separate for each group. Although there is minimal reference made to this consideration in the literature, it was clear from the fourteen teachers‟ responses that combined training was an ideal approach, as it provided a frame of reference for the partnership and the opportunity for the participants to discover commonalities: *"We managed to get a feel for where we wanted to go with our „partnership". Mutual understanding is developed faster when training is cooperative"*.

Responses from three of the four higher education programme coordinators identified that mentoring training was a key aspect of their mentoring programmes. Training was described as a formal component which had been an integral aspect of the programme since its inception in the institution. One of the coordinators

believed that the provision of training for both mentors and mentees had meant that teachers were "*more committed to the programme*". An additional concept of mentoring training was described by another coordinator who explained how their programme incorporated up-skilling sessions and advanced mentoring training. They referred to these as "*extraordinary professional development sessions*". A key finding highlighted how mentoring training was perceived by two of the coordinators as providing a fairly unique type of support for the mentees. The coordinators referred to how their training workshops also focused on helping the mentees learn how to be a mentee and learn how to find a mentor for themselves.

The findings in this study highlighted that the most successful partnerships, as reported by the academic teachers, were those in which the mentee had considered and/or identified their professional development goals and how the mentoring could support them in the achievement of these. Mentees and mentors need to document their goals at the beginning of the partnership and document their learning during this period, to identify the impact of the mentoring on their teaching practice. This documentation also provides another strategy for evaluating mentoring effectiveness.

7.6.8 Establishing the mentoring relationship

The quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee significantly impacts on the success of the mentoring partnership which acts as a framework encasing the provision of mentoring support for the mentee. How teachers use the mentoring partnership time and what they consequently do in their teaching practice is significant to determine whether mentoring has an impact on teaching practice and therefore justifies itself as a valid support mechanism for teacher professional development. As Plamondon (2007) states, "Mentoring relationships are complex and dynamic processes that include a variety of different activities and elements" (p. 12).

The findings in this study identify key processes that influence the quality of a mentoring relationship which have been discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. These processes include mentor and mentee selection, the mentor-mentee matching process and demographic characteristics of the relationship. In addition, three further considerations were highlighted in the academic teachers" feedback

during the second focus group meeting, including i) the practical actions taken by the mentoring partners to establish the partnership process and structure; ii) establishing trust and iii) the environment in which the mentoring meetings take place.

7.6.8.1 Actions taken by the mentoring partners

Making decisions about the focus of the mentoring meetings, clarifying role expectations and setting ground rules were three key actions the teachers perceived as important to build the foundation of the mentoring relationship and ensure ongoing usefulness of the partnership meetings. An emphasis on the mentee deciding how the mentoring could support their practice was again evident in the data. The teachers commented on how this mentee action helped to direct the focus of the mentoring. Plamondon (2007) describes how the personal and professional development of the mentee may be selected by the mentor or they may be identified jointly by both mentor and mentee as specific learning objectives of the relationship.

Clarifying role expectations was highlighted by the academic teachers as another action that needed to be taken by the mentor and mentee at the commencement of the partnership, in particular clarifying whose responsibility it is for establishing the mentoring relationship. For example, two of the mentor teachers commented that it was up to the mentor to "*set the scene*", also indicating that it is easier for the experienced teacher (as the mentor) to create the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. A third important action perceived by the teachers as impacting on the quality of the mentoring relationship was the setting of ground rules to ensure the partnership meetings maintained the agreed professional development focus. Interestingly, three teachers believed this action was also the mentor‟s responsibility to initiate; however, once ground rules had been established, the same teachers felt that the mentee should subsequently "*drive the meetings*".

7.6.8.2 Establishing trust in the mentoring relationship

The second important consideration identified in the teachers‟ feedback during the second focus group meeting focused on the importance of establishing trust in the mentoring relationship. Interestingly, building trust was also identified by the

mentor teachers later in their summative interviews as a critical mentor attribute. The teachers placed an emphasis on both the mentor and the mentee as being responsible for building trust in the relationship, again referring to the setting ground rules in their explanation of how trust could be developed, as well as the "*maintaining of confidentiality*" by both partners. The perception of mutual responsibility was evident as the teachers talked about "*mutual willingness to share*", "*an equal playing field*" and "*mutual respect*". Plamondon (2007) contends that "Explicit elements of a mentoring relationship are those that are intentionally shared by the mentor with the mentee" (p. 12). In contrast, the academic teachers felt that this sharing was a mutual exchange rather than being driven by the mentor.

Four teachers additionally referred to the influence of teaching commonalities on the relationship, believing that trust had developed quickly in their particular partnerships because they shared similar areas of expertise. Two of these teachers added how they felt trust already existed in their partnership because of previous projects they had engaged in together. It was evident from the teachers‟ comments that whichever factor influenced the establishment of trust, this element of the mentoring relationship was critical for its success and effectiveness as a support mechanism for the teacher.

7.6.8.3 An environment for the mentoring meetings

Data collected during the second focus group meeting with the teachers highlighted the theme of environmental aspects that can impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring partnership. For example, the eleven teachers who attended this meeting referred particularly to how the meeting space determined how often their partnership met and what they subsequently discussed in the meetings. The need for privacy was identified as the most important consideration as this was seen as supporting confidentiality and creating a sense of safety for the mentee to share issues. One teacher was definite that the meetings should be "*visual*", particularly as their partnership comprised a male-female match. It was evident from the teachers‟ feedback that there was a significant lack of appropriate spaces on campus for people to meet privately.

The inadequacy of spaces that were conducive for mentoring meetings was further highlighted as the teachers talked about the physical comfort of the venue. Four

teachers perceived this environmental aspect as critical for the effectiveness of their mentoring meetings, one teacher stating, "*I was not comfortable with the seating set up. I had to mentally put aside a perceived barrier to any meaningful communication*".

7.6.9 Additional support mechanisms for the mentoring participants

The literature on mentoring in the higher education context suggests a range of options that could be provided by an organisation to support teachers who engage in mentoring. For example, Wolfe (1992) talks about mentoring the mentors through collegial support groups, viewing this approach as encouraging collaborative networks across the organisation. Jucovy (2001) claims that "Systematic monitoring of the relationships is one essential method for providing support to mentors". She believes that one of the essential roles of a mentoring programme is to help build and maintain the mentoring relationships which can be achieved through monitoring the relationships, including checking in with the mentors and the mentees on a regular basis, providing additional training and support for mentors and offering mentor support groups. Jucovy (2001) adds that these support groups usually require "Some level of experienced and professional oversight" (p. 18).

Data from two of the programme coordinators identified three main activities undertaken by them to provide an additional level of support for both the mentors and mentees. These included regular email and phone contact during the mentoring partnership period, establishment of mentoring agreements which clarified the expectations and purpose of the partnership and regular feedback to the mentors by the central programme coordinator. In one of the Australian universities, mentors and mentees received a stipend on signing the mentoring agreement, which they could use to buy teaching assistance.

More extensive data in relation to additional support mechanisms was collected from the academic teachers. A key finding from both the mentor and mentee teachers was the usefulness of a community of practice structure being an integral component of a mentoring programme. Based on their experience in attending the focus group meetings, the teachers referred to these meetings as similar to the community of practice concept, stating that they had benefitted as much from these

meetings as form the mentoring partnership. There was unanimous support for the structure to comprise of mentor-only and mentee-only community of practice meetings, which the teachers felt should be organised regularly throughout a mentoring programme period. The group meetings were perceived as providing the teachers with opportunities to share best practice and enhance collegiality across the campus. The desire for separate meetings for the mentors and mentees was explained as enabling people to talk openly about their respective partner or the partnership experience itself. As one mentee teacher stated, "*When people talk about their mentors, I feel I would have to be careful about what I say*". The teachers believed a central programme coordinator would be beneficial to oversee the communities of practice, perceiving the coordinator role as providing a "*base*" for the mentoring participants to access when required and being a "*person broker*" who drives the mentoring system.

The community of practice concept could be likened to the group mentoring model advocated by a number of authors in the mentoring literature, particularly within the higher education and health disciplines. For example, Joyce-Erueti et al. (2002) perceive the group mentoring model as a conduit for nurses to consult with each other for professional development purposes, whilst Darwin and Palmer (2009) view the group mentoring approach as encouraging less structured learning partnerships between multiple learners with the result of having more potential for fostering workplace learning. The academic teachers also saw the group meetings for mentors and mentees as providing opportunities for sharing experiences and common goals.

7.6.10 Mentoring activities

Analysis of the data collected from the academic teachers identified that the activities undertaken by the mentee and mentor is one of the key variables intrinsic to the process of mentoring and influential on the outcomes of mentoring. A conclusion from the data analysis is that mentee and mentor activities either contribute to the establishment of the mentoring relationship or to the usefulness of the mentoring partnership as it progresses through the duration of a mentoring programme.

Activities engaged in by the mentee and mentor were described in various ways by the teachers in response to being asked how they were achieving value for time in their partnerships during the second focus group meeting. Regularity and frequency of mentoring meetings were believed to be significant influences. This was evident in the comments from the teachers who had scheduled fortnightly meetings in comparison to those who had "*struggled to find time to meet*". Regular meetings were perceived as enabling a continued focus on teaching and learning and a more rapid development of the mentoring relationship.

A specific mentee activity perceived as an important part of the mentoring partnership process involved the need for the mentee to identify their learning goals. As explained earlier in this chapter (refer p. 314), eight of the teachers viewed this as critical to ensuring the mentoring meetings had a clear purpose and focus and achieved outcomes for the mentee"s teaching practice development. Another activity perceived as important referred again to the mentee, the teachers believing that the mentee needed to ask for feedback on their teaching practice from the mentor and act on any suggestions the mentor had for them. Commitment to the mentoring by both partners was also highlighted as important, in terms of committing to regular meetings and formalising a space for meetings in teaching timetables. As one teacher explained, "*It is too easy to not make it a priority because it is not on your job list. This has to be thought through by both partners*".

Interwoven in the teachers" feedback was the reference to how a „formal structure and process" had helped them to engage in various mentoring activities, explained by one teacher as "*otherwise we just talked for two hours*". There was a definite indication that the teachers had wanted to achieve value from the mentoring experience and they perceived this as being contingent on how they contributed to and participated in the mentoring partnership.

There are a number of processes at the mentoring partnership level that could be formalised which would help strengthen the decisions about how the partnership is structured. For example, by incorporating a formal expectation of some mentee and mentor activities/actions within the partnership period, and providing resources to assist with this, the participating teachers would be given tools and strategies for

utilising the mentoring opportunity to its fullest potential and achieve outcomes pertaining to the improvement or enhancement of their teaching practice.

7.7 Organisational Influence on Mentoring

The organisation and its influence on the status and place of mentoring as a support mechanism for teaching practice is a central component of the findings. Data from this study highlights a number of key elements within the organisation that directly and indirectly impact on mentoring, including:

i) A strategic plan that identifies quality teaching and learning as one of the core goals for the organisation to strive for;
ii) An organisation-wide model that defines quality teaching and learning, within which required teaching practices are clearly articulated;
iii) The organisational culture;
iv) Other organisation-wide processes that provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of quality teaching and learning practices such as: peer observation, manager evaluations, student evaluations, promotion scale criteria, performance agreements, professional development plans.

A number of authors in the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of health, higher education and business refer to the importance of mentoring being aligned to an organisation"s strategic goals for quality teaching and learning if its value and benefits are to be realised. For example, Friday and Friday (2002) believe that the organisation is pivotal in the success of a mentoring programme being successfully implemented. They contend that mentoring programmes have the potential to be less successful if they are not strategically aligned with the organisation"s long-term objectives and strategic positioning.

Supporting this view, Holahan et al. (2000) found in their mentoring study that the difference between more successful and less successful outcomes of mentoring were significantly influenced by the degree to which the organisation followed through in its commitment to the goal of the mentoring project. Kanuka (2005) describes mentoring as a tangible mechanism within an organisation to support staff, contending that the practice of mentoring should focus on helping teachers to reflect on and support the goals of the organisation.

During the third focus group meeting the academic teachers commented on how they believed the implementation of a formal mentoring system would impact on teaching practices within the organisation. It was evident in their feedback that mentoring as a mechanism contributing to the organisation"s goals for quality teaching and learning would have significant impact on teachers" professional development. For example, the establishment of a formal mentoring programme would provide a steady induction mechanism of support for the new teacher and/or the teacher new to the organisation. The teachers also highlighted how mentoring as a core goal of the organisation would ensure allocation of specific support for teaching practice and strengthen a commitment to campus-wide professional development of teaching practice.

Holahan et al. (2000) point out in their summary of findings that when the benefits of adopting a new initiative are clear across the organisation, high levels of motivation to adopt the innovation are often observed. This correlates to the alignment of a mentoring programme with the organisation"s strategic goals, encouraging the integration of this professional development activity as a core teacher support mechanism.

Another factor influencing the success of a mentoring programme is whether it is perceived as providing legitimate professional development support for teachers" academic practice. It became increasingly apparent from the data analysis across the three participant groups that mentoring was perceived as an integral teacher development activity largely dependent on acknowledgement by the organisation. For example, the support of managers and recognition of the time invested in mentoring by both mentors and mentees were regarded as important ways in which the organisation could value mentoring and therefore influence the provision of this teacher support mechanism. Building in mentoring as a legitimate component of a teacher"s workload was also emphasised.

The connection between the acknowledgement of mentoring as a valid professional development mechanism for teachers within a higher education context and the extent to which an organisation demonstrates recognition of mentoring as a value-added element of its infrastructure was very strong in the findings of this study. During their summative interview when the academic teachers were asked how the

organisation could influence mentoring, their responses focused primarily on how they believed the organisation could demonstrate a valuing of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism. Of the sixteen teachers who completed the summative interview, thirteen identified time allocation as a significant support strategy to enable and encourage teachers to engage in mentoring. Conversely, time constraints had been indicated as a major challenge for the teachers in the fourth and fifth focus group meetings.

Teachers are subject to working within organisational constraints or conflicting beliefs about how much value mentoring can add to a teacher"s professional development, therefore how much mentoring is resourced and supported by the organisation. Teachers cannot implement or engage in major organisational initiatives without substantial support from the organisation itself (Gross, Giacquinta & Bernstein, 1971). For a mentoring programme to be successfully integrated into an organisation as a professional development support mechanism, the organisation needs to commit to this initiative and acknowledge it as an integral organisational activity.

As identified earlier in this chapter in relation to the criteria required for effective mentor selection (refer p. 306), Gibb (1999) refers to the need for the organisation to have a clear definition of teaching and learning quality as an integral component of an organisation-wide quality learning model. This researcher builds on Gibb"s (1999) concept of a learning model by proposing that an organisation-wide model for quality learning within which required teaching practices are clearly articulated provides a vehicle for establishing the purpose and value of mentoring as a core professional development mechanism.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2002) claim that the effectiveness of any model implemented to address quality teaching and learning in the higher education context is dependent on the organisational culture. Similarly, Callan (2006) believes that the nature of mentoring is determined by the culture, the traditions and the philosophy of the organisation. The past mentors" responses in their interview indicated a high degree of negative experiences when they recounted how the institution had influenced the mentoring they had been involved with. For example, the teachers identified key institutional-level influences, such as how the

strategic direction had determined strategic initiatives for staff development activities, associating these strategic decisions as inculcating minimal support and acknowledgement by management of mentoring as a mechanism to enhance quality teaching and learning. Blackwell and Preece (2001) talk about how interventions instigated by an organisation which aim to maintain and enhance standards and quality can create a sense of academic staff feeling "Battered", which the authors describe as a feeling that "Professional autonomy and identity are threatened" (p. 9). It was evident that the past mentors felt powerless to contribute to or influence how mentoring was structured as a teacher support activity due to the business-model approach instigated at that time.

