

Expectations and Experiences: An examination of
mentoring in the Associate Degree in Primary Education
teaching practicum in Antigua and Barbuda

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of
the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of
Education

By
Desryn Tessa Ann Collins

September, 2022

Abstract

Expectations and Experiences: An examination of mentoring in the Associate Degree in Primary Education teaching practicum in Antigua and Barbuda.

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This is a qualitative, intrinsic case study of mentoring during the teaching practicum of the initial teacher education programme for primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda. Although, the teaching practicum (TP) during the initial training of teachers has engendered much empirical focus in diverse education contexts, there is limited understanding of the experiences of student teachers (STs) and cooperating teachers (CTs) from the same practicum. Furthermore, the extant literature suggests that mentoring during TP is of critical importance to the initial training of teachers and it deserves deep contextual examination. Research into the mentoring experiences of CTs and STs in the context of Antigua and Barbuda is practically non-existent. The study reported in this thesis is intended to contribute to fill in this gap.

The ultimate aim of this study was to acquire insights which could be used to enhance the preparation of CTs to mentor, as well as enhance the initial training of STs and strengthen their preparation for the primary classroom. A purposive sample of CTs, STs, and the Head of the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) participated in the study. Data were gathered through document analysis, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Social constructivism and the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) were the lenses through which the data were interpreted. The main finding is that mentoring is valued by both CTs and STs as an integral part of the STs' training to become teachers, but some of the participants had experiences which contradicted the important role which mentoring is expected to play in the initial training of the STs. The experiences of the CTs and STs indicate that the needs of the STs were not consistently matched by the expertise of the CTs resulting in the STs having a continuum of experiences ranging from effective mentoring to experiences which led them to perceive that they were not mentored. The metaphor, 'uneven playing field' is used to represent the experiences of the STs. During the practicum exercise, the CTs experienced selection, preparation, support and monitoring practices by the DTE which suggested that they were not valued as an integral part of the initial training of the STs. This left them with a general impression of their experience which can be likened, metaphorically, to a flavour. The study also suggests that the *Mentoring Up* theory which was developed in the context of the nursing profession, can be a viable tool for evaluating the experiences of CTs and STs because, in teaching and nursing, similar processes are involved in the interactions between mentors and mentees, and the goal of confidencing is as relevant to the ST as it is to the nurse protégé.

Key words: cooperating teachers, student teachers, mentoring, initial teacher education, teaching practicum

Acknowledgements

I am sincerely grateful to Dr Victoria O'Donnell who started this journey with me and kept reassuring me that I was more than capable of completing it. To Dr José Reis Jorge and Dr Anthony Edwards, who joined me at critical points on the journey and guided me to the end, many thanks to you. Your generous support, constant encouragement and unflagging commitment to excellence have pushed me to this point. I will be forever grateful.

To all the participants in this study, I extend my sincere gratitude for your interest and your time.

To all my relatives and friends who enquired about my progress, offered words of encouragement or just quietly prayed for me, thank you.

To my dear husband, Mike, thank you for staying the course with such patience and kindness.

This accomplishment, like everything else in my life, was only possible by the grace of God. Thank you, Lord for keeping me in the palm of your hands.

Dedication

For all the children and descendants of my mother, Ermelinda Euranie Warde.

With God's help, you can do anything you set your mind to.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADE	Associate Degree in Education
ADPE	Associate Degree in Primary Education
ASC	Antigua State College
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CT	Cooperating teacher
CTs	Cooperating teachers
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
EO	Education Officer
G6NA	Grade Six National Assessment
HoD	Head of Department
JBTE	Joint Board of Teacher Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
ST	Student teacher
STs	Student teachers
TEs	Teacher Educators
TP	Teaching Practicum

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Although much has been written on initial teacher training, particularly the teaching practicum (TP) aspect of the initial training (Lawson, Çakmak, Gündüz, & Busher, 2015), there remains a need for contextual understanding of the mentoring which takes place during the teaching practicum which is also called field experience, clinical experience or just practical teaching in some contexts (Burns, Eaton, Gereluk & Mueller, 2019; Lejonberg, Elstad, Sandvik, Solhaug, & Christophersen, 2018; Zeichner, 2021). Contextual understanding is needed because of the potential impact of mentoring on teachers' preparation to teach (Gan, 2014; Lejonberg et al. 2018; Leshem, 2012; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020). My research, which adopts an interpretive framework (Gray, 2014), seeks to describe and evaluate mentoring during the TP for the Associate Degree in Primary Education (ADPE) at the Antigua State College (ASC) in Antigua and Barbuda. A binary distinction between positivist and interpretive studies is an oversimplification of the very complex forest of research paradigms, but it is a useful distinction for this study because the distinction essentially signifies a fundamental contrast in how the world is viewed, how knowledge is developed, and the processes that are best employed in answering specific types of research questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gray, 2014). This case study focuses on the mentoring experiences of the cooperating teachers (CTs) and the student teachers (STs) in order to gain a deep understanding of how mentoring during practicum is experienced by the key participants. The completion of this study marks a significant addition to the corpus of studies on mentoring during TP because it provides insight into mentoring in the Antiguan and Barbudan context for which no prior study exists. Furthermore, it includes the experiences of both CTs and STs in addition to utilising the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019), which provides an explanatory framework for the mentor-mentee relationship. The *Mentoring Up* theory was derived in a nursing context but, in this study, it is applied to the experiences of mentors and mentees in the context of an initial teacher training programme, thereby advancing a cross disciplinary relevance for the theory. The findings of this research could, ultimately, support the enactment of policy to enrich the quality of the CTs' engagement in the training which STs receive, making the STs better prepared for the primary classroom.

In this chapter, I will explain the research context, justify the conduct of the research and outline the research questions, objectives and methodology. Next, a succinct outline of the structure of the thesis is provided. The chapter will end with a summary which highlights the key content that was covered.