In contrast to the experiences voiced by the past mentors in regard to the negative impact of the organisational culture on mentoring and teacher professional development, the academic teachers perceived mentoring as a vehicle for encouraging a culture of cross-campus communication and a culture of teacher professional development, if mentoring was valued by the organisation. As one teacher stated, "*Mentoring should be part of the institution, that"s part of being a teacher*". The cultural climate of the organisation at the time of this study was perceived by the teachers as a challenge to mentoring being formally acknowledged as a useful teacher support mechanism. They believed that mentoring could contribute to creating a positive climate but added that the organisation would have to "*encourage rather than dictate the process*". Chalmers (2008) refers to the institutional climate as being characterised by a commitment to the enhancement, transformation and innovation of learning, where the level of staff satisfaction and experience is a key area to evaluate this climate. Chalmers (2008) highlights the connectivity of mentoring and organisational culture and indicate that an important challenge for the organisation is how to develop a culture that is conducive to the adoption of mentoring as a legitimate teacher support mechanism.

Integrally linked with the different levels of connectivity between mentoring and organisational infrastructure discussed in this section of the chapter is the need for impact evaluation processes to be inherent in a mentoring system, for an organisation to appreciate the extent to which mentoring provides a value-added activity. Impact evaluation methodology also provides the individual teacher with a

purpose for engaging in mentoring and encourages them to self-reflect and evaluate their own development. The topic of evaluation as an integral component of a mentoring system is discussed in more detail in the next section.

7.8 Evaluation of Mentoring Outcomes

One of the objectives of the present study was to examine whether the practice of mentoring influenced the teaching practices of academic teachers in the higher education context. The findings from this study suggest that evaluation should be an intrinsic mechanism within a mentoring programme to determine what influences mentoring as a support mechanism for teaching practice and what outcomes result from mentoring. Within the mentoring literature, strategies that are connected with mentoring programme evaluation primarily focus on assessing mentoring process effectiveness and participant satisfaction or rely to a large extent on reflective feedback from the mentoring participants. There is less evidence of impact evaluation that measures tangible outcomes of mentoring with regard to teaching practice changes or improvements.

The current study used both process and impact evaluation methods that contributed to providing more comprehensive and valid evidence of mentoring as an activity that supported and influenced change or improvement in their practice via the one year programme in which the eighteen academic teachers participated. Evaluation in the mentoring domain needs to be about determining the degree of effectiveness and the impact of mentoring on teaching practice, not just evaluation of the satisfaction levels perceived by the mentee and/or the mentor. Strengthening the process of evaluating mentoring effectiveness can be achieved by including other stakeholders in this process, for example mentor programme coordinators, managers and programme leaders. This can add to the assessment of how or whether the teacher (mentee) has changed or improved their teaching practice.

A significant question being asked in the mentoring literature is whether mentoring relationships lead to positive outcomes for the mentee (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). This appears to be a larger consideration compared to whether the mentor experiences any positive outcomes from mentoring, although this aspect is also a discussion thread in the literature. Jones (2007) identifies „personal productivity‟ as a significant tangible outcome of

mentoring, viewing this as a quantifiable outcome that justifies a mentoring scheme as an integral part of an organisation‟s business strategy. The findings in this study indicated that the personal and professional elements of a teacher‟s development are inseparable and that the development of one cannot help but result in the development of the other. Results of this study also identify that both the mentee and the mentor benefit from engaging in mentoring. For example, both the mentee and the mentor teachers referred to personal and professional gains that they had achieved which they believed had contributed to the changes in their practice. Personal development such as gaining more confidence and thinking more about their own pedagogy and taken-for-granted assumptions was identified alongside introducing reflective journals with their students, being more relaxed about session planning and making changes to the curriculum.

The findings highlight how the inherent humanistic aspect of mentoring is critical, not just a focus on coaching a person in job skill acquisition. A number of the mentor teachers talked about how they kept the focus of the meetings on teaching and learning but this was often pre-empted by a social, personal element, such as catching up generally, spending some time rapport building before talking about the mentee‟s teaching and allowing for discussion about issues that were not necessarily teaching-related as well.

As mentoring provides support for a teacher‟s professional practice, this results in an influence on the teacher‟s personal development. A number of authors in the higher education mentoring literature discuss the social practice of mentoring (Young & Perrewe, 2000) and the social practice of teaching (D‟Eon, Overgaard & Rutledge-Harding, 2000). The findings in this current study indicate that mentoring provides for the social development of the teacher as well as for their professional development. Earlier in this investigation, the researcher identified a conceptual and theoretical framework for mentoring that equally acknowledged the place and practice of mentoring as being important for a teacher‟s professional and personal development (refer Chapter Three, p. 53). This duality of the purpose of mentoring innately recognises that the personal development of the teacher is a natural and critical aspect of their professional development. Mentoring influences both dimensions of the person.

Specific identification of teaching practice changes as a result of engaging in mentoring provides evidence of the link between mentoring and teaching and learning professional development outcomes. One of the New Zealand programme coordinators identified in their interview that they undertook a comprehensive written evaluation at the conclusion of each one year mentoring programme. This consisted of a series of questions which focused on whether the participants felt that the mentoring had been beneficial for supporting them in their teaching practice. The programme coordinator also mentioned that the mentoring participants could contact the central coordinator at any stage during the one year mentoring programme. They identified this as another form of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the mentoring. One of the Australian university programme coordinators referred to how they asked for the mentoring participants to provide written reflections on their mentoring experience at the end of the mentoring programme. Both of these examples contribute to the notion that evaluation processes deserve a place within an organisation"s mentoring system. Both institutions highlighted how they used this evaluation data to further inform their programmes.

Additional formative evaluation strategies were identified by three of the higher education programme coordinators as they talked about how they maintained regular telephone and email contact with the mentoring participants throughout the mentoring programme. One of the coordinators also explained how a group sharing session was organised at the conclusion of their programme, providing the mentees and mentors an opportunity to "*debrief*" their mentoring experiences. Evaluation was optional within one of the coordinators" programme, as they identified that no formal process was in place.

Building on the data from the two programme coordinators, this researcher believes that for evaluation to effectively determine the impact of mentoring on teaching practice, evaluation strategies need to be directly linked to a number of processes inherent in a mentoring system. Figure 7 (refer p. 335) identifies the different mentoring system components and the evaluation mechanism or strategy that co-relates to each of these, with the aim to determine the what, when and how of mentoring effectiveness. Figure 7 then summarises how systemic evaluation processes can be incorporated to ensure that evaluation of mentoring effectiveness

is implemented throughout a mentoring programme cycle, rather than being dependent on evaluation occurring only at the conclusion of a programme period. Asking how an organisation can measure the value of mentoring highlights the importance of a clear purpose for mentoring being established at the outset of implementing a mentoring system and having robust evaluation processes incorporated in this system.

Figure 7. Systemic Iterative Evaluation Processes and Mechanisms

Mentoring System Component	Evaluation Mechanism/Strategy
Mentor Selection	**Collective identification and definition of teaching and learning quality by the organisation:** Strategic objectives and whole-organisation consultation process results in establishment of a „Quality Learning Model". Criteria are established for determining mentor skills and attributes deemed important to support the achievement of individual professional development in teaching and learning through mentoring, based on whole-organisation definition of quality teaching and learning. Evidence of mentor skills and attributes are collected for mentor selection: Performance agreements, student evaluations, teaching portfolio.
Mentee Identification	**Documentation of mentee teaching skills and knowledge:** Matching process completed.
Mentoring Partnership	**Formative evaluation:** Three and six month informal evaluations conducted by mentor and mentee. Six month informal evaluation by programme coordinator with mentors and mentees via phone or email.
Community of Practice Meetings	**Formative evaluation:** Informal evaluation undertaken by mentors and mentees during community of practice meetings.
Conclusion of Formal Mentoring Programme	**Post evaluation of mentoring effectiveness:** Documented evidence of mentee"s teaching and learning impact/change/improvement. Documented evidence of mentor"s teaching and learning impact/change/improvement. Evaluation of mentoring participant satisfaction: benefits gained, mentoring experience, achievement of goals.

Alongside the proposed procedure of the mentees documenting their professional development gains by the conclusion of the formal programme period, it is also recommended that the mentors engage in a similar exercise. Although the mentor may not enter the mentoring partnership with specific goals for their own learning, nor be expected to in their role as a mentor, this researcher believes it would be as beneficial for the mentor to document any insights and/or changes they too make during the mentoring programme period. As the findings from this study show, the nine mentor teachers identified that they had either considered or made actual changes in their own teaching practice, as well as supporting the mentee in doing the same.

Odell (1992) suggests both formative and summative evaluations are useful for enabling evaluation of the mentoring process and tangible results of a teacher"s engagement in mentoring. She separates these two evaluation methods, contending that summative evaluations are product-oriented and therefore necessarily carried out retrospectively of the mentoring programme, whilst formative evaluation can occur at any time during a mentoring programme. Inherent in a mentoring programme is the iterative nature of activity and process. This natural iteration in turn provides a framework for iterative evaluation of mentoring effectiveness, using both formative and summative evaluation strategies, at the individual and organisation levels.

As illustrated in Figure 7 (refer p. 335), opportunities for ongoing evaluation can be created, for example, the establishment of mentor and mentee communities of practice during the partnership period; midway and at the conclusion of the partnership, the programme coordinator could meet with the respective mentors and mentees and complete a progress review; establishing an expectation within the partnership process that the mentor and mentee engage in regular review and formative evaluation, providing them with an evaluation template to carry this out. This latter activity serves two purposes. Firstly, it encourages active, critical reflection by the mentee as they make links between their professional development goals and the actual progress they make towards achieving these goals during the mentoring programme. Secondly, the documentation of tangible outcomes provides valuable evidence for the organisation that the mentoring is supporting the teacher"s professional development. What is pivotal is the

elimination of a reliance on discovering the impact and effectiveness of mentoring at the end of a formal mentoring programme cycle, when it can sometimes be too late to rectify or redirect the mentoring process, the partnership matching or the mentoring activities if this means the support for the teacher and outcomes will benefit. Summative evaluation is not beholden to occurring at the end of an event to discover the consequences of that event, although this is a common application of summative evaluation methods.

The findings from this research study highlight that the academic teachers were articulating changes and improvements in their teaching practice during the programme at the conclusion of the one year programme, during their summative interviews. For example, the eight mentee teachers identified a range of changes they had made as a consequence of the mentoring, indicating both perceived and tangible changes in their teaching practice. Five of the teachers reported that they were now using new teaching strategies in the classroom, whilst two teachers talked about having made significant changes and improvements in their curriculum and course design.

Anecdotal examples from the mentee teachers identified perceived changes in their practice, such as an increased confidence in themselves as teachers and increased reflection on practice. Two of the teachers referred to „improved student learning outcomes‟ but could provide only anecdotal evidence of this, as they commented, "*the students are far happier in their learning now*". In comparison, the eight mentor teachers identified three specific areas in which they believed they had made changes in their practice. All eight teachers stated that they had definitely improved their reflective practice and were evaluating their teaching more rigorously as a consequence of the mentoring partnership they had engaged in. Interestingly, the remaining two areas of change or improvement in practice were reflective of the mentee teachers‟ feedback. For example, two of the mentor teachers stated they were using different teaching strategies and utilising technology more. One teacher had also made changes to their programme curriculum, which they attributed to having been influenced by the mentee‟s ideas about this.

Question four in the summative interviews with the teachers asked whether they had made any changes in their teaching as a result of the mentoring support they had received. The findings show how the teachers translated the benefits they believed they had gained from the mentoring into outcomes of change in their practice. For example, one of the mentee teachers described a benefit for them as learning more about curriculum development processes. The tangible outcome for this teacher was implementation and documentation of curriculum changes they had consequently made in their programme. Although measurement of this change had not been formally implemented, that is, the quality of the changes made, the teacher‟s feedback indicated that the curriculum status at the beginning of the mentoring partnership had improved significantly by the end of the partnership.

This indicates that putting systems in place to capture the mentoring participants‟ feedback at scheduled times during the programme is a useful design for evaluating mentoring effectiveness. However, this researcher also contends that the summative evaluation conducted at the conclusion of the formal mentoring programme period must incorporate evaluation of the quality of the changes made in teaching practice, not just identify the changes that were made. This positions evaluation at yet another level within a mentoring system framework as it further qualifies the impact of the mentoring support at a deeper point in the teacher‟s practice.

What are the implications of measuring the value of mentoring? Any decision about value needs to be considered against variables such as the perceived value by the participants and the perceived value by the organisation. As Jones (2007) points out, measuring the link between mentoring and value is complicated because the perception of value is so inherent yet so subjective. The provision of real measurable outcomes as a result of mentoring substantiates it as a valid, constructive and valuable mechanism that contributes to the organisation‟s strategic goals and its growth.

Evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring continues to be described as problematic in terms of applying methods that evidence tangible outcomes and impact of mentoring on teaching practice. Several authors in the higher education literature debate the validity of mentoring as a professional development mechanism if

tangible, measurable, cost-benefit outcomes are not identified (Desimone, 2009; Ganser, 2000; Grossman, 2009; Kram, 1985; Portner, 2005), whilst others accept anecdotal feedback as justifiable evaluation methodology (Elliott & Calderhead, 1995; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Stupiansky & Wolfe, 1992;). More recent studies in the mentoring literature have focused on the need for evaluating the process of mentoring and the outcomes of this intervention. For example, Grossman (2009) refers to two criteria for a good outcome measure. She contends that the outcome must be realistically expected to change during the mentoring period and that the chosen measure is "Sensitive enough to detect the likely change" (p. 6).

The mentoring literature that has explored the practice of evaluating the outcomes of mentoring has focused on evaluation of teacher retention rates (Bell & Thomas, 2007; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2004). Investigating teacher retention provides some evidence of mentoring effectiveness. Many of these studies fail however to include or reveal in their evaluation process whether the teachers who continue to teach are effective teachers who are prepared to learn, change or improve their practice to meet changing demographics and technological and innovative learning demands of their learners. It is contended that the use of staff retention as an indicator of mentoring effectiveness is problematic, as the question that needs to be asked is whether those teachers who are being retained are teachers who demonstrate teaching best practice. Evaluation of mentoring effectiveness needs to include discovery of teaching practice effectiveness as a result of the mentoring, to provide a more complete picture.

The results of Ingvarson et al.‟s (2005) study on evaluation of mentoring outcomes on teacher efficacy, knowledge and student outcomes were predominantly based on teachers across four different programmes completing a four-point scale. The scale identified the degree of agreement or disagreement with key evaluation questions, rather than having the teachers articulate what and/or how they had developed their teaching practice. Given the large sample in Ingvarson et al.‟s (2005) study of 3,250 teachers, open-ended questions may have been problematic for the time needed to analyse all responses. However, without asking the teachers to respond to „what‟ and „how‟ questions in relation to their teaching practice and whether changes or improvements were linked with the mentoring they received, the findings are reliant on subjective, anecdotal data.

Who is the best person to say whether mentoring has been effective - the mentor or the mentee? Or is it the organisation, in terms of having in place organisation-based indicators, such as student retention, teacher retention, student results and student evaluations? To be definitive about this, a comparison needs to be set up that documents information about the mentee‟s teaching and impact on student learning *before* and *after* engaging in mentoring. Otherwise, what are the outcomes measured against?

Measurable impact of mentoring on student learning outcomes remains an area for further research. In this current study, the researcher‟s literature review identified this gap in the mentoring literature. The finding from the three participant groups did not produce data to resolve this. However, the findings do support the literature which advocates that more outcome-oriented evaluation of mentoring, particularly with regard to assessing impact on student learning, is needed in order to substantiate the practice of mentoring as a legitimate professional development mechanism for academic teachers.

7.9 Mentoring Models

Darwin (2010) describes a „model‟ as the environment in which you place mentoring. She believes that the higher education context has changed, therefore requiring more wider-scope conceptual frameworks. In Chapter Two of this thesis (refer p. 7), a conceptual and theoretical framework was developed by the researcher in order to establish a structure and basis for the practice of mentoring as a support mechanism for academic teachers in the higher education context. As the conceptual framework for mentoring originally illustrated, the activity of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism is one of the organisation‟s core professional development mechanisms. Mentoring is positioned within the larger organisational framework, giving it a valid place and purpose. For the mentoring programme to be effective, it must be seen as contributing to the achievement of the organisation‟s strategic goals. This is the over-arching support mechanism that encapsulates it. The over-arching determination of teaching and learning quality by the organisation establishes the criteria for teacher professional development and in turn formalises the mentoring programme and provides validation of mentoring as a mechanism of support.

A range of models for mentoring is suggested in the literature across the three disciplines explored in this thesis. In the higher education literature, there is common reference made to the expert-novice model which identifies the new teacher as the mentee receiving mentoring from an experienced teacher; the peer mentoring model and group mentoring. More recent literature identifies the need for an organisation to establish multiple types of mentoring models in order to support teaching practices across a broad spectrum of academic teachers (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Darwin, 2007; Zachary, 2000).

Analysis of the data gathered from the higher education programme coordinators revealed that the expert-novice model was typically associated with the mentoring provided for the beginning teacher. This model comprised the formal programme structure offered in two of the four higher education institutions. One of the coordinators explained how peer mentoring was an option for teachers however this relationship was not formally managed or monitored in their mentoring programme. Reflective of these findings, the academic teachers also believed that the expert-novice model was the most beneficial mentoring partnership structure for supporting the new teacher. The peer mentoring model was seen as an alternative option for teachers who desired a relationship that was equal, "*non-hierarchical*" and "*non-dictatorial*". Five teachers felt that the peer mentoring model was more applicable to the experienced teacher as mentee.

Interestingly, as the academic teachers progressed through the one year mentoring programme, many of them reported making changes in the structure of their mentoring relationship. Peer mentoring, also described as mutual mentoring (Harnish & Wild, 1994) was evident as the preferred model for the teachers. Five of the eight dyad partnerships commenced with a formal expectation of the mentor as the expert teacher and the mentee as the novice teacher. Interestingly, these partnerships reported that their mentoring relationship had quickly developed into a peer mentoring relationship. A description provided by one of the mentor teachers illustrated the mentoring partnership process as an evolving phenomenon. For example, they explained how the development of the mentee teacher over the one year programme period had led to their initial expert-novice relationship evolving into a peer mentoring relationship. They referred to this as "*a natural phase in a mentoring partnership*".

This characteristic of a mentoring relationship changing in structure is reflective of Clarke‟s (2005) „layered relationship mentoring model‟ which depicts the progressive nature of a collegial friendship through to a co-mentoring relationship. Clarke‟s (2005) model complements the concept of mutual mentoring offered by Harnish and Wild (1994), as one key aspect of mutual mentoring can be described as the willingness or intention of the mentor to learn from the mentoring exchange as much as the mentee. This willingness to exchange at a mutual level inevitably influences the mentoring relationship that commenced with an expert-novice structure.

There are numerous translations in the education literature regarding the relationship aspect of the teacher and learner interaction. For example, Metge (1984) premises „Ako‟ as a fundamental philosophy underpinning quality teaching and learning. Ako, the Maori approach to teaching and learning, represents the synergetic interaction and "Unified cooperation of the learner and teacher" (p. 2), where the teacher is willing to learn from the student as much as sharing their wisdom and experience with the student. The philosophy of Ako underpinning the academic teachers‟ mentoring partnerships was evident in their feedback. For example, six of the eight mentor teachers emphasised how they had appreciated the opportunity to learn something from a totally different perspective, stressing the importance of "*being open to learning from the mentee*". The mentor teachers mentioned how their own openness to learning from another had made them question their taken-for-granted assumptions and think about their pedagogy.

7.9.1 Formal and informal models of mentoring

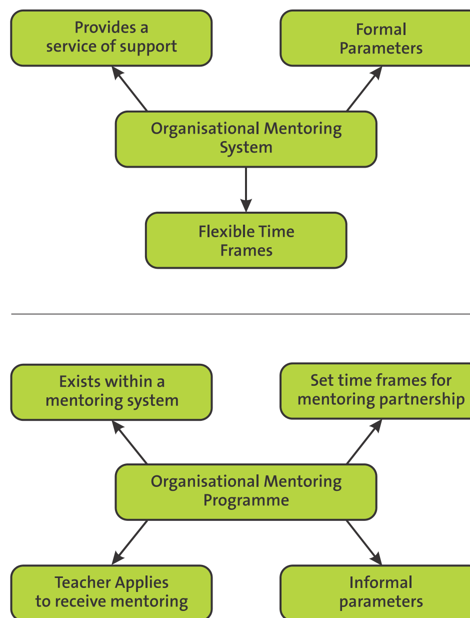
Mentoring can comprise a continuum of formal and informal levels in regard to mentoring systems, processes and structure. For example, Wunsch (1993) is in favour of formal mentoring schemes on the basis that they will deliver maximum impact and value to an organisation. However, Wunch (1993) indicates that a degree of informal process is important. He describes a formal scheme should operate at a 'light touch' level, with few rules but making explicit expectations of the relationship, giving ideas on the different models of mentoring and giving guidelines on good practice.

Across the three research participant groups there appeared to be an accepted and desired mentoring system that incorporated a balance between formal and informal processes and programme structure. Analysis of the interviews with the four programme coordinators highlighted several formal features that were inherent in their mentoring programmes. These included the mentoring partnership time-frame of either six months or one year and the processes for commencement and conclusion of the partnership. At the same time, the coordinators emphasised the degree of autonomy afforded the teachers once they were in a mentoring partnership.

Feedback from the academic teachers strongly indicated a definite division between the desire for the mentoring partnership process to be informal in nature, where teachers have the choice and flexibility as to how they engage in the mentoring, and a more formal mentoring system established by the organisation which is centrally coordinated and supported in terms of time, access and resources. From the teachers" point of view, the informal partnership structure acknowledged professional autonomy and reduced issues of power imbalance in the mentor-mentee relationship. Conversely, a formal mentoring system provided by the organisation was perceived by the teachers as encouraging a greater commitment to mentoring and in particular meeting the needs of the beginning teacher.

The decision as to whether a mentoring programme should be formally or informally structured is a resounding debate in the mentoring literature across the three discipline strands explored in this study. Whilst some authors advocate a formal structure for mentoring (Darwin, 2000; Klug & Salzman, 1991), claiming that this approach to mentoring system design ensures equality of access to mentoring for all staff, another sector of the mentoring literature supports the concept of informal mentoring systems (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Chao et al., 1992; Underhill, 2006). A third cohort of authors in the literature presents an alternative perspective, advocating for a mentoring system that is formal and informal, both foundationally and developmentally (Harper & Sawicka, 2001; Moir, 2006).

It is important here to differentiate between a mentoring programme and a mentoring system. Figure 8 illustrates the differences between a programme and a system, providing clarification of the findings in relation to the academic teachers‟ desire to maintain professional autonomy within the organisation‟s mentoring programme whilst at the same time believing the programme should be formally embedded within the organisation‟s mentoring system.



The findings from this current study further identified that intrinsic to any type of mentoring model is structural or process-focused considerations, particularly in relation to the degree of formality or informality of both of these. For example, an interesting finding was the suggestion of a „blended‟ model that combined both formal and informal elements, applicable to both the mentoring partnership structure and process and the organisation‟s mentoring programme structure.

Darwin (2010) is one author in the literature who advocates the need for voluntary engagement in mentoring by both the mentee and mentor participants. Forced mentoring doesn‟t work, which emphasises the need for a blended formal and informal mentoring programme structure. The literature suggests that ideally the

organisation establishes a formal system structure for the mentoring programme whilst the programme retains informal, voluntary participation of staff (Darwin, 2000; Hezlett, 2005; Underhill, 2006; Wanberg et al., 2003). This premise is supported by the findings from this research investigation. The researcher‟s proposed model for mentoring, which is discussed in the following chapter, provides an in-depth discussion of the concept of formal and informal model designs for mentoring.

7.10 Summary

In summary, Chapter Seven has provided a discussion of the research findings from this study. Analysis of the data gathered over four cycles of action research involving twenty-seven participants and a synthesis of the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of health, business and higher education resulted in the identification of five key determinants of mentoring which have implications for the higher education context. These key determinants based on a consolidation of the findings include i) the purpose, benefits and challenges of mentoring; ii) the mentoring process; iii) the organisational influence on establishing a mentoring system; iv) evaluation of the outcomes of mentoring and v) key mentoring models.

Chapter Seven also suggested a metaphor for mentoring which provided a philosophical framework for the ensuing focus and meaning-making of the discussion. Highlighted in this chapter is the significance of the findings in terms of how they are reflective of the current mentoring literature, where there are contrasts to the literature and the identification of new material to add to the mentoring literature.

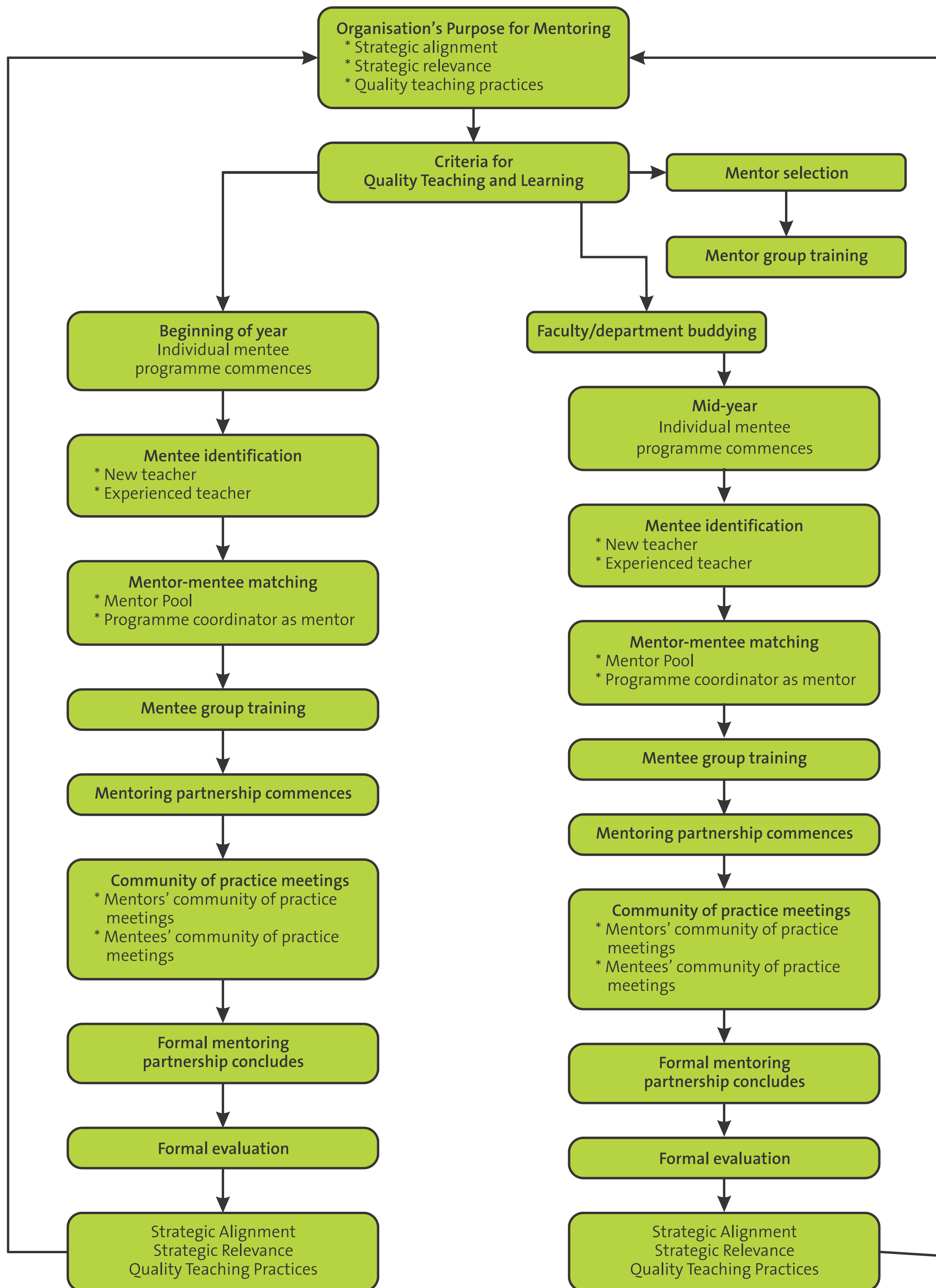
The following chapter, Chapter Eight, presents a final synthesis of this research investigation, which has resulted in a convergence of the findings into a proposed model for mentoring in higher education contexts. The „High Impact Mentoring‟ model (*HIMM*) consolidates the four action research cycles involved in this study and suggests an approach to implementing an organisation-wide mentoring system as a mechanism for supporting academic teaching practices.

CHAPTER EIGHT
FINAL SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH: THE 'HIGH IMPACT MODEL' FOR MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTS

A conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three of this thesis (refer p. 53) positioned mentoring as a professional development mechanism for academic teachers within the larger sphere of the organisational infrastructure, the latter acting as an encompassing, underpinning structure for the activity of mentoring. Using the analogy of mentoring as a progressive, iterative process, this researcher proposes a model that follows a similar progression in its development and final construction for the purposes of this thesis. In this chapter, two models are presented. Figure 9 (refer p. 347) summarises the researcher"s initial formative model for mentoring whilst Figure 10 (refer p. 350) presents the researcher"s proposed „High Impact Mentoring" model (*HIMM*). The significant difference in the formative model to the final *HIMM* is the integration of a systemic evaluation model for measuring the impact of mentoring on teaching practices. Inclusion of systemic evaluation transforms the formative model and provides a pivotal second-level tier of process and structure to the mentoring system proposed in the *HIMM*.

Both models have evolved as a result of consolidation of the four cycles of research findings in this investigation and build on the researcher"s initial conceptual framework. It is important that the philosophical and pedagogical reasoning for mentoring as a mechanism of teacher support is integral in the proposed model"s design and application.

Figure 9 A Formative Mentoring Model



8.1 The 'High Impact Mentoring' Model (*HIMM*)

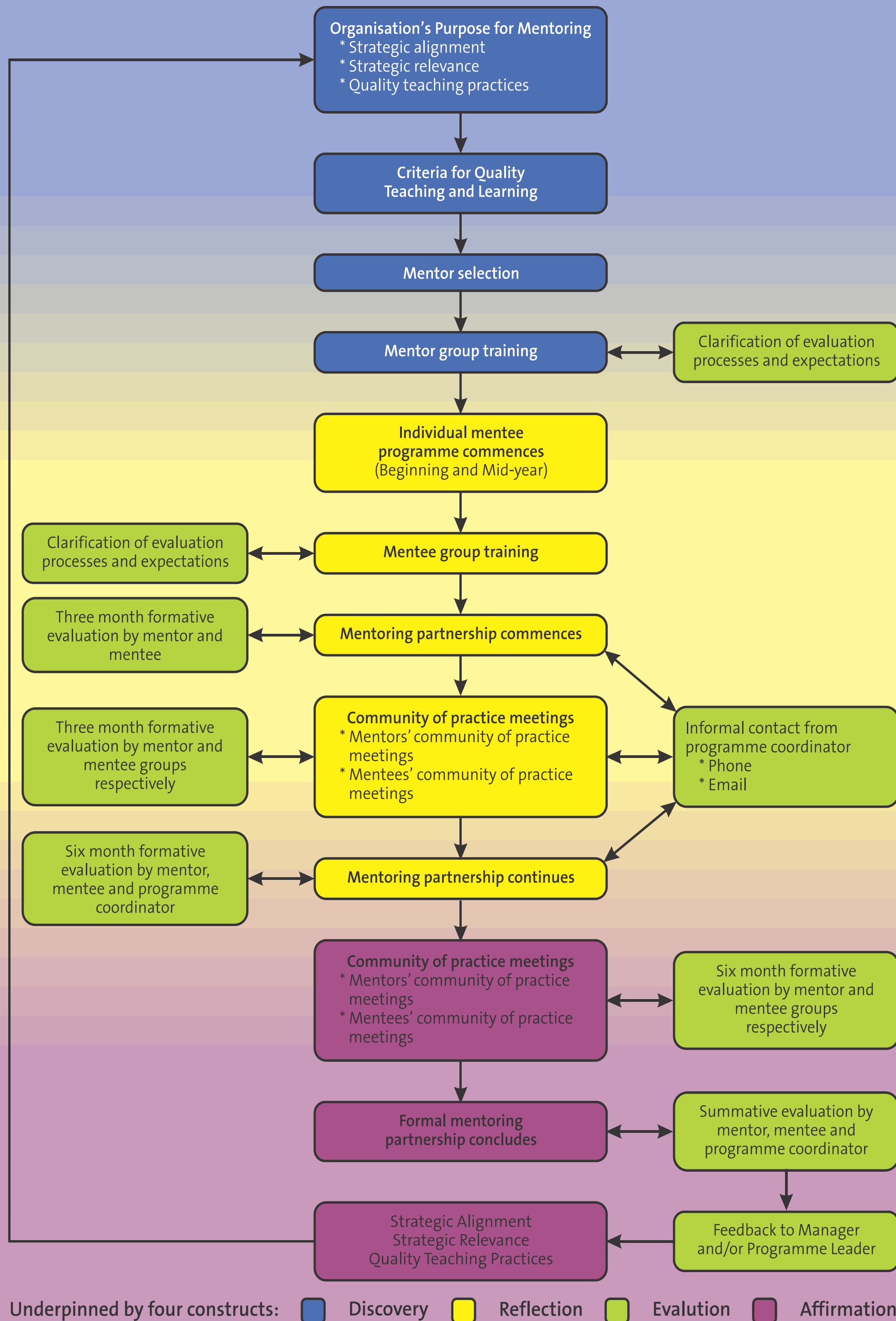
The formative model design illustrated in Figure 9 (refer p. 347) illustrates how the provision of two mentoring programmes during a given year can provide mentoring support for teachers within a reasonable time-frame, rather than, for example, waiting a year before the next mentoring programme commences. A significant aspect of this mentoring system design is the positioning and combining of mentor selection and mentor group training processes as a separate branch in relation to the two programme options (beginning and mid-year). The importance of mentor selection as a critical process in the design of a mentoring system was discussed extensively in Chapter Seven (refer p. 306). Additionally, mentor training is identified in Figure 9 as a necessary process to complete before a mentoring programme commences. Whether an organisation chooses to implement one or two mentoring programmes within a given year, this researcher believes that mentor selection and mentor training must occur prior to programme commencement.