1.1 The Research Context

Antigua and Barbuda, a twin island state in the Lesser Antilles with a population of approximately 97,000 people, is located in the north of the Eastern Caribbean. The island was colonized by English settlers in 1632 and remained a British colony until it earned political independence from Britain in 1981 which is significant because the country has retained key British systems. For instance, the territory identifies as a “constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government” (Tolson, Momsen & Niddrie, 2022). The reigning British Monarch is represented in Antigua and Barbuda by an appointed Governor General who functions as the Head of State. The long colonial past was marked by neglect of education for the masses (African slaves who were brought to work on the sugar plantations), and limited financial investment in education (Jennings, 2001). Having emerged from colonial rule, the nation views education as the avenue to developing its citizens and stimulating national growth, but limited investment in education continues to shape education outcomes.

The administrative centre of the state is Antigua, the larger of the two islands. It is where the Ministry of Education (MoE) which has oversight of all levels of education in Antigua and Barbuda is located. Similar to the British system, formal education in Antigua and Barbuda has three main divisions—primary, secondary and post-secondary. Students begin compulsory primary education at age five at either a public primary school, a government assisted private school or an entirely private school. Primary education ends at grade six when students complete the Grade Six National Assessment (G6NA) which earns them a place at a secondary school of their choice or a school assigned by the Ministry of Education on the basis of the students’ residence or their particular education needs. Antigua practises universal secondary education which means that all students are placed in secondary schools regardless of their performance at the G6NA. This practice has put increased attention on primary education and the quality of instruction which students receive at that level. Secondary education spans a period of five years which takes students from first form to fifth form when they write the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) exams. Upon graduating from secondary school, students enter the workforce or move on to tertiary

education. The majority of the students who opt for tertiary education go to the Antigua State College (ASC) which was founded in 1977 through a merger of the Leeward Islands Teachers Training College and the Golden Grove Technical College. The ASC began with three of the six departments that it currently has. These departments were Engineering and Construction; Commercial, Hotel and Catering; and the Teacher Education Department. Thus, the DTE is one of the original departments of the ASC, but teacher education in Antigua existed in Antigua and Barbuda prior to the establishment of the ASC.

The earliest recorded evidence of teacher education in Antigua is associated with the Moravian church which was a forerunner in providing education to the freed slaves. Around the middle of the 19th century, the Moravians established a school for the training of teachers. However, the institution was plagued by financial difficulties and only a very small number of persons was trained. Eventually, a teachers' training college for teachers across the Leeward Islands was established in Antigua and it is that college which was merged with two other institutions to form the ASC.

The ASC, which is a public institution funded by the government, was the premier tertiary education institution in Antigua and Barbuda until 2019 when a fifth landed campus of the University of the West Indies was opened in Antigua. It is still the only local institution which offers an initial teacher training programme through the Department of Teacher Education (DTE). The DTE has full control of the day to day management of the teacher training programme but a regional body, the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), is the certifying entity for teachers in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member. The members of the OECS share common developmental goals which include the goals of higher student achievement and better teacher quality (OECS Education Sector Strategy, 2020). These goals, which are also included in Antigua and Barbuda's Education Sector Plan, represent an acknowledgement that teacher quality within the region falls short of expected standards, and that the quality of teachers has a significant impact on student achievement. In fact, this point was made explicit by the Director General of OECS at a Conference for educators in the region which was held in April 2018. He noted that,

One of the most common sense assertions – backed by realms [sic] of academic studies – is that the quality of teachers is one of the most critical determinants of student performance. In spite of the general recognition of this fact, we have not done enough

in the domain of the teacher to provide the quality of teaching that would guarantee that every learner succeeds. (Jules, 2018, p. 1)

Prior to 2008, all students of the DTE were in-service teachers who enrolled in the department after teaching for a minimum of two years in one of the public primary schools. In 2008, individuals who had never taught—pre-service teachers—were admitted to the programme once they met the minimum entry requirement. The minimum entry requirement for the ADPE programme is passes in five subjects including Mathematics, English, Science, and a Social Science at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination or the General Certificate Examination.

The STs pay a highly subsidised fee even though Antigua is a small developing state with a GDP of 1.42 billion US dollars (Trading Economics, n.d). Education usually gets about 10% of the government's annual budget and the majority of that sum goes towards the payment of salaries. Because the government is challenged in providing adequately for the education sector (Ministry of Education statistical Digest, 2015), both human and other resources are inadequate for optimum development of the teacher education programme. This point was made in a report on the evaluation and reform of the teacher education programme. The report indicated the need for greater monetary investments in the programme to improve the quality of trained teachers (Universalia, 2017).

Unlike territories around the world, including Caribbean territories, where professional teaching qualification is at the master's degree or bachelor's degree level, (Carter, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012), STs in Antigua and Barbuda pursue a two-year associate degree. The two-year ADPE comprises sixty-six credits. The TP accounts for 9 of the credits. This applies to both in-service and pre-service teachers who, as I stated earlier, represent two categories of persons pursuing the ADPE. These categories are

- 1.) Pre-service teachers (STs who enter the teacher training programme prior to being employed as teachers)
- 2.) In-service teachers (STs who had been teaching for two or more years prior to pursuing the teacher education programme because they were hired to teach prior to receiving any teacher training) (JBTE, 2016).

In keeping with the JBTE regulations for the ADPE, both pre-service and in-service STs are required to complete the teaching practicum which occurs in the final semester of the programme and lasts for ten weeks (JBTE, 2016). For the duration of the TP, the STs are assigned to kindergarten to grade five at primary schools and paired with trained, experienced teachers called CTs who are expected to mentor them (Cooperating Teachers hand-out, n.d). In the education literature, both terms—‘mentor’ and ‘cooperating teacher’—are used to refer to teachers who mentor student teachers (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2016). The same practice is adopted here. These teachers, who are themselves graduates of the DTE, are expected to support the professional development of the STs by providing consistent guidance and assistance in the areas of knowledge and skills outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013). Thus, in Antigua and Barbuda, similar to Australia, Trinidad, and the United States of America among other territories, the CTs are integral to the initial training which STs receive. (Franks & Krause, 2020; Garcia, 2018; Hudson & Millwater, 2008; Izadinia, 2016; Koc, 2016). During the practicum, the STs are expected to observe the classroom teachers who are functioning as CTs for 2 weeks before they are required to assume full responsibility for the classes, teaching all the lessons, while the CTs continue to support their development throughout the practicum period.