Building on this formative model design, the *HIMM* represented in Figure 10 (refer p. 350) presents a central design of a mentoring system which can be implemented within an organisation. As Figure 10 illustrates, the *HIMM* suggests a definitive approach for mentoring as a professional development mechanism that supports the teaching practice of teachers in the higher education organisational context. This model conceptualises the concept, practice and evaluation of mentoring as vehicles for teachers to explore, challenge and change existing paradigms of teaching and learning in higher education. Reflecting Odell"s (1992) suggested incorporation of formative and summative evaluation within a mentoring system, Figure 10 illustrates the integration of a systemic evaluation model which provides a second-tier of structure to the *HIMM.*

The integration of systemic evaluation strategies further enhances the quality of mentoring provision, as explicit evaluation that establishes the impact of mentoring on a teacher"s academic practice also assists the organisation with clarifying and qualifying the purpose of mentoring within their professional development infrastructure. Establishing the purpose of mentoring within an organisational context has been clearly identified by the researcher and supported by the findings

in this study as a pivotal first step in the consideration of mentoring as an academic teacher support mechanism.

As many authors in the mentoring literature will attest to, mentoring can support a range of professional development areas, including teaching practice, career development, help with promotion, socialisation into an organisation‟s culture, induction of new teachers and investment in research (Bleach, 1999; Gibb, 1994b; Regev, 2000). The *HIMM* (refer Figure 10, p. 350) suggests a process approach to implementing a mentoring system in an organisation; from this perspective, the specific focus of the mentoring support provided could be any one of these identified professional development purposes. For example, the model can provide the foundation for the organisation‟s induction, ongoing professional development and evaluation processes, linking all of these together to help teachers become more reflective practitioners, a model concept purported by Danielson (2007).



As illustrated in Figure 10, four constructs underpin the *HIMM*. They include discovery, reflection, evaluation, and affirmation, collectively acting as the drivers of the practice of mentoring. The constructs symbolise mentoring by establishing

meaning for the purpose, process and practice of mentoring as a professional development activity. Understanding the nature of mentoring drivers enhances the likelihood of a mentoring system to act as a mechanism which supports teachers‟ professional development, whilst working within the existing organisational infrastructure.

Additionally, the model can provide a context for a meaningful mentoring relationship between teachers, in which both the individual teacher and the organisation benefits. The model seeks to guide the process for including teacher mentoring as one of the organisation‟s support mechanisms to facilitate teacher professional development that is theoretically, contextually and strategically framed. Also, the model‟s value can be realised as the foundation for professional conversations amongst academic teachers as they seek to enhance their teaching capabilities. Figure 10 illustrates these key points. Additionally, three key premises provide a basis for the *HIMM*, including:

- The purpose of mentoring is clarified;
- Integration of processes and „layered‟ models create a comprehensive mentoring system. These processes and models are compatible with identifying and supporting the needs of academic teachers in the higher education context;
- Mentoring is positioned theoretically and practically as an integral support mechanism for teachers, complementing other systems of support in the organisation‟s professional development infrastructure.

The following sections identify twelve key elements which are integrally related to the *HIMM*. Discussion of these elements provides a more comprehensive explanation of the *HIMM*, establishing the model‟s multiple components and the interconnection of these that make the *HIMM* plausible and a legitimate proposal of a mentoring system for supporting the academic practice of teachers in higher education contexts.

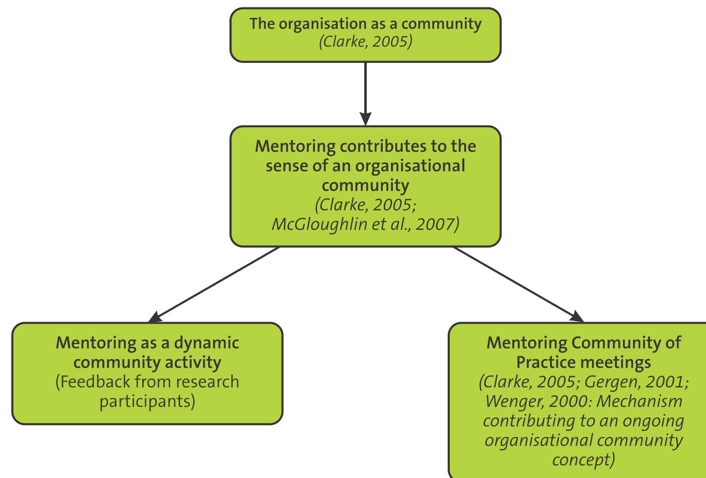
8.2 The Organisation as a 'Community'

Conceptualising the organisation as a „community‟ is a concept advocated by a number of authors in the mentoring literature across the three disciplines explored

in Cycle Two of this study (Clarke, 2005; McGloughlin et al., 2007; Zachary, 2000). The concept of a „community" environment suggests the provision of an integral place for mentoring. Figure 11 illustrates how mentoring contributes to and reinforces this concept.

Figure 11

The Organisation as a Community



A consequence of the findings in this current study is that the organisation as a „community" is an embedded concept in the *HIMM*. The metaphor of „community" speaks philosophically as well as practically and structurally and is integral to underpinning mentoring as a professional development support mechanism for teachers" practice. The concept of a „mentoring community" embedded in the *HIMM* builds on Cox"s (2005) conceptual model of „The Learning Community". Her model is directed at a higher education faculty cohort working together to focus on teaching and learning needs of the teaching staff. In the current study, the academic teachers emphasised how they had appreciated the „spin-off" effect of their mentoring as building relationships with teachers in other areas of the campus.

The *HIMM* depicts how mentoring can shift from being a solitary, somewhat isolated relationship to a concept that is dynamic and based on relationships that are a combination of dyad and group in the same context, contributing to the sense of an organisational community. The academic teachers also reported how they

had found themselves establishing wider collegial networks and contributing more actively to organisational activities and teaching and learning strategies as they progressed through the one year mentoring programme. The proposed *HIMM* has a focus on supporting teaching and learning professional development across the whole organisation, with an attempt to reduce the often isolated activity of teacher professional development.

8.3 The Organisation's Purpose for Mentoring

Data analysis of the research findings has identified that the successful establishment and implementation of a mentoring system within an organisation is largely contingent on the purpose of mentoring being strategically aligned with the organisation‟s goals for teaching and learning. Strategic alignment and determination of strategic relevance positions mentoring as a mechanism that contributes to the achievement of the organisation‟s goals for quality teaching and learning. Figure 10 (refer p. 350) illustrates how the organisation‟s purpose for mentoring establishes the beginning point of a mentoring system and becomes an iterative cycle, as the formal end point of the mentoring programme completes an evaluation of the impact of mentoring on the achievement of strategic alignment, strategic relevance and quality teaching practices.

8.4 Mentor Selection and Accessibility

Chapter Seven provided an extensive discussion on the issue of mentor selection and how this process within a mentoring system can be effectively designed and carried out. As the *HIMM* depicts, the process of mentor selection is directly based on the organisation‟s identification of criteria for quality teaching and positioned as an important system feature that is in place prior to the commencement of the individual mentoring programmes.

Based on the feedback received from all three of the research participant groups involved in this investigation, which advocated the effectiveness and resource-efficiency of a pool of mentors as a component of the mentoring system structure, the *HIMM* has incorporated this element. As well as providing for mentee-mentor autonomy in the partnership matching process and a significant resource bank of mentors for the organisation‟s mentoring programme, the mentor pool also supports the concept of a developmental continuum model as advocated by a

number of authors in the mentoring literature (Byrne & Keefe, 2002; Clarke, 2005; Darwin, 2000; Short, 2002), that is, a pool of mentors allows for the teacher at any stage in their career to access mentoring support. The findings from this current research study also identified definitively that the most effective mentor-mentee partnership comprised teachers from different disciplines or teaching contexts. In response to this data, the model proposes that a mentor pool is a multi-disciplinary construction.

Establishing a pool of mentors in advance of initiating individual mentoring programmes allows for the planning and organising of this critical component, especially if, as the findings in this study strongly advocate, mentor selection is based on a voluntary, self-selection process. Managing the coordination of and allowing time for this type of approach are given necessities.

8.5 Mentor Training

Integral to selection of the mentor and establishment of a pool of mentors which the mentee can select from is the provision of mentor training. The findings in this study have identified that mentoring training was perceived as an essential component of a mentoring system, as it provides the potential mentor and mentee teachers with the opportunity to prepare for the mentoring partnership, gain a clearer understanding of the purpose and process of mentoring and establish professional development goals for the mentoring.

Although one of the findings from the academic teachers identified that combined mentor-mentee training workshops was an ideal scenario, the *HIMM* positions training separately for mentors and mentees. This design feature is based on the key premise that mentee teachers need to be able to access mentoring as soon as possible after they have identified, or been identified, as requiring mentoring support hence the suggested two programme entry points. Having a sufficient number of mentors to ensure mentee teachers can access mentoring support has been highlighted in this study as often problematic and seldom the reality. This was a particular finding from the higher education programme coordinators" feedback in their interviews. Consequently, the research has positioned the processes of mentor selection and mentor training as pivotal in the overall mentoring system and, as the *HIMM* depicts, these two processes are a significant

„stand alone" structure which have been established before an individual mentoring programme commences. The main implication with two mentoring programme entry points is the requirement of two mentee training events, which are conducted when each programme in the given year is initiated.

8.6 An Individual Mentoring Programme Approach

The findings from this study indicate that a mentoring system needs to have the flexibility to provide mentoring support for new teachers and experienced teachers at the time of their identified need for support in their teaching practice. Given the availability of resources and the priority of mentoring as a professional development mechanism within an organisation, the *HIMM* proposes a dual programme structure, recognising the need to circumvent a resource-intensive model as well as provide flexibility to provide two programme commencement dates during an academic calendar year. This aims to meet the individual teacher"s need for support within a reasonable time-frame whilst at the same time acknowledging the resource-intensiveness of a system that implements mentoring partnerships at any given time.

The formative model illustrated in Figure 9 (refer p. 347) includes a buddy system, designed for those teachers who cannot engage in a mentoring programme at the beginning of the year but will be able to commence the mid-year programme. The mentoring literature identifies buddies as surface level support mechanisms for teachers. Given the reality of when mentoring support can be provided for the teacher, the buddy system has a place as an interim support tool. In the *HIMM*, providing a buddy option ensures that the potential mentee teacher receives some level of support whilst they wait to commence a mentoring programme.

8.7 Mentee Identification

Supporting the beginning teacher early in their career is a predominant theme in the higher education mentoring literature. For example, Klug and Salzman"s (1990) investigation showed that new teachers who had engaged in formal induction processes reported positively on aspects of observations, regular meetings and a commitment to the number of hours the mentor and mentee spent in the partnership. McKinley (2004) perceives the mentor as undertaking a leadership role, confirming the new teacher"s classroom skills and other teaching

professional development. The findings in this investigation have identified that the mentee may be a beginning teacher, a teacher new to the organisation - who may be an experienced teacher - or an experienced teacher within the organisation.

Emphasis on the need to design a system which meets individual needs and acknowledges the resource requirement for this is based on the premise that the organisation purports to provide quality teaching for quality learning. For example, support of the new teacher has to occur early in their career; supporting the academic practices of all teachers should be contingent on needs identification, which can occur at any time. The broader application of the *HIMM* signifies how all teachers can access and engage in a mentoring partnership, given the resounding findings in this study that teachers at any stage in their career can benefit from mentoring.

8.8 Mentor-Mentee Matching

Two options for generating the mentoring partnership through effective matching of the mentee and mentor are proposed in the *HIMM*, including the provision of a mentor pool for the mentee to select from and the programme coordinator assuming a mentor role. The decision to provide two avenues for partnership matching is based on the findings from the data gathered across all three of the participant groups involved in this study. For example, it was apparent from three of the higher education programme coordinators that they perceived the success of the mentoring partnership relied on the level of mentee choice in the matching process. Providing a pool of mentors for the mentee to select from was advocated by the programme coordinators as a mechanism to support the concept of mentee choice. The academic teachers also emphasised how they believed it was important that the mentee and the mentor had choice in the matching process and also supported the idea of establishing a mentor pool.

To increase the probability and viability of the mentee teacher being guaranteed mentoring support when they need it, the *HIMM* identifies the mentoring programme coordinator as a second option for providing this support. Having two options in place for the mentor-mentee matching process reduces a dependence on one mechanism that could prove problematic. For example, there is the risk of the pool of mentors being limited in number and/or mentor availability and there is a

definite risk and predictably unrealistic expectation of one person providing mentoring for all academic teachers, particularly in large organisations.

8.9 Mentee Training

Cycle Two of this research study investigated the mentoring literature across the three disciplines of higher education, health and business. A key finding from this literature review identified that mentor and mentee training was a key element of a mentoring programme. However, the literature focuses extensively on mentor training and directs minimal attention to training for the mentee.

The findings in this current study identify that the academic teachers who assumed the role of mentee believed that they had benefitted significantly from participating in mentoring training. The training workshops conducted at the commencement of the one year mentoring programme involving the teachers provided them with opportunities to understand the purpose and process of mentoring and subsequently the mentoring partnership they would be engaging in. The training also outlined the roles of the mentee and mentor, and clarified expectations of evaluation processes integral to the programme and the purpose of these processes. Perhaps most importantly, mentoring training encourages the potential mentees to identify their teaching development goals and consider how the mentoring partnership can support the achievement of these.

Based on these findings, the *HIMM* includes mentee training as an integral component of a mentoring system. This was initially problematic in the model‟s design, for example, providing mentee training that complemented this researcher‟s stance that a mentee should be able to access mentoring support at any time. Because mentee training has been identified as essential for effective engagement in mentoring by the mentee, further development of the model resulted in the proposed dual programme structure where two mentoring programme commencement dates are provided and consequently two mentee training opportunities are integral in the mentoring system design.

8.10 The Mentoring Partnership

A significant element of the *HIMM* is the mentoring partnership. It is proposed that the mentee-mentor relationship can be a horizontal structure, indicating a peer

mentoring relationship, or a more traditional, vertical expert-novice structure, denoting a degree of hierarchy in the relationship which is emphasised in the literature as beneficial for the beginning teacher (Bennion, 2003; McGuire & Reger, 2003; Santucci et al., 2008). Inherent in the application of the expert-novice model is the consideration of power balances and the use of power by the mentor.

Although the group mentoring concept was not explored in the current study, this model of mentoring support is identified as an option in the *HIMM*. However, this researcher believes that additional mentor and mentee training on how to facilitate and participate in group mentoring would be a necessary additional feature of the mentoring system design. In essence, the model combines more than one mentoring partnership approach, aiming for teacher benefits at whichever career stage the teacher is at and to support a range of teaching and learning professional development needs at the time of accessing mentoring support.

Rather than prescribing that a co-mentoring model is a natural or inevitable shift in the mentoring partnership moving beyond a beginning-teacher-dependence scenario, as suggested by Mullen (2005), the *HIMM* proposes that the underpinning structure and process of the mentoring partnership is based on the choice of the mentoring participants. This acknowledges that mentoring can be a support mechanism for a range of professional development support at the discretion of the mentee and mentor and as identified in the mentee‟s goals for the mentoring. Hence, the *HIMM* emphasises the importance of a co-relationship between the organisation‟s structure and administration of a mentoring system and the mentoring participants‟ autonomy within the mentoring partnership.

Co-relating a formal organisational structure with participant autonomy also supports Harper and Sawika‟s (2001) belief that by formalising mentoring as an organisational professional development mechanism, “All academic staff could benefit, not just the fortunate few who find mentors informally” (p. 3). The *HIMM* therefore also aims to reduce or eliminate „mentoring-by-chance‟.

8.11 Community of Practice Concept

Group mentoring (Ritchie, 1999; Polilo & Knight, 2005) and mentoring circles (Darwin, 2000; Darwin & Palmer, 2009) provide mentoring structures and processes that are collaborative in nature and purpose. During cycles three and four

of this action research study, the eighteen academic teachers attended five focus group meetings over the one year mentoring programme period. The fourth and fifth focus groups were respectively mentee-only and mentor-only meetings. It was evident from the feedback received from the teachers in the summative interviews that the focus group meetings had provided an additional mechanism of support as they found the meetings a unique opportunity to share their experiences and any issues arising from their mentoring partnership. As one of the mentor teachers commented, these meetings felt like a support networking opportunity and "*a chance to compare notes and meet with people in the same role; a chance to hear other people's experiences and share your own*".

The provision of collaborative opportunities for mentors and mentees engaging in dyad partnerships can be provided through the implementation of a community of practice as an integral component of the mentoring programme structure. As well as creating collaboration across the organisation, the inclusion of community of practice meetings for both the mentors and the mentees provides a conduit that can be multi-purpose. For example, the mentee and mentor teachers respectively did not feel restricted to only discussing their teaching and learning needs but also their specific development needs in terms of their mentoring roles. Wenger (2000) describes communities of practice as places that enable people to define with each other what constitutes competence in a given context. He explains how communities of practice grow out of "A convergent interplay of competence and experience that involves mutual engagement" (p. 6) which as a consequence retains important social spaces of learning in the context of much larger systems.

The idea of collegial support groups specifically for mentors is highlighted by Wolfe (1992) and Mullinix (2002) as they emphasise these groups as mechanisms for shared learning within the mentoring process, a concept supported by Clarke (2005) as she refers to the benefits for teachers of increased collegiality and the development of a support network as a consequence of engagement in mentoring. Given the findings from the academic teachers in the current study, as described above, the *HIMM* adds to this perspective of support groups for the mentor by including community of practice meetings for the mentees as well.

An important question to ask as a result of this study is "Who mentors the mentor?" particularly in the event of a mentee withdrawing from the partnership during the mentoring programme. As one of the academic teachers who had assumed a mentor role in the study experienced, her mentee left the institution during the mentoring programme period. The mentee in this partnership had been described by the mentor teacher as "*fairly negative*" and was struggling with the teaching position she was in. The mentor commented how they felt responsible for the mentee leaving the partnership and felt responsible to the organisation as a consequence.

Because the issue of how the mentors are supported raises the consideration of resourcing, the proposed integration of a community of practice for mentors and a separate community of practice for mentees aims to provide another mechanism for mitigating potential risks as described and providing additional support for the mentor in particular. The *HIMM* espouses the integration of a mentoring community concept, where mentoring is not an isolated activity, where collegial networking and learning is encouraged and where teachers engaging in mentoring can receive ongoing support.

Interestingly, none of the research participants across the three groups involved in this study talked about the measures that needed to be in place to counteract any „fallout" from a negative mentoring situation, for example, a partnership match that did not work. It presents an important question with regard to what is the „safety net" for the mentor and the mentee if they experience a breakdown in the partnership. Access to a pool of mentors, a programme that is centrally coordinated, inclusion of communities of practice to provide group support mechanisms for mentors and mentees and integration of a rigorous impact evaluation model could mitigate some of the risk for the mentee or mentor participants who experience difficulties or negative experiences in the mentoring partnership.

8.12 Central Coordination of a Mentoring System

The establishment of a central coordination function which manages the mentoring system within the organisation is suggested as a result of the findings from this study. The academic teachers for example were adamant that an organisation-wide

mentoring system would require a central person or "*person broker*" to drive the whole process as well as provide additional support for the mentors and mentees whilst they engaged in a mentoring programme.

This coordination function could involve a programme coordinator providing mentoring for new teachers, managing the mentor-mentee matching process for the new teacher or managing the process of the experienced teacher connecting with a mentor from a central mentor pool. Also, if a central coordination function is established to oversee the functioning of the mentoring system, the process for new and experienced teacher mentoring is more likely to occur seamlessly. Ultimately, new teacher mentoring as an inherent element of an organisation"s induction process would mean that mentoring is formalised as an integral system of professional development provision.

8.13 Systemic Evaluation

Evaluation mechanisms which were discussed in the previous chapter (refer p. 332) provide qualitative and empirically-bound determinants of mentoring effectiveness and impact on teaching practice. The mentor and mentee training workshops conducted prior to the commencement of a mentoring programme provide the opportunity for clarification of the evaluation processes that will be inherent in the mentoring programme and the expectations of the mentor and mentee in relation to these. Participant self-report and reflection and empirical data are collected during and at the end of an individual teacher"s mentoring programme to evaluate the individual teacher"s perceived value of the mentoring support as well as identify tangible outcomes in regard to changes and improvements they have made in their teaching practice.

The systemic evaluation model integrated in the *HIMM* (refer Figure 10, p. 350) shows how formative and summative evaluation methods can be interwoven throughout the formal lifespan of a mentoring programme, which enables the collection of progressive evidence of mentoring outcomes, both in terms of value and the impact on academic practice. For example, the implementation of formative evaluation provides a mechanism for quality checks within the informally-bound mentoring partnership as it progresses through the first six months of the programme. This includes regular informal contact by the

programme coordinator with the mentoring teachers, either by phone or email, and a formative evaluation by each mentoring partnership. Then at the six month point in the programme, it is proposed that as well as the mentoring partnerships undertaking another formative evaluation of the mentoring, the programme coordinator assumes a more active role in collecting evaluation data of the mentoring experiences and progress.

It is important to note here that although the *HIMM* proposes a mentoring programme structure of one year duration, the mentee and mentor can choose to conclude their partnership at an earlier stage. Ideally, a mentoring partnership (or mentoring group) benefits from establishing mentoring meetings over a minimum of a three month period, before deciding if the mentoring is still beneficial and supporting achievement of professional development goals. Therefore, at the conclusion of the mentoring programme *or* the mentoring partnership, a summative evaluation of the whole mentoring experience is conducted by the mentee, mentor and the programme coordinator.

The *HIMM* illustrates how developmental and judgemental evaluation roles are incorporated which can be undertaken by different stakeholders at different points in the system. Importantly, the final formal summative evaluation which feeds back to key stakeholders in the organisation informs whether mentoring has achieved the original purpose for mentoring in the organisation. This approach to integrated formative and summative evaluation processes complements Ragins et al.‟s (2000) belief that quality control within the mentoring partnership is critical for any valid comparison to be made between formal and informal mentoring effectiveness.

8.14 Summary

In summary, Chapter Eight has proposed a model for mentoring that synthesises the key findings in this research investigation. The „High Impact Mentoring‟ model (*HIMM*) suggests a process-oriented and impact-evaluative approach to the implementation and practice of mentoring at the macro and micro levels. For example, as well as positioning mentoring as an integral professional development mechanism for supporting teachers‟ academic practices within the organisation‟s infrastructure, the model also provides a context for meaningful mentoring

conversations and building relationships between teachers. The concept of the organisation as a community is embedded within the *HIMM*, reflecting the findings and the researcher"s conceptual framework which proposes that mentoring contributes to and often creates a community spirit within the organisation where collegial, collaborative relationships and networking are built.

The *HIMM* illustrates the progressive, iterative nature of the mentoring system proposed by this researcher. The model establishes that the implementation of a mentoring system within an organisation is contingent on the purpose of mentoring being strategically aligned and relevant to the organisation"s goals for quality teaching and learning. At the conclusion of the mentoring programmes - structures which provide for the mentoring support process within the larger mentoring system - a formal evaluation informs the organisation as to whether mentoring has achieved the original purpose. Inherent in the *HIMM* is systemic evaluation consisting of integrated formative and summative evaluation strategies which allow for progressive quality checks that mentoring is supporting the teacher in their academic practice and contributing to the organisation"s goal for quality teaching and learning.

The following chapter, Chapter Nine, presents the researcher"s conclusions drawn from the current study, discusses the implications of the research findings and suggests recommendations for future research on mentoring in higher education contexts.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study has focused on how mentoring can support academic teachers in their teaching practice within the higher education context, investigating the key factors involved in establishing mentoring as a legitimate professional development mechanism within an organisation. Findings from the study have provided valuable information about the impact of mentoring on academic teaching practices. This model has led to the formulation of a model for mentoring which proposes a systems-approach to the implementation of mentoring as an organisation-wide professional development mechanism.

At the commencement of this investigation, an extensive literature review on mentoring identified several areas where further research could provide a more comprehensive insight into how mentoring assists teachers in their teaching practice. Using action research methodology, a series of four research cycles produced findings that inform and add to the current mentoring literature for the higher education context. Synthesis of the research findings led to the development of a model for mentoring. The „High Impact Mentoring" model (*HIMM*) proposed by the researcher (refer Figure 10, p. 350) in Chapter Eight illustrates how mentoring is a multi-dimensional process and practice which requires a clear purpose to establish its place in an organisational context. The *HIMM* suggests a definitive approach for mentoring as a professional development mechanism that supports the teaching practice of teachers in the higher education organisational context. The model conceptualises the concept, practice and evaluation of mentoring as vehicles for teachers to explore, challenge and change existing paradigms of teaching and learning in higher education.

Action research is increasingly being viewed as a legitimate qualitative methodology. Somekh (2006) argues that because of its contextualised nature, "Knowledge generated from action research is cautious in its claims, sensitive to variations and open to reinterpretation in new contexts" (p. 28). Somekh (2006) believes that such knowledge is validated when similar contexts recognise its value

and relate it to their own environment. The *HIMM*, which can assist a higher education organisation in implementing a robust, impact-evaluated system of teacher professional development, relieves some of the cautiousness Somekh (2006) refers to and has the clarity and flexibility to manage reinterpretations. The *HIMM* is therefore able to be reproduced in other discipline settings. It is also contended by this researcher that generalised findings from this study is evidenced, based on data collected over the four action research cycles and the number of research participants involved in this study who represented multiple roles and disciplines within a range of higher education contexts.

The current study has also demonstrated the effectiveness of action research as a dual purpose methodology. Firstly, the cyclical nature of action research enabled the researcher to adopt a developmental approach in their application of triangulated research methods which produced findings incrementally, as each data set informed the next method of inquiry. Secondly, action research provided the eighteen academic teachers, one of the three participant groups, with a reflective process for exploring their own teaching practice and making sense of their mentoring experiences as these evolved progressively. This meaning-making comprised a significant portion of the research findings.

As a result of this research investigation, several conclusions are drawn which reflect the proposed *HIMM*. Implications for the implementation of mentoring as a support mechanism for the academic practices of teachers in higher education are discussed and recommendations for future research on mentoring in higher education contexts are also posed.

9.1 Conclusions: A Summary of the Findings

Table 9.1 (refer p. 366) summarises the key areas of findings that this researcher believes increase the meaning, understanding and application of mentoring as an organisational mechanism for academic teacher support and development. Synthesis of the findings contributed to the formulation of the *HIMM* which proposes an organisational approach to mentoring and helps an organisation determine a structure for providing mentoring within their existing professional development infrastructure.

Table 9.1 Conclusions: A Summary of the Research Findings

Stakeholder	Domain of Influence	Functionality	Outcome
Whole organisation	Purpose	Strategic alignment. Professional development infrastructure. Induction mechanism. Theoretical framework. Establish formal model to ensure teacher support.	• Strategic relevance. • Embedded induction process. • Organisation-wide agreement of purpose of mentoring. • Mentoring is defined. • Support mechanism established for all teachers. • Built into workloads. • Allocation of resources. • Teacher and organisation benefits. • Commitment to mentoring.
Central programme coordinator/ team	Process	Mentor/mentee selection. Mentoring training. Partnership matching. Systemic evaluation.	• Early support of new teacher. • Supports experienced teacher. • Flexible provision of mentoring for all teachers. • Communication of purpose, expectations and strategic relevance. • Commitment to mentoring.
Central programme coordinator/ team	Practice	Communities of practice. Formative evaluation.	• Targeted support. • Professional development. • Personal development. • Enhancement of collegial networking. • Organisation-wide communication. • Builds organisational culture. • New learning. • Reflective learning. • Changes in teaching practices. • Identifies progress of mentoring benefits and effectiveness.
Mentoring participants		Goal identification. Partnership structure: underpinning model. Partnership meetings. Communities of practice. Mentoring activities. Formative evaluation.	
Mentoring participants Central programme coordinator Whole organisation	Progress	Outcomes-based evaluation: Summative evaluation Participant satisfaction Organisational measure against mentoring purpose	• Systemic monitoring of mentoring impact. • Identification of changes in teaching practices. • Changes in the quality of student learning. • Progress measures for mentoring teachers. • Measure of impact on teaching and learning in the organisation.

As Table 9.1 illustrates, key stakeholders are associated with different functions within a mentoring system. In turn, each of these different functions has associated outcomes, including required outcomes for the effective application of mentoring as a professional development tool and desirable outcomes for the mentoring participants and the organisation. The integration of systemic evaluation strategies applied throughout the mentoring system aims to shift the number of desired outcomes to outcomes that are inevitable and a naturally occurring feature of the system. The inter-connectivity between these elements, as illustrated in Table 9.1, depicts the combined findings and subsequent conclusions resulting from this study.

It has been established as a result of this research investigation that an organisation-wide mentoring system involves several key stakeholders. As identified in Table 9.1, key stakeholders include the organisation, the mentee and mentor and a central programme coordinator or coordination team. To differentiate the „organisation‟ from the mentoring participants and central programme coordinator, who are obviously members comprising the organisation, the organisation in this context constitutes managers, as the findings from this study have highlighted that managers have a significant influence on mentoring and the mentoring participants. Conclusively, each of these stakeholders undertake different roles and manage different functions within the mentoring system, leading to a number of key outcomes, for the individual and the organisation as a whole.

9.1.1 First domain of influence: The purpose of mentoring

The findings from this research study have established that mentoring can be viewed as a legitimate mechanism for supporting a teacher‟s academic practice within an organisation‟s professional development infrastructure. The *HIMM* (refer Figure 10, p. 350) highlights how strategic alignment of mentoring to the organisation‟s goals for quality teaching and learning is necessary if the value and benefits of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism are to be realised. As a consequence, a support mechanism for all academic teachers is provided. As well as a tool for new teacher induction, mentoring is recognised as having benefits for the experienced teacher. The level of commitment to mentoring is also contingent

on the goal of mentoring being established in direct relation to the strategic goals for quality teaching and learning.