The Teacher Educators (TEs), who are the facilitators of the theoretical courses, are also expected to provide support to the STs, but their primary role during the practicum is to assess the teaching performance of the STs and assign a grade to the ST for the subject they are responsible for assessing. In addition to the TEs, the DTE usually enlists the assistance of retired and current EOs to assess the STs because there are not enough TEs to deploy to all the STs during this time. So, during the practicum, the TEs and other personnel are mainly assessors while the CTs function as mentors. This is an important distinction because it informs the mind-set that TEs adopt during practicum. Each ST is assigned one assessor for each of the four subjects they teach. This means one assessor for Mathematics, one for Language Arts, one for Science and one for Social Studies. Usually, the assessors visit the STs to observe their teaching twice before they visit to assign a grade. The STs are required to obtain a pass grade for each subject in order to qualify for the ADPE. Thus, the guidance of the TEs is specifically geared towards helping the STs to obtain a qualifying grade. Their interactions with the STs during this period is also limited because they continue to facilitate classes for students who are in the first year of the programme. Although TEs observe STs and provide feedback during the developmental stage of their teaching practicum experience

(JBTE, 2013), the CTs are the individuals charged with the day to day mentoring of STs (Cooperating Teacher Handout, n.d). Clarke and Mena (2020) note the critical importance of mentors to the initial training of teachers and they emphasise the significance of context in the way CTs go about creating the future of the teaching profession in their setting. In Antigua and Barbuda, the critical elements of the context in which the CTs operate and STs are educated are the history and culture of the nation, the territory's geopolitical ties to the OECS, the learning institution and the ADPE programme. This research has taken place at a time when there is heightened focus on teacher quality and student achievement as part of the MoE's thrust to ensure that it meets the needs of every student. This is an understanding that I gained because of my positioning within the MoE.

1.2 Positionality Statement

My positionality, the impact of my background, beliefs and values (Hammond & Wellington, 2013) on this research, was carefully considered. Because I was conducting a qualitative case study, I needed to acknowledge that my perceptions and interpretations are intertwined in the research and adopt a reflexive stance in order to truly represent the experiences of the research participants and minimise the effect of my assumptions. Barbour (2014) contends that because of the nature of the interpretive paradigm, researchers must make their positions explicit. I am currently an Education Officer (EO) in the Ministry of Education (MoE) so teacher quality and student achievement are pivotal aspects of my professional focus. I have strong interest in deepening understanding about what teachers experience at different junctures in their teaching career, and the factors which influence teacher quality and, ultimately, impact on student achievement. Thus, the topic of my research is directly linked to my professional interests. According to Atkins and Wallace (2015), personal interest in the research topic necessitates that the researcher pay careful attention to rigour and reflexivity. I was careful to engage reflexively with every stage of the research process and to take specific action which I outlined in section 3.9 to safeguard the rigour of the study.

In Antigua and Barbuda, EOs fall into two broad categories: curriculum officers and officers responsible for school administration and services. I am a curriculum officer with responsibility for Language Arts. Part of my responsibility is ensuring that primary school teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach Language Arts effectively. This requires me to observe their instruction as well as engage them in dialogue

about their instructional practices. The information gathered from these interactions are used to organise professional development sessions to enhance the teaching of Language Arts. Thus, because of my role in the MoE, I can be considered a gatekeeper for the quality of Language Arts instruction in primary schools and, ultimately, a gatekeeper for the overall quality of primary education in Antigua and Barbuda. I was, therefore, comfortable with the methods which I chose for this study but I was also forced to bracket my professional position in order to operate impartially in the data collection process.

My position in the MoE has provided me with knowledge of decisions and actions that are taken to improve teacher quality and student achievement at both the national and OECS levels. Consequently, I was able to perceive an opportunity to extend the discussion on strategies to enhance teacher quality and student achievement. Currently, proposals to improve teacher quality focus on revising the content and structure of the theoretical courses which the STs pursue during their initial training, and on conducting workshops for practising teachers (Universalialia, 2017). The impact of the teaching practicum as an integral factor in teacher quality is overlooked even though there is consistent empirical evidence from other education contexts that what STs experienced during their practical teaching in initial teacher education was the single most significant factor in the quality of teachers they become (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Koc, 2016). Thus, my professional position has afforded me insights into crucial national and regional concerns and how my research fits in the national and regional goal of improving teacher quality.

I have made explicit statements about my ontological and epistemological assumptions in section 3.1 which essentially suggests that reality is relative and truth is subjective. Those aspects of my position have to be considered in juxtaposition with my personal and professional identity. There are pivotal aspects of my experiences that have coalesced to form my identity. I grew up under a Socialist regime in Guyana in the seventies and eighties, I was a foreign student in England where I pursued my Master's Degree in my mid-twenties, I am an immigrant in Antigua and Barbuda, the mother of three sons, and a professional educator. My personal and professional experiences have influenced my belief in "multiple constructed realities" (Gray, 2014, p. 27), and the importance of context in determining reality and truth. This is reflected in the design of this research even though I designed the study in relation to the research focus and not an allegiance to a research paradigm.

Based on where I am situated in my career and academic pursuits, I had both opportunities and challenges which I harnessed to create a credible study. My job in the MoE gives me an insider perspective in terms of the critical concerns of the MoE, the inter-relationship between the MoE and the educational institutions in Antigua and Barbuda, and the macro processes that are involved in realising sustainable change. On the other hand, because I spent six years as a TE but have now moved out of the DTE and full-time teaching, I also have an outsider's lens in relation to the research topic. My student researcher stance was also a significant factor in the insider-outsider continuum that was my reality in this research.

The fluidity of my position as an insider is compounded by the fact that I am an immigrant, a reality with peculiar psycho-social challenges. Although I migrated to Antigua from Guyana since 1995, and I have been working in the field of education from then until now, I might still be perceived as an outsider by some of the participants. This warranted much reflection on whether or not my identity influenced what participants shared in focus groups and individual interviews. The triangulation of data collection methods was, therefore, an essential aspect of the research design. Triangulation is also a reflection of how I perceive knowledge is created. The multiple viewpoints which are included in this study allowed for the construction of shared knowledge in a context where the co-construction of knowledge is valued as evidenced by the prevalence of meetings, conferences and symposiums that are designed to inform decision making. In addition, I had to be attentive to the ways in which my role as researcher and the decisions I was making in that capacity were shaped by my background. This led me to be very careful in my analysis and to engage in constant interrogation of the data, weighing the evidence to ensure that my findings truly represented the perspectives of the participants.