A definition of mentoring needs to be decided alongside the organisation‟s definition of quality teaching and learning. The interconnectivity of these two conceptions helps to qualify the organisation‟s purpose for the provision of teacher mentoring. A number of authors in the mentoring literature emphasise the importance of striving to achieve an agreed purpose of mentoring across the organisation. For example, Clutterbuck (2004) believes that the most common reason why many mentoring relationships fail is because “Neither the mentor nor mentee is quite sure what he or she is aiming for, so there is no sense of direction” (p. 28).

As the findings in this study have illustrated, communicating the organisation‟s purpose of mentoring and the strategic goals for quality teaching and learning early in a mentoring system‟s implementation can lead to greater commitment and motivation to the cause. A clear purpose for mentoring also establishes the nature and structure of how mentoring will be provided. This stage in a mentoring system‟s design ensures allocation of resources specifically targeting an area of professional development alongside other professional development processes. The level of resourcing needs to factor in workload implications for the teachers participating in a mentoring programme.

Mentoring needs to be theoretically qualified and made explicit. In Chapter Three of this thesis (refer p. 53), the researcher proposed a dual humanist-constructivist theoretical model to frame the concept and practice of mentoring and generate the meaning of mentoring for the individual teacher and the organisation as a collective of stakeholders investing in mentoring. Theory helps shape the design of a mentoring system and establishes the expectations of how mentoring will be applied as a teacher support mechanism in the organisation. An agreed theoretical underpinning to the practice of mentoring enables all stakeholders to understand why they are advocating for and/or engaging in mentoring and creates an understanding of how they can influence the outcomes of mentoring.

9.1.2 Second domain of influence: The process of mentoring

Based on the findings of this investigation, a central programme coordination role has been identified as the prime mechanism for managing the process of a mentoring system within an organisation. This role may be allocated to an individual programme coordinator or a coordination team, depending on the organisation"s size, breadth of teacher development infrastructure and priorities of resource allocation. The researcher"s „High Impact Mentoring" model (*HIMM*) proposed in Chapter Eight (refer Figure 10, p. 350) identifies each of the key components involved in a mentoring system which the coordination role either facilitates or oversees, including mentor and mentee selection, mentee-mentor matching, mentoring training, instigation of mentoring programmes and formative and summative evaluation at critical points in the mentoring programmes.

These processes have been identified as interdependent components of a mentoring system as well as pivotal in the success of the mentoring relationship and the outcomes of mentoring. For example, effective mentor selection is a decisive influence on the mentoring partnership and the support and guidance provided for the mentee within this. Equally important is ensuring the best match between the mentee and mentor by employing a matching process that acknowledges and allows for participant choice. The research participants in this study emphasised how important they believed it was for a mentoring system to be a formal structure and process whilst at the same time encompassing a level of flexibility in how teachers participated in the mentoring programme and how they engaged in a mentoring partnership. The findings also highlighted how mentoring training was perceived by the higher education programme coordinators and the academic teachers as a conduit for communicating the purpose, expectations and process of mentoring as well as becoming a catalyst for collegial networking in the early stages of a mentoring programme.

9.1.3 Third domain of influence: The practice of mentoring

The key participants involved in the practice of mentoring are the mentor and mentee teachers with the programme coordinator/s assuming a subsidiary role. As summarised in Table 9.1 (refer p. 366), the main feature of the mentoring practice dimension comprises the mentee and mentor commencing a partnership which

involves deciding the structure, process and nature of this relationship. The *HIMM* proposes that separate communities of practice for the mentor and mentee teachers are conducted during the formal mentoring programme period to provide a support mechanism additional to the mentoring partnerships. The central programme coordinator or team is connected with this dimension of the mentoring system, predominantly to assist with the coordination of community of practice meetings and conduct formative evaluation with the mentors and mentees during the formal programme period as progress checks.

The findings from this study indicated that professional development goals identified by the mentee before or at the time of commencing a partnership positively influences the focus of the ensuing mentoring meetings and the benefits and outcomes gained by the mentee as a result of engaging in mentoring. Framing mentoring by the theories of constructivism and humanism recognises the need for the teacher‟s professional and personal development to be supported. An environment where teachers can safely develop their teaching skills and knowledge and explore their identity as a teacher is created if this dual theoretical approach is clarified and applied. Theoretically underpinning mentoring as a process that cares for the individual whilst supporting them in learning, building and creating knowledge and skills in their teaching practice has provided a framework for the mentoring partnership structure, the relationship between the mentee and mentor, the process of mentoring, the focus of the mentoring activities and the mentoring participant experience.

The eighteen academic teachers involved in this study were adamant that the mentee and mentor should have a choice in how they structured their partnership and the mentoring activities they engaged in during the formal mentoring programme period. They voted for choice in this area as they believed it acknowledged their professional autonomy and ensured individual teacher development needs would be supported. The programme coordinators in the higher education institutions emphasised how the degree of teacher choice in the mentoring partnership led to greater commitment and motivation to engage in mentoring.

Formative evaluation needs to be conducted throughout the mentoring programme period to ascertain the effectiveness of the mentoring support and the mentoring experience. Evaluation strategies are undertaken by both the programme coordinator/s and the mentoring participants. Whilst the programme coordinator role conducts formative evaluation with the mentoring participants, the mentor and mentee teachers are encouraged to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their partnership and any progress in relation to achievement of professional development goals. Additionally, the community of practice meetings provide a place where the teachers can further evaluate the mentoring effectiveness. These meetings also provide the mentors and the mentees with a designated space for sharing successes, strategies, problem-solving or working through issues.

One of the objectives of this study was to ascertain whether mentoring supported the academic practice of teachers in the higher education context. As evidenced by the findings, both the mentee and the mentor benefit from mentoring. Feedback from across the three participant groups involved in the study established an extensive list of professional and personal development benefits as well as benefits for the individual teacher and the organisation collectively. As identified in Chapter Five, the benefits of teachers engaging in mentoring include increased reflective practice, new learning, organisation-wide communication and building the organisational culture. Implementation of evaluation strategies helps to identify these benefits (refer Table 5.10, p. 141 & Table 5.11, p. 143),

9.1.4 Fourth domain of influence: The progress of mentoring

One of the key findings from this investigation is the need for systemic formative and summative evaluation to be an inherent feature of a mentoring system, as a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of mentoring as a tool for supporting the academic practice of teachers. As discussed in the previous section, formative evaluation strategies are implemented once a mentoring programme commences. Although Gibb (1994a) and Odell (1992) strongly advocate this integrative approach to evaluation, the mentoring literature focuses primarily on determining mentoring effectiveness as defined by the adequacy of mentoring training (Youens & Bailey, 2004), participant satisfaction rates or staff retention percentages (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This researcher has argued

that these measures go some way to gauging the impact of mentoring in the organisation but do not provide evidence of actual development or changes in teaching practices which signify the achievement of the individual teacher‟s goals and achievement of the organisation‟s goal of quality teaching and learning. Participant satisfaction is not discounted and is one area targeted for the evaluation, as illustrated in Table 9.1 (refer p. 366). Systemic evaluation that moves beyond participant satisfaction and retention rates evidences the link between mentoring and teacher professional development and provides data that legitimises the provision of mentoring within the organisation. The impact and outcomes of mentoring are particularly important for an organisational measure against the agreed purpose of mentoring.

The implementation of evaluation strategies can result in several significant outcomes, as identified in Table 9.1. As previously discussed, regular evaluation as a systemic mechanism enables critique and assessment of the progress and impact of the mentoring support with regard to the mentee‟s and mentor‟s experience and changes or development made in their teaching practice. An assumption is made here that improvement in teaching practices will impact on the quality of student learning. The findings in this study also indicate that mentoring contributes to creating a culture of teacher professional development. Evaluating how mentoring affects and influences a teacher‟s academic practice assures and informs the individual and the organisation that these outcomes are achieved.

In light of the conclusions reached in this study, the next section in this chapter identifies some key implications of the research for teachers and managers in the higher education context specifically but also applicable to other professional contexts such as business and health.

9.2 Implications of the Research

Mentoring as a teacher support mechanism in higher education presents some emerging issues for a range of stakeholders who are considering implementing a mentoring programme as a mechanism for supporting academic teachers‟ professional development in the higher education context. Stakeholders could include managers at all levels in the organisation, academic teachers, human resource departments and the organisation as a whole. The findings from this

investigation present some implications for mentoring as a support mechanism for academic teaching practice in this context.

9.2.1 The purpose and place of mentoring

It has been established in this current study that the purpose of mentoring as determined by the organisation ensures the place of mentoring as a legitimate professional development mechanism for supporting teachers in their academic practice. This is a key premise of the *HIMM*. A mentoring system needs to have strategic relevance and alignment with the organisation‟s goals for quality teaching and learning. Clarifying the purpose of mentoring qualifies this practice as an integral component of the organisation‟s professional development infrastructure.

Congruent with the organisation‟s determination of the purpose of mentoring is an agreed definition of mentoring that is contextual. A multitude of definitions of mentoring can be located in the mentoring literature, with plenty of similarities in meaning and description. For the organisation establishing mentoring as a core teacher support mechanism, a core definition of mentoring should guide the implementation process, in conjunction with the strategic decision to provide mentoring for teachers.

Walker et al. (2002) propose a revised paradigm of the mentoring relationship by describing a shift from the traditional dyad model to a triad model of collaboration between the organisation, the mentor and the mentee. This concept of a triad model of commitment to a professional development activity by these three key stakeholders will increase the probability that the purpose of mentoring is communicated by the organisation and that teachers will receive the necessary resources and support to engage in mentoring.

A long-term commitment of resources as an ongoing feature of a mentoring system should be clearly articulated and agreed upon by the organisation‟s key stakeholders prior to the system‟s establishment. Recognising the whole organisation as a key stakeholder supports the concept of wider stakeholder support which contributes to the sustainability of systemic changes that mentoring will create. A willingness by the organisation to continue with resource commitment and support is essential to a mentoring system‟s long-term success and strategic goal contribution.

What remains problematic is the continued variation of interpretation of mentoring as it contributes to the professional development of a teacher"s practice as well as the position of mentoring within an organisation"s infrastructure. This tension is apparent in the recent mentoring literature and evidenced by the feedback from across the three research participant groups that participated in this study. The determination of a clear purpose for mentoring that is aligned with the organisation"s teaching and learning goals would assist in alleviating this tension.

9.2.2 Central coordination of a mentoring system

The proposed *HIMM* represents a comprehensive set of interrelated factors that comprise an organisation-wide mentoring system. The implementation of an organisation-wide, multi-dimensional system requires the coordination of people and resources, which will inevitably involve the management of a significant administrative element. An integral design feature of the *HIMM* is a central coordination function which acts as a dedicated resource to manage this multi-faceted system will ensure that the numerous processes inherent within the system function as seamlessly as possible. Kerry and Shelton-Mayes (1995) talk about how mentoring coordinators facilitating different components of a mentoring programme such as mentoring training is a prime example of a multi-support system. The coordination role would encompass management of processes such as mentor selection, mentoring training, mentor-mentee matching and the implementation of systemic evaluation strategies conducted throughout the mentoring programme, as well as the sequencing of these processes.

People are the cornerstone of a mentoring system. An important consideration in the mentoring equation is the potential for teachers to be quite intimidated by the whole process of finding a mentor, talking about their teaching and raising issues with another teacher (the mentor). This is certainly an important consideration for the beginning teacher. A central programme coordinator or coordination team can act as guides for the teacher as they prepare to engage in mentoring for their professional development and as intermediaries as the teacher journeys through a mentoring programme.

The aim of mentoring is for the mentor and mentee to establish a relationship that supports the teacher"s practice, however, there are variables that can interrupt or

prevent this process from occurring successfully. If negative mentoring experiences are not managed effectively for example, there is a potential risk of teachers resisting engagement in mentoring in the future. In Chapter Seven, several limitations to this research study were discussed (refer p. 288). One limitation referred to the lack of influence the researcher had over the managers‟ or colleagues‟ support of the mentoring participants‟ teaching practice. These external variables could potentially impact on the teacher‟s mentoring experience. The establishment of a central coordinator or coordination function would provide additional support and/or advocacy for the teacher if this situation arose. An independent resource assigned to coordinating the mentoring system functions and processes can provide a valuable risk management mechanism.

9.2.3 Mentor selection

A rigorous process for mentor selection has been identified in this study as a vital mechanism that significantly influences the effectiveness of the mentoring support provided for teachers. The mentoring literature positions the mentor selection process as a pivotal element in the success of a mentoring partnership and consequently the success of an organisation‟s mentoring scheme, however provides minimal suggestions of a tested effective process. The findings from the interviews with the higher education programme coordinators identified that voluntary teacher participation as mentors was the common approach taken in their institutions. Feedback from the academic teachers based in the principal institution produced an extensive list of desired mentor attributes which are an important aspect of the mentor‟s selection.

As a result of these findings, the researcher has suggested an approach to mentor selection that is largely dependent on the organisation having in place robust systems and processes that nurture and develop quality teaching and learning practices (refer p. 306). For example, the development of a mentor selection framework that incorporates both organisational criteria for quality teaching and learning and individual mentor attributes. Also, as suggested in Chapter Seven of this thesis, the creation of a mentor typology would help to streamline the mentor selection process (refer Figure 6, p. 310). Given that other strategies for mentor selection are suggested in the literature, including personality profiling at one end

of the spectrum to voluntary participation by the „experienced teacher" at the other, a rigorous selection process or mechanism has yet to be designed.

9.2.4 Mentoring training

Training for mentors and mentees acts as a conduit for the organisation to communicate the expectations of how mentoring fits with the organisation"s strategic goals for quality teaching and learning, thereby establishing the purpose of mentoring and the expectation of an outcome in relation to the development of a teacher"s academic practice. Mentoring training also provides an opportunity for networking, sharing perceptions of mentoring practices, clarifying the meaning of mentoring and creating a greater understanding of mentor and mentee role expectations.

The mentoring literature reports extensively on the benefits of training for the mentor, however makes minimal reference to the importance or need of training for the mentee. Evidenced by the findings in this current study, mentoring training was identified across the three participant groups as an important aspect of a mentoring programme. One of the four programme coordinators in the higher education institutions, for example, mentioned how a one day training workshop was provided for mentors and an additional advanced mentor training session was incorporated in the programme. The mentees involved in their mentoring programme received a half-day workshop. The academic teachers in the principal institution who had assumed a mentee role emphasised how the mentoring training they had received had definitely assisted them, in terms of preparing for the mentoring partnership, considering their professional development goals, understanding their role as a mentee and learning about the expected developmental process of a dyad mentoring partnership.

The proposed *HIMM* makes significant the provision of training for mentees and mentors and does not segregate mentors and mentees in their receiving of this training. Feedback from the academic teachers also indicated unequivocally that combined mentor-mentee training workshops was the ideal approach as this provides a common frame of reference and initiates mutual understanding about the mentoring relationship.

9.2.5 Support for mentoring participants

An important finding in this study emphasised by the academic teachers at the principal institution was the opportunity for collegial meetings for the mentors and mentees. Although a specific structure to provide for mentor-mentee collaboration was not an original feature of the research design in this study, the academic teachers related their experiences in the five focus group meetings they attended as akin to group support and sharing opportunities. Such opportunities for collegial, collective support for mentoring participants need to be provided as part of a mentoring system.

The mentoring literature highlights the need for support of the mentor but offers minimal focus on the same level of support for the mentee. This lack of recognition that the mentee will benefit from additional support outside their mentoring partnership is possibly based on an assumption that the mentee receives adequate support from the mentor in the partnership. The findings from this study indicate strongly that mentee teachers benefit significantly from having a mechanism of collaborative support external to their mentoring partnership. Additionally, the academic teachers" feedback indicated that they were in favour of separate group meetings for mentors and mentees, believing this structure enabled the respective roles to share similar experiences and talk through issues that may involve their mentoring partner. In response to the findings, the *HIMM* incorporates regular community of practice meetings for mentors and mentees during a mentoring programme period, to provide this additional support mechanism.

A question that arose in response to the findings was "Who mentors the mentor?" As this researcher has suggested, the inclusion of regular community of practice meetings during the mentoring programme period would provide a collaborative environment of support for the mentor, a concept identified as an integral design feature of the *HIMM*. Additionally, the establishment of a central programme coordinator who is skilled as a mentor themselves could provide on-site assistance for mentors as required, in addition to providing mentoring support for mentee teachers as identified in the *HIMM*. The importance of systemic evaluation practices as an integral design within a mentoring system has been emphasised by this researcher, inclusive of formative and summative evaluation strategies. As

illustrated in the *HIMM*, formative evaluation approaches can involve the programme coordinator maintaining regular contact with the mentoring participants throughout the mentoring programme period. This practice can therefore provide another support option for the mentor.

Teachers involved in a mentoring programme need to be allocated release time to fully engage in the mentoring partnership, in particular for mentors who are mentoring other teachers. This was a resounding finding in the current study. However, the reality for many organisations is that the mentor does not automatically have the luxury of a reduced workload because they have assumed a mentor role. Workload reduction and/or release time would be ways in which the organisation could acknowledge the value of the mentor"s time and involvement with supporting another teacher.

It is common for new teachers to have a reduction in their workload in their first year of teaching in order to complete induction requirements. This enables the new teacher to actively participate in mentoring as one of the organisation"s core induction activities. For teachers with prior teaching experience who have chosen to engage in mentoring to support their practice, extraordinary release time would also be important for their engagement in a mentoring programme.

The *HIMM* proposes a mentoring system design based on the mentoring partnership structure being predominantly dyad in nature. To counteract the argument that the dyad model for mentoring is outmoded and in need of a paradigm shift, the group mentoring model as a viable model of mentoring support is recognised in the *HIMM*. It could be argued that a group mentoring model provides a level of additional support for mentoring participants. Whether the dyad or the group mentoring model is adopted, this researcher believes that additional support for the mentor and mentee from colleagues who share similar experiences is without doubt.

9.2.6 Access to mentoring

The opportunity for a teacher to access mentoring at the time they identify a need for support in their teaching practice has been highlighted in this study as a philosophically important characteristic of a mentoring system that purports to support the teacher in developing quality teaching and learning practices. This

researcher has emphasised how a teacher should not have to wait until a formal mentoring programme commences, which was identified in the findings as potentially waiting a year or more.

However, this has practical implications in terms of the application of providing mentoring for a teacher at any time in the academic year. The design of a multi-support system that recognises this potential issue comes to the fore again. In response to this, the *HIMM* proposes that a mentor pool and a programme coordinator assuming a mentor role provides a more comprehensive system of mentoring support which teachers can access at any stage in their academic career. Also, because of the real consideration of resource allocation, the *HIMM* proposes two mentoring programme commencement dates, to enable new and experienced teachers to receive mentoring support at different times in the year.

The establishment of a pool of mentors can provide comprehensive access for teachers to receive support in their teaching practice as part of the formal mentoring programme. Provision of mentoring via the programme coordinator ensures that mentoring support can be offered if the mentor pool matching process is not viable or is unsuccessful. The programme coordinator as mentor could mean that the teacher can receive mentoring at any time outside the formal mentoring programme periods, on the proviso that this level of support is resourced appropriately. This particular scenario is the current situation within the principal institution involved in this research study. There is a dedicated programme coordinator who provides mentoring for new and experienced teachers, accessible when a teacher requires support with their teaching practice.

Providing a dual system of access to mentoring support via a mentor pool and a programme coordinator (or coordination team) as mentor within the organisational system of mentoring provision would result in a) the programme coordinator having additional mechanisms providing mentoring to supplement their own mentoring role; b) elimination of a reliance on one source of support for a potentially extensive number of people requiring assistance with their teaching and c) a comprehensive provision of mentoring support that ensures teachers receive mentoring when they need it.

9.2.7 Mentee benefits

Cycle Two of this research study, which involved an extensive literature review, identified that there remains limited reference to how the mentee teacher benefits from receiving mentoring support. This is a surprising gap in the literature given the importance placed on the mentee"s role in the mentoring partnership and a focus on the need for the mentee to identify professional development goals if they expect to benefit from mentoring. It appears to be taken for granted that the mentee automatically benefits because of the support they receive from the mentor. But if an organisation intends to provide a comprehensive mechanism to support the teacher in their academic practice which in turn achieves the strategic goal of quality teaching and learning, knowledge of whether and how a mentee benefits from mentoring is critical. The findings in this current study identify that many benefits can be gained by the mentee teacher, including both professional development and personal development gains.

Systemic evaluation processes integrated in a mentoring system, as proposed by the researcher, provides pivotal contact and information-gathering points with the mentee during their mentoring experience. This can help to determine the gains they are making as a consequence of engaging in mentoring. A greater emphasis on gathering evidence about how the mentee benefits from mentoring would significantly strengthen the argument for an organisation to provide mentoring as a teacher support mechanism within its professional development infrastructure.

9.2.8 Teacher engagement: A blended approach to mentoring

Professional autonomy granted to academic teachers within a higher education context demonstrates an acknowledgement by the organisation that teachers have the integrity to manage their job role and their engagement in professional development activities to continually develop as a teacher. How much choice should an academic teacher have to participate in mentoring? The findings in this study highlighted that teachers in the principal institution and in other higher education institutions in New Zealand and Australia believed there definitely needed to be a degree of individual mentee choice in whether they engaged in mentoring to support their practice, particularly for the experienced teacher as mentee.

Congruent with this opinion voiced by the research participants was that mentoring should be a compulsory requirement for the new or beginning teacher as a critical induction tool for supporting them in learning about their teaching practice early in their career. Incorporating mentoring support as part of the organisation‟s induction process also assists the teacher who is new to the organisation although not new to teaching. The *HIMM* identifies that an expected process for the new teacher would be to engage in a mentoring programme as a natural activity within their induction. This process would be coordinated centrally, acknowledging that the new teacher has yet to start building a collegial network. For the more experienced teacher wanting to receive mentoring support, the model acknowledges and makes accessible a mentoring programme without a compulsory requirement.

It was very clear from the academic teachers who participated in this study that mentoring should not become "*another tick box exercise*" controlled by managers. They emphatically believed that this approach to mentoring in the organisation would be a significant deterrent to teachers engaging in and committing to mentoring as a support mechanism for their teaching practice. The *HIMM* provides opportunities for teacher autonomy (for the mentee and the mentor) at different stages in the system, in particular the mentoring partnership, where the mentor and mentee decide on the structure, process and consequent mentoring activities they will engage in. However, at the same time the formalising of a mentoring system by the organisation that acts as a mechanism for supporting teachers in their academic practice ensures that engagement in teaching professional development is encouraged, enabled and embraced by the teachers themselves and other key stakeholders in the organisation.

„Forced mentoring‟ has been identified in the mentoring literature and in the findings from this study as counter-productive to the mentee‟s experience of receiving support in their teaching. Forced mentoring can create resistance in the mentee and the mentor to commit to the mentoring partnership/programme. The term „forced‟ is in fact dichotomous in the phrase „forced mentoring‟. The underlying philosophy of mentoring espoused by this researcher positions mentoring as a process that acknowledges the individual teacher and supports them

in constructing their own identity as a teacher within a humanistic domain. Forcing a person or process to make such constructions is in opposition to this philosophy.

„Mentoring by chance‟ has also been discussed by authors in the higher education mentoring literature, signifying a lack of recognition by the organisation that mentoring is a legitimate professional development activity that supports a teacher‟s academic practice (Darwin, 2000; Harper & Sawicka, 2001). Darwin (2000) points out that mentoring at this level of informality results in people "Waiting patiently and powerlessly for a person to materialise" (p. 205).

Both of these examples illustrate a deficit approach to the provision of mentoring for teacher support. The *HIMM* counteracts such an approach by proposing a systems-based model that encapsulates key processes that collectively provide a comprehensive, people-driven teacher support mechanism. Allowing for mentee and mentor choice in how, when, where and what the mentoring will involve places the responsibility for professional development in the teachers‟ domain and acknowledges that professional autonomy can exist within the formal structure of the organisation‟s mentoring system.

9.2.9 Evaluating the impact of mentoring

An organisation planning to implement a mentoring system needs to consider the identification and inclusion of sound evaluation strategies to monitor the effectiveness of the support and impact of human variables on mentoring and therefore academic practice outcomes. Systemic evaluation that identifies and measures the mentoring experience, the impact of mentoring on a teacher‟s academic practice and the outcomes of mentoring creates organisational confidence that mentoring is a legitimate teacher professional development activity that influences quality teaching and learning.

There is a direct connection between an organisation‟s clear purpose for and evaluation of mentoring. Greater clarity about the purpose of mentoring is required if mentoring is to serve as a valuable tool for professional development support and enhancement of teaching practice. Based on the researcher‟s proposed systemic model of evaluating mentoring effectiveness (refer Figure 7, p. 335), a mentoring system within the organisation needs to have formative and summative evaluation methods interwoven throughout the formal mentoring programme period,

providing a progressive, developmental evaluation approach. This would provide a system of monitoring the value and impact of mentoring on academic teachers and their teaching practice at regular intervals, rather than relying on a discovery of the impact and outcomes at the conclusion of a mentoring programme, when it may be too late to adapt or improve the system or processes if required.

The final section of this chapter provides recommendations for future research, based on the findings from this investigation. This researcher believes these are important areas for post-doctoral research.

9.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations have resulted from an in-depth analysis and synthesis of the findings in this research investigation. Five recommendations for future research are presented. Reflecting the applied nature of this research study, which implemented action research methodology to guide and inform the investigation, the five recommendations propose practical, applied suggestions for mentoring and research on mentoring in the future.

9.3.1 Mentor selection

The development of a framework for determining the process of mentor selection has been explored in Chapter Seven (refer pp. 306). A framework for mentor identification and selection would provide an organisation with a system that has identified the critical elements which guides the decisions regarding the characteristics that constitute an effective mentor, including skills, knowledge and attributes. This framework needs to be multi-dimensional in design as it incorporates multiple processes for effective mentor identification and selection.

As this study has also highlighted, mentor attributes provide a significant indicator for selecting the mentor. This researcher has suggested and continues to advocate for the development of a typology that identifies core mentor attributes. The typology then becomes the underpinning framework for the creation of a mentor profile which can be used as a template for selecting mentors who reflect the purpose and philosophy of mentoring provided in the organisation.

Relying on mentors to pass on their teaching practices regardless of whether they are effective practices or not has been identified in the mentoring literature (Eby et

al., 2000; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004) and corroborated by this study as problematic. To counteract this potential issue, stringent processes of mentor selection, mentor-mentee matching and in particular robust evaluation strategies implemented at regular intervals throughout the mentoring programme are recommended.

9.3.2 Mentee identification and benefits

Eighteen academic teachers at the principal institution represented one of the three participant groups involved in this study. The teachers were self-selected as they chose to participate in the study after a general invitation had been sent to all academic staff in the institution. This raises the potential issue that these teachers were not representative of teachers who required mentoring to support their teaching practice. Further investigations using additional teacher samples would add to the knowledge of how mentoring supports the academic teacher in higher education as well as produce comparative data as to who, why or how mentoring assists teachers at different stages in their career, based on different reasons for their engagement in mentoring.

For example, one sample could consist of teachers who have been identified within the organisation as requiring assistance with their teaching practice. Another sample could represent teachers who are required to engage in mentoring as a mandatory induction activity. Although the latter sample has been researched, as evidenced in the literature, a combination of the two different samples could produce additional data to the current study.

9.3.3 Evaluation of mentoring effectiveness and outcomes for academic practice

There is an opportunity for extending the current research study to explore whether the inclusion of other key stakeholders in the evaluation process could enhance the identification of the impact and outcomes of mentoring in relation to a teacher‟s academic practice. This consideration could add a degree of rigour to the evaluation approach proposed in the researcher‟s model for mentoring, the „High Impact Mentoring‟ model (*HIMM*) (refer Figure 10, p. 350). Further research could be conducted in the same principal institution and include other higher education institutions to determine how managers, as one of the key stakeholders in the organisation, perceive mentoring as a teacher support mechanism and whether they

believe mentoring is a value-added activity within the organisation‟s quality teaching and learning strategy.

A second area of additional evaluation of mentoring impact and outcome for the teacher could be the inclusion of teaching observations of the mentoring participants, as they progress through a formal mentoring programme, by the researcher or the central coordination function, to provide a more rigorous triangulation of data, as suggested by Murrihy (2009) and therefore an extension of evaluating mentoring impact and outcomes.

9.3.4 The impact of mentoring on the quality of student learning

If there is further evidence required by an organisation that mentoring impacts on teaching practice which directly impacts on student outcomes, an empirical study would be necessary to map the links between a mentored teacher and student results, including pass rates, retention rates and student evaluations. The outcomes that can be gained by both the mentor and the mentee will enable them to have a greater commitment to the process, the partnership and the goal of developing their teaching practices.

9.3.5 The negative effects of mentoring

Recent literature on mentoring across the three disciplines reviewed in this study has focused on the negative effects of mentoring, signalling an increasing consciousness of the importance of this potential, real issue (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby et al., 2008; Simon & Eby, 2003). The authors exploring this aspect of mentoring strongly advocate for further research that either focuses exclusively on this aspect of mentoring or is included as one of the key dimensions of research investigations into mentoring and how mentoring impacts on or supports academic practice.

As this researcher explained in Chapter Seven, investigation of negative mentoring experiences or effects of this were not included in the research design and did not arise significantly as a finding in the data analysis (refer p. 299). This limitation of the current study, given the emphasis now being placed on exploring the „negative side of mentoring‟ in the literature, highlights an area for further research that encompasses an examination of the causes and consequences of negative

mentoring experiences, for the individual teacher as mentee or mentor and the organisation as a collective stakeholder.

An additional area of future research in regard to the negative experiences and effects of mentoring relates to the investigation of strategies for managing these. If it is assumed that negative mentoring is a real issue, examining what negative mentoring constitutes one part of the study. How negative mentoring can be countered or managed should be the other component of the same study.

Conclusion

Walker et al. (2002) concluded from their review of the mentoring literature that mentoring had value "Even into the next millennium, with some conceptual evolution" (p. 1). They proposed a revised triad model for mentoring which embraced collaboration between the mentee, the mentor and the organisation. Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, & Garrett-Harris (2006) believed that considerations for mentoring in the future needed to focus on the development of mentor support groups and "Possibly mentor supervision" (p. 176).

This current research has expanded on the key features proposed by the above authors and has identified ways in which these paradigm shifts in mentoring can occur. The investigation has culminated in the development of the „High Impact Mentoring" model (*HIMM*), a model for mentoring which encompasses these key features and streamlines a complex system of inter-connected processes and human relationships. This model consolidates the research findings which support the premise that mentoring is a mechanism that supports academic practices of teachers in the higher education context and that the effectiveness of this professional development mechanism is reliant on being positioned within an organisation"s professional development infrastructure, not an isolated activity. The *HIMM* provides an organisation interested in implementing a mentoring system as a support mechanism for academic teachers with a clear framework and guidelines to assist them in this process.

The *HIMM* represents a systems-based approach to structuring mentoring within an organisational context. Some might call this a functionalist model for mentoring. This researcher has been conscious of the possible dichotomy between

the *HIMM* as a „systems" model and the humanistic framework emphasised as underpinning the *HIMM*. To counteract and alleviate concerns of this potential conflict, an extensive and intensive focus on the multiple components comprising mentoring and consequently integrated in the *HIMM* has been examined and discussed in this thesis. Also, key considerations of reducing or eliminating power imbalances in an organisation-led mentoring system and in the mentoring relationship itself have been explicated.

Five areas for further research on mentoring have been recommended by this researcher. A more robust system for mentor selection is one of these recommendations, based on this researcher"s confirmation that a reliance on the experienced teacher as mentor is historically-located and, although not necessarily redundant, is in need of a continued paradigm shift in the mentoring literature.