This research has provided context specific insights that could guide the restructuring of the initial teacher training programme and inform professional development activities for teachers in Antigua and Barbuda. In my role as Education Officer, I contribute to the process of education policy development so the context specific evidence that was obtained in this study could be used to contribute to policy which advances the national and regional thrust to improve teacher quality and student achievement, not only in Language Arts but all four of the core areas—Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts. I am also well situated to influence an intense conversation on what CTs and STs experience during the

practicum for the ADPE, leading to the creation of adaptive actions to enhance their experiences.

1.3 Problem Statement and Relevance of the Study

The practicum arrangement in Antigua mirrors what occurs in England as well as other territories where there is “a one-to-one relationship between a teacher student (the mentee) and a qualified and usually more experienced teacher (the mentor) which aims to support the mentee’s learning and development as a teacher” (Manning & Hobson, 2017, p. 575). Currently, these mentors are chosen based on the criteria that they are trained teachers, are positioned at the required grades and are reputed to teach well. No direct evaluation is made of the class teachers to determine their suitability for mentoring. Furthermore, no specific training is provided in mentoring for the CTs and no evaluation is conducted of their impact on the preparation of the STs for their own primary school teaching. In essence, the CTs are expected to participate in the training of the STs, but the quality of their participation is not taken into account by the DTE. This may be because the STs generally pass the practicum so little consideration is given to the role of the CTs in the STs’ success. It may also be that the quality of the CTs participation is considered, but improving their performance requires an outlay of resources which the department lacks, so nothing is done to address adequate preparation of the CTs. Yet, teacher education literature contends that CTs play a significant role in the benefits which STs derive from their practicum experiences. Practicum experiences during initial teacher training influence the teaching performance of newly qualified teachers, which, in turn, impacts on student achievement (Carter, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Labaree, 2010; Tuli, 2009). Currently, as is evidenced in the report on the reform and evaluation of teacher education (Universalia, 2017), there is heightened focus in Antigua and Barbuda on teacher quality and student achievement. A similar focus is noted at the OECS level (OECS Education Sector Strategy, 2020).

As a member of the OECS, Antigua and Barbuda shares a set of education and other goals with other OECS territories. One of the education goals of the OECS is improvement of the quality of teacher education in the overarching goal of improved teacher quality and student success (OECS Education Sector Strategy, 2020). Improved teacher quality and student achievement also appear in the local agenda for the development of education which “presents plans and programmes in education for the period 2022 – 2027+” (Education Sector

Plan, 2021, p.1). At both the regional and local levels, plans to improve teacher quality focus on the content of the teacher education programmes, but no mention is made of what STs experience during practicum, specifically the quality of the mentoring which is expected to complete the STs' preparation for the classroom. Teacher education research indicate that TP and the mentoring that takes place during that exercise are critical components of teacher quality and efforts to improve teacher education necessitate improvement in what CTs and STs experience (Carter, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Koc, 2016).

This research is motivated by two key considerations. Firstly, it is motivated by an awareness of the crucial inter-relatedness between teacher quality and the quality of initial teacher training which STs receive (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Secondly, it is motivated by the position that teacher quality affects student achievement (Canales & Maldonado, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Jules, 2018; Tuli, 2009). Research such as Canales and Maldonado's (2017) which was conducted in Chile, and Darling-Hammond's (2000) in the USA, have shown that students at both elementary and secondary school consistently performed better when their teachers were adequately prepared to teach. Given the heightened focus on teacher quality and student achievement in Antigua and Barbuda, and a corresponding silence on the role mentoring plays in helping STs to be ready to teach upon graduation or, in the case of in-service STs, teach more effectively, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the mentoring aspect of the initial training which STs experience is warranted. A meaningful evaluation could be derived from accessing the experiences of both CTs and STs.

1.4 Research Questions, Objectives and Methodology

The overarching question of the research is, "how do cooperating teachers and student teachers perceive the mentoring which they experience during TP?" The following questions were formulated to guide the inquiry:

- i. What role does mentoring play in teacher preparedness for ADPE student teachers at the ASC?
- ii. What role do formal and informal professional development experiences play in preparing CTs to mentor?
- iii. How do mentors perceive the mentoring they provide during practicum?

- iv. How do STs perceive the mentoring they receive during the practicum period?
- v. Could teacher preparedness be improved through more effective mentoring, and if so, how?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted an intrinsic case study using a qualitative approach. I selected a case study design and used a qualitative approach because I believe the subjective experiences of the participants in the context had the potential of generating rich, textual data, providing insights into what the key participants in the mentoring process consider to be critical to its effectiveness. All the CTs and the STs from three consecutive practicum exercises were purposively invited to participate in the study. I utilised focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to triangulate the data (Gray, 2014; Yin, 2008). A thematic approach was used for the data analysis and this was done manually as I decided that since it was the first time I was conducting an empirical study of this level, I wanted direct experience in analysing and synthesising the data. All the steps in the research were conducted by me as the researcher.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised in six chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a literature review which covers the role of mentoring in TP and key considerations in the mentoring experiences of STs and CTs. In chapter three, I present the research design and methodology. Chapter four is concerned with data analysis and findings. Next, I discuss the findings in chapter five. Finally, in chapter six, I present the conclusions.

1.6 Summary

This thesis is an intrinsic case study of mentoring during the compulsory ten-week TP which forms part of the ADPE programme in Antigua and Barbuda. In this research which provides insights into how CTs and STs perceive their mentoring experiences during TP, I have evaluated the experiences of both CTs and STs using the *Mentoring Up* Theory and Social Constructivism as the interpretive lens. The findings could be utilised in creating policies to improve the quality of initial training which STs receive in keeping with the national and regional thrust to improve teacher quality and student achievement.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with a general statement about the teacher education research literature with particular reference to the practicum aspect of initial teacher education. It progresses with an analysis of the key concerns that are relevant to mentoring during the TP for initial teacher training programmes. The review shows that there are many commonalities in mentoring and other aspects of initial teacher training programmes, but there are also significant differences which convey an ongoing need to examine teacher education programmes within their unique contexts and to vary the lens through which different aspects of the programmes are examined (Lechem, 2012; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020).

Additionally, this review of the extant research literature reveals that, although multiple theoretical and empirical frameworks have been employed to study various aspects of initial teacher education programmes, the interpretive approach seems to match the need to access the lived experiences of the participants. Thus, a foundation is set for the methodology that is presented in chapter three. A deeper understanding of the teaching practicum aspect of initial teacher education seems to be an issue of universal significance.

2.1 Why TP Matters

The literature is clear that TP is a requirement for certification in education programmes around the world because it adds significant value to a student teachers' preparation to teach. This complex activity is a crucial step towards a young teacher's journey to becoming a qualified school teacher (Brown, Lee & Collins, 2015; Cohen, Hoz & Kaplan, 2013; Farrell, 2008; Gallchóir, O'Flaherty & Hinchion, 2019; Graves, 2010; Lejonberg et al., 2018; Morales Cortés, 2016; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2008; Trent, 2013, Tuli, 2009; Ulla, 2016). For instance, Tuli's (2009) qualitative case study at Jimma University in Ethiopia among a group of third year students who had completed their TP showed that the practicum experience of the STs was instrumental in helping them to match the theory which they gained in their higher education courses with school classroom teaching practice. In addition, the study showed that TP also helped the students to develop their sense of efficacy. Similarly, Brown, Lee and Collins' (2015) study of the impact of student teaching on the preparedness to teach of pre-service teachers at the elementary level from a large public university in the Southwest, USA, and Ulla's (2016) investigation among STs from a private university in the Philippines revealed that the TP played a pivotal role in

what pre-service school teachers learned about teaching and their sense of readiness for classroom practice. These studies, among others, from a variety of education contexts and research methodologies, demonstrate the value of practicum experiences to preparing teachers for their own classroom teaching. In fact, Brown et al. asserted the criticality of the practical component of the teacher education programme to the development of pre-service school teachers by stating that, “Student teaching ... is the most significant and necessary educational component of teacher preparation programs” (2015, p. 80). However, despite the variety of studies highlighting the importance of practicum, the emphasis is, generally, on STs’ experiences in teaching one subject such as Science, Mathematics, or English as a second language. Few of the studies included the perspectives of all the key stakeholders and none of them was based in the Eastern Caribbean. Thus, there is an opportunity for studies on the practicum experiences of STs pursuing an ADPE within the Eastern Caribbean region.

In the research literature that was examined, there was general consensus on the importance of practicum but there were also clear indications that several important factors combined to shape the effectiveness of the exercise and the actual impact it had on the development of novice teachers (Trent, 2013). Among these significant factors were the duration and position of TP in relation to the whole programme (Meyers, Mathur, & Barnes, 2017), the nature and quality of the support that the STs received (Glenn, 2006; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Graves, 2010; Rajuan et al., 2008; Trent, 2013), the organisation of the practicum, inclusive of the roles of key stakeholders (Garcia, 2018), the suitability of the schools at which STs were placed, the attitudes of the STs, and the teaching, and learning experiences they had during this critical period (Gallchóir, O’Flaherty & Hinchion, 2019; Garcia, 2018; Lejonberg et al., 2018). These are critical themes that will be explored in this review.

2.1.1 Duration and position of TP in initial teacher training.

The duration of the practical component of initial teacher training programmes varies from one context to another but, according to Cohen et al. (2013), the importance of TP “is evidenced by the increased time and intensity allotted to this component in teacher education programs” (p.1). The controversy over the ideal length and structure of practicum is underscored by Meyers, Mathur and Barnes (2017) who focused on a continuous five week high impact immersion practicum in several elementary schools in the US as a strategy to combat the “limitations of one-day-a-week and one year residency models of practicum”

(p.11). The high impact immersion practicum started three weeks after the students began their teacher education programme. In contrast, in developing countries like Malaysia and Ethiopia, student teachers could experience one stint of practicum lasting for several weeks during the third year of their training (Jusoh, 2013; Tuli, 2009). In Trinidad and Tobago, the TP occurs in phases over the four year bachelor's degree programme (Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012). This differs from the ten-week long practicum which occurs in the final semester of the ADPE which the STs in Antigua and Barbuda pursue (JBTE, 2016). Irrespective of the duration and placement of the TP, there is consensus in the extant literature that it is a key aspect of initial teacher training.

2.1.2. The support provided during TP.

The nature of the support which STs receive during their practicum experience is a recurring theme in research studies which explored the effectiveness of the practicum exercise. The provision of support by CTs, the other teachers at the host schools, and university supervisors or teacher educators is shown by both quantitative measures and qualitative interpretations to be a meaningful consideration in the professional development of STs. Of these three potential sources of support during practicum, CTs have generated the most attention mainly because of the role they are expected to play in the development of STs (Ambrosetti, 2014; Clarke, Triggs & Nielsen, 2014; Gallchóir et al., 2019). Several studies argue that the effectiveness of the TP is contingent on what STs experience with their CTs or mentors because mentoring is intended to help STs become professional teachers (Glenn, 2006; Kwan and Lopez-Real, 2005; Lawson et al., 2015). This observation supports my case study exploration of the practicum experiences of CTs and STs with particular attention to the mentoring which these stakeholders provide and receive respectively during the practicum period. The next section of this review will explore mentoring as a central element of the TP.

2.2 Mentoring: Models and Practices

In this section of the review, I will demonstrate the complexity of the mentoring process while advancing the need for examination of what is involved in the mentoring of STs within the context of an associate degree. The view that mentoring is an essential aspect of the practicum exercise is well established in the education literature, but various models of mentoring have been utilised and described in different contexts. Furthermore, research studies vary in the specific features of effective mentoring which they highlight. These

variations suggest that different dimensions of mentoring emerge in different contexts, emphasising the relevance of contextual exploration.