The results of this research study have identified that any consideration of mentoring as a concept and practice inevitably involves a consideration of multi-dimensional variables which make up the mentoring whole. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) refer to a range of variables which contribute to determining the success or demise of an organisation-wide mentoring programme, including programme duration, provision of mentor training, identification of the mentee, and the selection and compensation of mentors. These antecedent, mediating and moderating variables have been identified in this study as influencing the initiation, impact and outcomes of mentoring as a teacher support mechanism and combine to produce a concept, process and practice that is mentoring.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM (copy for research participant)

You have been invited to participate in a research project regarding the implementation of a mentoring programme for academic teaching staff at EIT. Lesley Petersen is conducting the research. Before signing this consent form, please ensure you have read the **Participant Information Sheet** and discussed this with Lesley.

Title of the Project:

"Implementing a support mechanism through mentoring for teaching practice by academic teaching staff in a higher education context."

Name of Researcher:

Lesley K Petersen

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to discuss this and ask any questions.
2. I understand that the strictest confidentiality and anonymity shall be preserved. My name shall not be published in the final report nor will there be any cross-references made that can link the results of the research project to me.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without prejudice or threat of being disadvantaged in any way.
4. I understand that there will be no personal risk to me by participating in this research project.
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

______________________	____________	____________________
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

______________________	____________	____________________
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Please retain this copy for your records.

APPENDIX B

Participant Information Form for Academic Teachers

Title of Project:
"Implementing a support mechanism through mentoring for teaching practice by academic teaching staff in a higher education context."

Name of Researcher:
Lesley K Petersen

Name of Supervisor/s:
Kathryn Dixon, Curtin University of Technology
Lou Siragusa, Curtin University of Technology

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to participate.

Who is organising this study?
Lesley K Petersen

What are the aims of the study:
To investigate whether the provision of a mentoring system for academic teaching staff supports their teaching practice.

Who can take part/why have you been chosen to take part?
An invitation was sent to all academic staff to participate in the research project. In particular, participants were sought in the following categories:

- Five staff members who had previously engaged in a mentor role with academic teaching staff at EIT
- Four mentoring programme coordinators from two New Zealand and two Australian higher education institutions
- EIT academic teachers willing to engage in a mentor-mentee relationship as part of the research project

What does the study involve and how long does it take?
There is a time commitment that you need to be fully aware of if you decide to participate in this project, as outlined in the following description.

Over a period of one year, you will be participating in a mentoring relationship with another research participant of your choosing, either in the role as mentor or mentee.

During this year, you will be required to meet once a month for a one hour mentoring session, providing the opportunity for you and your mentoring partner to discuss anything related to your jobs as academic teachers.

Also during the year you will be involved in focus group meetings which will occur bi-monthly (a maximum of five meetings) of two hour duration. These meetings will bring all mentor and mentee research participants together with the purpose of people sharing their mentoring experiences.

During the year you will be keeping a reflective journal as an additional tool for collecting your mentoring experiences. You will be asked to submit these to the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

Do I have to take part?
It is within your discretion to refuse to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason and without prejudice or threat of being disadvantaged in any way.

What happens to the information I provide?
Participation in this study guarantees confidentiality of the information you provide. No-one apart from the researcher and research supervisors will have access to the information you provide. Your name and any other identifying information will be stored separately from your data in a securely locked filing cabinet. Data will be stored for a maximum of five years. Once the data is analysed, a report of the findings may be submitted for publication. Only broad trends will be reported and it will not be possible to identify any individuals. A summary of the results will be available from the researcher on request.

Contact for further information:
If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the researcher or research supervisors.

Name of Researcher: Lesley K Petersen
lpetersen@eit.ac.nz
Telephone: 06 974 8000, ext 5064

Name of Research Supervisors: Kathryn Dixon
K.Dixon@curtin.edu.au
Lou Siragusa
L.Siragusa@curtin.edu.au
Telephone: 0061 8 9266 2596

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Form and for considering to take part in the study. This Form is for you to keep. If you do wish to take part in the study, please sign the consent form.

Signature of researcher: ______________________________

APPENDIX C

Past Mentors Mentoring Interview Schedule

A research project is now underway at EIT, aimed at identifying whether the implementation of a mentoring programme for academic teaching staff will support teaching practice.

The following interview questions have been designed to identify past approaches to providing mentoring support for academic teaching staff at EIT. This information will help to provide a comparison between previous mentoring practices at EIT and the current focus of mentoring, with a particular focus on contextual influences.

Any information you can offer in response to these questions would be appreciated. The data collected from this interview will be contributing to identifying whether the establishment of a formal mentoring programme at EIT would support and benefit the teaching practices of academic teaching staff.

Thank you for your participation.

1. How was mentoring provided for academic teaching staff?

2. What do you believe was the purpose of the mentoring support you provided?

3. How were mentors identified and selected? How did you become a mentor?

4. What training did you receive as a mentor?

5. How was the mentoring relationship established? What do you believe influenced this?

6. How do you think the organisational culture influenced the mentoring you were involved in?

8. What is your opinion as to whether or how mentoring supports teaching practice?

APPENDIX D

Higher Education Programme Coordinators
Mentoring Interview Schedule

A research project is now underway at EIT, aimed at identifying whether the implementation of a mentoring programme for academic teaching staff will support teaching practice.

The following interview questions have been designed to identify the current mentoring programme operating within your polytechnic. Any information you can offer in response to these questions would be appreciated. The data collected from this interview will be contributing to identifying whether the establishment of a formal mentoring programme supports and benefits the teaching practices of academic teaching staff.

Thank you for your participation.

1. How have you implemented a mentoring system within your institution?

2. What instigated the establishment of the mentoring system?

3. Is training provided for the mentors and mentees when they first take on these roles?

4. What mechanisms have been put in place to support the mentoring participants?

4. To what degree is the mentoring focused on supporting teaching practices?

5. What is the structure of your mentoring programme?
For example, how often do the mentors and mentees meet? How long does the mentoring partnership last?

6. How is the mentoring programme evaluated?

APPENDIX E

Summative Interview Schedule: Academic Teachers

Date: ____________________

Name: ______________________________

1. What had you identified as your intent and purpose for using the mentoring partnership? For example, career progression, general teaching & learning support.

2. What positive outcomes (if any) have you experienced during or as a result of the mentoring partnership?

3. What would you say was „unique" about the mentoring that contributed to your experience of it?

4. Have you made any changes as a result of the mentoring experience? If yes, what changes have you made?

5a. What do you believe are the core characteristics the mentor needs to possess to influence the effectiveness of the mentoring received?

5b. What do you believe are the core characteristics the mentee needs to possess to influence the effectiveness of the mentoring received?

6. What would be some demographic characteristics of the relationship that influenced your mentoring experience? (Guide: gender, ethnicity, roles)

7. How do you think the organisation as a whole could impact on or influence the mentoring experience and the outcomes of this?

8. How do you think the experience and outcomes of the mentoring have impacted on EIT, at an organisational level?

9. What place do you see mentoring having within the organisation in the future, in reflecting on your own mentoring experience?

APPENDIX F

Focus Group One

23 September 2007

Below are the questions for the first focus group meeting, for those of you who would appreciate some time before the meeting to consider them. You might like to jot down some notes before the meeting in response to each.

This meeting is scheduled for one hour, during which time I will be tape-recording the discussions. Again I stress that this will be confidential to the research project.

QUESTIONS

1. What are your first impressions of your mentoring experience?

2. What have you found to be important in establishing the mentoring partnership?
   For example, roles, logistics, the purpose or focus of the meetings

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Two

15 November 2007

QUESTIONS

1. A prominent focus in the literature is "creating a high trust zone" in the mentoring relationship. What have you found to be important/useful/critical to create a level of trust in your partnership?

2. Having met a few times now in your mentoring partnerships, what is your opinion or perception of the "ideal" environment for the mentoring meetings? Consider this question from the perspective of the wider campus environment and the 'meeting space' specifically.

3. "Value for time" significantly determines whether people turn up for and keep going in mentoring meetings. How have you created value-for-time in your mentoring partnership?

APPENDIX H

Focus Group Three

8 February 2008

QUESTIONS

1. If your mentoring partnership was a formalised scheduled activity in your timetable (that is, if EIT had a formal mentoring system), do you think this would change, support or inhibit your partnership?

2. How have you found the „formal" expectations of the mentoring partnership, that is, having to meet once a month, having to focus on teaching & learning specifically? How do you think formalising some of the process has impacted on your mentoring experience?

3. If EIT does establish a formalised mentoring system in the future, what do you believe are the key considerations for the institution?

APPENDIX I

Focus Group Four

Mentee-only Focus Group Meeting

20 April 2008

QUESTIONS

1. What (if any) challenges have you faced during the mentoring programme?

2. How useful do you think it would be for you to get together as a group during the mentoring programme time-frame, as an additional support mechanism for mentees?

3. What do you think about the concept of „matching" mentees with mentors?

4. Would you be interested in participating in a mentoring programme in the future?

APPENDIX J

Focus Group Five

Mentor-only Focus Group Meeting

28 May 2008

QUESTIONS

1. What (if any) challenges have you faced during the mentoring programme?

2. How useful do you think it would be for you to get together as a group during the mentoring programme time-frame, as an additional support mechanism for mentees?

3. What do you think about the concept of „matching" mentees with mentors?

4. Would you be interested in participating in a mentoring programme in the future?

APPENDIX K

Mentoring Training Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

Purpose of this evaluation:

Now that you have attended a mentoring training workshop, as the initial stage of the research project, I would really appreciate your feedback about the purpose and benefit/s of having some training prior to starting your mentoring partnerships. Could you please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible; that would be most appreciated.

1. **What aspects of the workshop did you find most useful?**

2. **Do you think a training workshop is integral to a mentoring programme? Whether 'yes' or 'no', please explain why you think this.**

3. **How do you think mentoring training will assist the mentoring partnerships?**

4. **What other information or material would be useful to include in the workshop?**

5. **Did you think it was useful for the mentors and mentees to attend the same training workshop or should the training be separated? i.e., mentor training and mentee training. Whichever answer, please explain why do you think this?**

6. **Was a three hour training workshop long enough?**

7. **What impact do you think training will have on your engagement in a mentoring partnership?**

APPENDIX L

Excerpts from the Researcher's Reflective Journal

September 12, 2007

"Interesting. As I was thinking about the place of the researcher (my place in this study), I have since bumped into one of the participants who have wanted to talk to me about their mentoring partnership and asked me questions about whether they were doing the right thing or not. One of the teachers who is assuming a mentor role appeared concerned that they were "doing a good job" as a mentor; I think she wanted some confirmation of this. I immediately felt „caught" – that I shouldn"t engage any further in the conversation as this would compromise my position as an „objective researcher" – if there is such a thing. I think I was right in suggesting that she use the next focus group meeting to voice some of her thoughts and concerns. I did explain how I believed I shouldn"t talk with her about this because of the potential ethical dilemma it could pose. She seemed okay with that."

December 4, 2007

Well, this time I was approached by a teacher who was in the role as a mentee. She quickly started talking about how her partnership wasn"t really going as well as she had hoped and asked if I had any suggestions as to what she could do about this. I could sense her frustration. I explained my position as the researcher trying to maintain objectivity. I asked her if she felt she could talk to her mentor about her concerns or perhaps use the focus group meetings as a way to work through this issue.

October 19, 2008

The summative interviews are going well. It makes me think seriously about the issue of negative mentoring experiences and partnerships that just don"t work out. Thankfully this hasn"t been a major issue with the teachers but one or two of them have commented on some „not so positive" mentoring experiences which concerns me. I think I will talk with these teachers at the end of the study and check out whether they would like to talk about their experiences further.

APPENDIX M

Table 1
Literature Review Scoring Rubric

Category	Criterion	1	2	3	4
1. Coverage	A. Justified criteria for inclusion and exclusion from review.	Did not discuss the criteria inclusion or exclusion	Discussed the literature included and excluded	Justified inclusion and exclusion of literature	
2. Synthesis	B. Distinguished what has been done in the field from what needs to be done.	Did not distinguish what has and has not been done	Discussed what has and has not been done	Critically examined the state of the field	
	C. Placed the topic or problem in the broader scholarly literature	Topic not placed in broader scholarly literature	Some discussion of broader scholarly literature	Topic clearly situated in broader scholarly literature	
	D. Placed the research in the historical context of the field.	History of topic not discussed	Some mention of history of topic	Critically examined history of topic	
	E. Acquired and enhanced the subject vocabulary.	Key vocabulary not discussed	Key vocabulary defined	Discussed and resolved ambiguities in definitions	
	F. Articulated important variables and phenomena relevant to the topic.	Key variables and phenomena not discussed	Reviewed relationships among key variables and phenomena	Noted ambiguities in literature and proposed new relationships	
	G. Synthesized and gained a new perspective on the literature.	Accepted literature at face value	Some critique of literature	Offered new perspective	
3. Methodology	H. Identified the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used in the field, and their advantages and disadvantages.	Research methods not discussed	Some discussion of research methods used to produce claims	Critiqued research methods	Introduced new methods to address problems with predominant methods
	I. Related ideas and theories in the field to research methodologies.	Research methods not discussed	Some discussion of appropriateness of research methods fo warrant claims	Critiqued appropriateness of research methods to warrant claims	
4. Significance	J. Rationalized the practical significance of the research problem.	Practical significance of research not discussed	Practical significance discussed	Critiqued practical significance of research	
	K. Rationalized the scholarly significance of the research problem.	Scholarly significance of research not discussed	Scholarly significance discussed	Critiqued scholarly significance of research	
5. Rhetoric	L. Was written with a coherent, clear structure that supported the review.	Poorly conceptualized, haphazard	Some coherent structure	Well developed, coherent	

Note: The column-head numbers represent scores for rating dissertation literature reviews on 3-point and 4-point scales (endnote 4 explains our choice of the two types of scales). Adapted from *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination* (p. 27), by Christopher Hart, 1999, London, SAGE Publications. Copyright 1999 by SAGE Publications. Adapted with permission.

APPENDIX N

Academic Teachers Demographics Checklist

Name	JT	JS	CV
Date	13 June 2007	13 June 2007	13 June 2007
Role	Mentee	Mentee	Mentor
Gender Preference	Either	Either	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	External to own faculty	Either same or different faculty	Either same or different faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other	Prefer match with more experienced teacher.	Matched with a mentor who has experience of own field of work.	Already involved in informal mentoring role within faculty.

Name	TR	MM	KY
Date	13 June 2007	13 June 2007	13 June 2007
Role	Mentee	Mentee	Mentee
Gender Preference	Either	Female	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	Either same or different faculty	External to own faculty	Either same or different faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other		Must be able to hear other person (hearing impairment).	

Name	WD	AM	CM
Date	13 June 2007	14 June 2007	14 June 2007
Role	Mentor	Mentor	Mentor
Gender Preference	Either	Either	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	Either same or different faculty	External to own faculty	External to own faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other	Doesn‟t matter about location.		Is it biased if mentor selects the mentee?

Name	AD	SC	JH
Date	15 June 2007	15 June 2007	18 June 2007
Role	Mentee	Mentor	Mentor
Gender Preference	Prefer Male	Either	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	Either same or different faculty	Either same or different faculty	External to own faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other	A mentor who is aware of practical nature of my work.		Is there a mentor support group? What if the partnership doesn‟t gel?

Name	CK	RW	CB
Date	18 June 2007	18 June 2007	18 June 2007
Role	Mentor	Mentor	Mentor
Gender Preference	Either	Either	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	Either	External to own faculty	Either same or different faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other	It‟s not about the faculty, it‟s about the teaching process.		Believe mentoring process should be as neutral as possible.

Name	JW	GR	MW
Date	20 June 2007	20 June 2007	20 June 2007
Role	Mentee	Mentee Prefer Peer	Mentee
Gender Preference	Either	Either	Either
Mentoring Partner Location	External to own faculty	External to own faculty	External to own faculty
Mentor: Self-selected or Assigned by Researcher	Assigned	Assigned	Assigned
Other	More important that the mentor is mature rather than their knowledge of my subject area.		Refreshing to have someone from outside faculty – give a different slant on things.