2.2.1 Definition of mentoring.

Finding a definition of mentoring that fits all situations is a challenging task because definitions of the concept and the qualities that are ascribed to mentors are contextual; they emerge from and are intricately linked to what unfolds in particular mentoring situations (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Jenkinson & Benson, 2016; Lechem, 2012; Mena, Faikhamta, & Clarke, 2020). In Kramm's (1985) account of mentoring in organisational life, mentoring is perceived to be a dynamic relationship that provides benefits to both the mentor and the mentee. In contrast, Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) present mentoring as both a process of developmental support for the novice teacher and a relationship that strengthens the trainee's development. In teacher education contexts, the relationship-process duality seems to be the most common perception of the interactions between teacher mentors and STs. According to Anderson and Shannon (1995), mentoring, in the context of initial teacher education, is a multifaceted process, which is supported by the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. This process is primarily geared towards the development of the trainee teacher. Similarly, Martin (1994) describes mentoring as a process which is "non-linear, complex and interactive" (p. 275) but she emphasised the potential professional development of both STs and mentors. More recently, Mullen & Klimaitis' (2019) review of mentoring shows that mentoring involves both process and relationship, and several context specific circumstances are covered by the term.

In general, the research literature suggests that mentoring is, essentially, a process in which one individual has knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes that are intentionally employed in supporting the professional development of a less knowledgeable, skilled and experienced individual through their interactions in a professional context (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Clarke, Killeavy & Ferris, 2015; Orland-Barak, 2010; Shulman & Sato, 2006). Thus, one individual is actively contributing to the professional development of a neophyte. This is the understanding of mentoring that is adopted in this study.

In the context of a teacher education practicum, the mentor could be the teacher educator (TE) also called university supervisor, a fellow teacher trainee or a school teacher. As I pointed out in the introduction, this study focuses on the school teacher mentor. The mentor, also called the CT in Antigua and Barbuda as well as other regions around the world,

(Brown et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2014; Glenn, 2006; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2016; Russell & Russell, 2011), is, invariably, an experienced, qualified school teacher. The mentor teacher may have a professional role as a mentor teacher (Lejonberg et al., 2018; Manning & Hobson, 2017; Orland-Barak, 2010), or volunteer to mentor a ST for the duration of a practicum exercise (Ambrosetti, 2014; Gallchóir, O’Flaherty & Hinchion, 2019; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005; Meegan, Dunning, Belton, & Woods, 2013; Trent, 2013). Mentoring is considered to be one of the most critical aspects of the TP for school teachers in training because of the potential it holds for influencing the development of teachers, but different models of mentoring exist which ultimately influence the benefits STs derive. (Mena, Faikhamta, & Clarke, 2020; Orland-Barak, 2010; Russell & Russell, 2011).

2.2.2 Models of mentoring.

Models of mentoring that are specifically relevant to initial teacher education vary depending on the goal of the mentoring process. Models are essentially represented by the nature of the interactions between the training institution, the teacher mentors and the teacher trainees. Often, the model that is practised in a particular context is not explicitly identified but it is evident by the role that is assigned to the CTs. Three distinctive models of mentoring that are described in the literature are apprenticeship, competency and reflective models (Maynard & Furlong, 1995).

The apprenticeship model of mentoring caters to the novice teacher’s need to make sense of the routines of teaching and develop a clear understanding of their role. In this model of mentoring, the trainee works along with the mentor, emulating the mentor’s practice and collaboratively engaging in specific tasks such as lesson planning. The mentor takes on the responsibility of teaching and guiding the trainee. The mentor teacher’s interactions with the trainee suggests sensitivity to the trainee’s need to understand teaching and develop confidence in the classroom. However, the mentor functions as a supervisor, directing the development of the mentee. Maynard and Furlong (1995) suggests that this model of mentoring is appropriate in the beginning stages of teacher trainees’ practical field experience but it limits the development of the trainee because of its concentration on broadly clarifying the processes of teaching. Nevertheless, in some situations, the apprenticeship, directive model is seen to permeate the whole of STs’ practicum experiences even when it is not explicitly identified (Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2015).

In contrast to the apprenticeship model of mentoring, the literature highlights a competency model which foregrounds the trainee's mastery of key teaching skills. Advocates of the competency model contend that learning to teach requires direct practical training in specific competencies. In this model of mentoring, the mentor teacher, "takes on the role of a systematic trainer" (Maynard & Furlong, 1995, p. 19). Collaboration between the mentor teacher and the teacher training institution is critical in this model because the institution determines the focus of the training which the mentor provides. Of equal importance in this model, is the expertise of the mentor. Since the mentor has to coach the teacher trainee in pre-determined areas of teaching and provide instructive feedback, it is important that the mentor teacher is proficient in the range of competencies that student teachers must develop. In the competency model, the development of teacher trainees is advanced through independent teaching which requires them to develop their own repertoire of teaching routines and strategies. Unlike the apprenticeship model of mentoring which restricts the professional growth of the mentor and the mentee, the competency model has the potential for developing advanced skills by both the mentor teacher and the teacher trainee (Carter, 2015).

The third model of mentoring that is evident in the literature is the reflective model which is best described as mentoring that stimulates the trainee to engage in systematic consideration of their teaching decisions and actions in order to maximise student learning. While reflection fosters their own continuous growth, the ultimate aim is to safeguard the achievement of the students they teach by making student learning more effective. The challenge in this model is isolating the specific actions which mentors must take in order to help trainees to be reflective practitioners. Glenn (2006) suggests that certain underlying qualities, rather than specific actions, unite effective mentors within this model of mentoring. Nevertheless, one practice which seems to have garnered some attention in the literature is modelling what it means to be a reflective practitioner. By modelling the process of reflection, mentors inspire STs to adopt the practice during the practicum and extend it to their own teaching (Clarke et al, 2014). A collegial relationship is foregrounded in the reflective model, and mentors who are operating within this model of mentoring encourage trainees to interrogate their own practice as well as the practice of the mentor teacher. In this model, mutual learning is key (Clarke et al., 2014; Patrick, 2013). The hierarchical relationship between the experienced, knowledgeable mentor teacher and the inexperienced teacher trainee is secondary to their position as co-learners in the dynamic teaching enterprise.

The three models of mentoring that are presented here do not cover every approach that is evident in the literature, but other models are approximations of one of these, hybrids of two or combinations of all three. In fact, there is a strong view that mentoring over the course of a student teacher's practicum experience should integrate elements of all of these models. Clarke et al. (2014) note that

It appears that ideally cooperating teachers would model practice as students first enter the practicum setting ... this would then be followed by a gradual move to a more reflective and independent way of engaging with student teachers signaling a shift from mimicked to more independent and reflective practice (p. 178).

This has implications for the nature of the interactions between the teacher mentor and the teacher trainee. Role shifting by both parties is essential for teacher trainees to move from emulating the practice of their mentors to interrogating their own and their mentors' practices. This may prove to be a challenge when CTs are not trained to engage in and model reflective practice (Clarke et al., 2014). Another real challenge may be in selecting the right focus at the appropriate point in the practical experience of the teacher trainee in order to foster their professional growth and avoid frustrating the student teacher and the mentor teacher.

Arguably, the model of mentoring which STs experience is shaped by all their interactions with peers, university supervisors (TEs) and CTs because all of these interactions contribute to their development. This perspective represents the sociocultural view of learning and it also promotes the understanding that the STs' interactions with each category of significant participants in the practicum influence the learning which they experience (Gan, 2014; Menter, Hulme, Elliot, & Lewin, 2010; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019). In Gan's (2014) qualitative case study of a group of English as a second language STs in Hong Kong, the researcher noted that interactions with all significant others in the practicum experience contributed to the development of the STs. Gan also observed that there was "a pressing need to develop university-school partnerships to facilitate the development of collegial relationships among student teachers and their significant others" (p. 137). Thus, there is the suggestion that the teacher education institution has a central role in safeguarding the model of mentoring which obtains in the context.

The literature suggests that the model of mentoring that exists in a particular context has implications for the growth of STs. More specifically, several studies assert that the practices of the CTs have the greatest impact on the preparation of STs.

2.2.3 Mentor practices.

In this section of the review, the focus is on the day-to-day practices of the CTs. Studies such as Izadinia (2016), Lejonberg et al. (2018) and Patrick (2013) suggest that mentors engage in specific practices which STs interpret as conducive to their development as well as practices which they do not value. These practices demonstrate the type of support which the CTs provide and their personal characteristics. Thus, these areas will be dealt with in the sub-sections which follow.

2.2.3.1 Types of support.

The literature suggests that the support provided by CTs fall into two broad categories. These are support for the STs' professional learning, and emotional support. Support for the STs' professional learning, which includes guidance in reconciling theory and practice, lesson planning, instructional strategies, classroom management and the preparation of teaching materials, has emerged as a key aspect of what mentoring entails in various contexts. However, research studies tend to highlight just one or two aspects of the professional learning which STs experienced. In Yayli (2018), for instance, a qualitative research which was conducted among fourteen pre-service teachers of Turkish Language and Literature at a Turkish public university, the researcher found that STs associated developmental support with the extent to which the school mentors were able to help them reconcile the gap between the theory which they learnt in their university classroom and the experience which they were gaining in practical teaching. In other studies, support for lesson planning, classroom management and the preparation of teaching aids are foregrounded (Cochran-Smith, Cannady, Mceachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2010; Gravett, Petersen & Ramsaroop, 2019; Graves, 2010; Tuli, 2009). As Graves (2010) found, a key issue in the provision of support by CTs is whether or not the support provided matched the expectations of the teacher trainees.

In addition to support for their professional development, several studies show that STs also expect emotional support from their CTs. In Izadinia's (2016) study of the experiences of nine mentors and eight pre-service secondary teachers from a university in Western Australia, the researcher noted an emphasis on emotional support in addition to

academic support for a fruitful mentoring relationship. Other studies, guided by a range of research questions, support the relevance of psycho-social and emotional support in the mentoring process (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Gan, 2014; Lejonberg et al., 2018; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020; Mullen and Klimaitis, 2019). For example, in Lynn and Nguyen's (2020) qualitative research among a group of seven teacher mentors from six schools across Sydney, Australia, which catered for different levels of students ranging from age 5 to 18, the researchers focussed on "mentors' perspectives on effective mentoring practice" (p. 299). They discovered that "psychosocial support was an important aspect of the relationship" (p.306). However, this is a dimension of mentoring that is generally highlighted but not clearly defined in the literature.

2.2.3.2 Mentors' personal characteristics.

The significance of mentors' personal characteristics to the effectiveness of their mentoring is another relevant issue in the education mentoring literature. For instance, Glenn (2006), whose research was conducted among two pairs of mentors and student teachers in Connecticut, USA, provided an account of mentoring that foregrounded the underlying qualities that connected effective mentors as they sought to provide professional guidance and support to STs. In this qualitative study, it was shown that, "effective mentors collaborate rather than dictate, relinquish an appropriate level of control, allow for personal relationships, share constructive feedback, and accept differences" (p. 94) This study is particularly noteworthy because it suggests that excellent mentoring is not confined to a single teaching style or set of character traits. Rather, the study showed that, although the teaching style and personalities of effective mentors may vary, there are core principles that connect their practices and these principles should guide the selection of CTs in order to ensure the provision of effective mentoring during practicum.

Glenn (2006) who emphasised the practices of mentors, and Graves' (2010) case study research on the mentoring of pre-service teachers advanced the perspective that mentoring relationships were perceived as productive when they featured particular elements that involved both the mentor and the mentee. The elements that emerged from the study were expectations, communication and time. This study of the mentoring relationships between Early Childhood pre-service teachers and their CTs revealed that the CTs were considered to be effective when they met the expectations for support which were held by the STs. According to this study, mentoring is better facilitated when the mentees' actions and

attitudes are also in line with the expectations of the mentors. Graves found that mentors expected mentees to be responsible, respectful, cognizant of child development, able to communicate and develop relationships with children, fond of working with children and involved in their classroom. Izadinia (2016) also highlighted mutually fulfilled expectations as a feature of productive mentoring relationships. Thus, both mentors and mentees make significant contributions to the success of mentoring relationships.

Having explored what mentoring entails in the context of the TP, I will now explore how STs and CTs view the role of the CT, showing that the perceptions of the two parties are crucial in an exploration of mentoring during TP.

2.4 The Role of the CT

There is ample evidence in the extant literature that mentoring could result in many positive outcomes (Clarke et al, 2014). However, as Manning and Hobson (2017) found, the interactions between mentor and mentee could be problematic, thus limiting the benefits to the mentee and the satisfaction of the mentors. One of the factors that resulted in limited benefits from mentoring is ambiguity in the role of CTs even though the CT is “the most influential actor in teacher preparation” (Lafferty, 2018, p. 75). Several research studies have noted that the role of the teachers who are expected to mentor STs during the TP needs to be clearly defined by the university or college (Garcia, 2018; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Graves 2010; Mena, Faikhamta, & Clarke, 2020; Yayli, 2018). Yayli (2018) found that the mentoring role of the CTs was not clearly defined and this impacted how the CTs engaged in the practicum exercise. Yayli’s findings echo the findings of previous studies in other contexts, showing that the role which CTs play in the development of STs has been and still is a very relevant concern for researchers. For instance, Graves, (2010) observed that “CTs need to understand their roles as mentors” (p.18). Russell and Russell (2011) also argued that although CTs may know that they are expected to mentor STs, they may not understand how mentoring should be operationalised in practice in the sense of the day to day actions that are required in fulfilling their role. A similar view was articulated by Lynn and Nguyen (2020) who noted, “knowledge of how the [mentoring] relationship progresses through the various phases is essential for both the mentee and the mentor in understanding how to take advantage of, and benefit from, the relationship” (pp.312-313).

The particular roles which CTs play in their interactions with STs may differ from one practicum situation to another and during the course of the same practicum period

depending on the model of mentoring that is espoused (Anderson, 2007; Clarke et al., 2014; Lafferty, 2018). When CTs are also assessors and stand in judgement of their STs, it complicates the role of the CT and this could infringe on the mentor-mentee relationship. Anderson (2007) makes the point that STs may not open up to CTs or even seek their guidance when the CTs are responsible for evaluating them. A similar observation was drawn from Manning and Hobson's (2017) research which combined the perspectives of 7 mentors and 22 mentees in a mixed method case study that was conducted in the further education initial teacher training context in the South of England. The researchers found that, from the perspective of both STs and CTs, the judgemental evaluations of the CTs defined the nature of the interactions between the two parties. The judgemental role of the CTs impeded the quality of support which the STs experienced and the overall quality of their practicum experience. It seems that STs perceive the assessor role to be a barrier to a close mentoring relationship. This suggests that both CTs and STs enter the mentoring relationship with specific expectations. I examine the expectations of CTs and STs in the next section of this review.

2.5 Expectations of CTs and STs

Few studies on mentoring during TP have included the perspectives of both CTs and STs, but empirical evidence suggests that, although there is general congruence between what STs expect from their mentors and what mentors perceive their roles to be, this is not always the case. (Manning & Hobson, 2017; Meegan et al., 2013; Patrick, 2013). In various contexts, divergent expectations have emerged when individuals entered the mentorship relationship with fundamentally different understandings about the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, and the mentee for that matter. Manning and Hobson's (2017) case study showed that a dichotomy existed between the mentoring expectations of some teacher students and their mentors. Manning and Hobson's study supports Patrick (2013) whose study involved narratives of the practicum experiences by both STs and their mentors. The findings showed that, whereas STs generally expected and valued a collegial professional relationship with their mentors which is characterised by collaboration and reciprocal learning, the mentors expected to supervise the STs. How the mentors saw their role essentially conflicted with the essence of mentoring as understood by the STs. Consequently, one of the recommendations made by Patrick is that STs and mentors meet to iron out expectations to achieve more harmonious relationships.

In addition to their understanding about what to expect from each other, there are other factors which determine how CTs and STs perceive their experiences during practicum. In the following section of this review, I will examine empirical evidence which demonstrate the importance of the experiences of CTs and STs during practicum.

2.6 Experiences of CTs and STs

The literature suggests that what CTs and STs experience is situated within a broader context of the teacher education programme, the school at which the TP is taking place, and their personal characteristics (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Glenn, 2006; Gravett & Jiyane, 2019; Lechem, 2012; Tuli, 2009). Furthermore, the process of mentoring and being mentored has professional as well as psychosocial implications for CTs and STs respectively. Thus, the experiences of these two groups of stakeholders warrant careful consideration in juxtaposition with each other.

In spite of the many studies dealing with the role of the CT during practicum (Clarke et al., 2014), the perceptions of CTs on what they experience during mentoring are under-represented in the corpus of practicum studies. Those studies which include the perceptions of CTs show that CTs are generally concerned about their preparation for the role (Izadinia, 2015; Lawson et al., 2015; Zemek, 2008). In cases where their interactions with STs were highlighted, positive experiences dominate the literature but there are also reports of challenges which CTs encounter with STs. Hudson and Hudson (2018), for instance, investigated tensions that arose between mentors and mentees during the practical teaching experience of a group of high school STs in Australia. They found that three categories of tensions emerged, namely, personal (incompatibility, personality differences and language), pedagogical (lack of content knowledge, behaviour management situations), and professional (unsuitable attire, inappropriate social networking, unsuitability for the profession). The experiences of the mentors in Hudson and Hudson's (2018) study underscore how difficult mentoring could be.

The initial teacher training literature underscores the general view that, although the experiences of CTs are important, the mentoring experiences of the STs are critical to their professional development and have lasting impact on their performance as teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Jones, Kelsey & Brown, 2014; Koc, 2016). In Gan's (2014) qualitative case study of 17 pre-service ESL student teachers' school based professional learning in different primary schools in Hong Kong, the researcher found that learning was

essentially experiential and that the STs as a group experienced both supportive mentoring and “unsatisfying relationships” (p.134) which impacted their sense of readiness to teach. Lejonberg, et al. (2018) also addressed the “developmental relationships in mentoring by exploring how aspects of mentoring relationships relate to mentees’ perceptions of receiving developmental support” (p.525). The 382 pre-service secondary level teachers who participated in the survey were from two five-year teacher education programmes at two universities in Norway. The participants reported divergent experiences which revealed, among other things, that their perceptions of the amount of effort expended by their mentors were “strongly associated with perceived developmental support in mentoring” (p.533).

Feedback, which is a key aspect of the communication which takes place between STs and CTs, is repeatedly highlighted as critical to the experience which STs have during practicum, particularly their perception of receiving the support they need to develop teaching skills. In fact, open communication between mentors and mentees has been perceived as central to the mentoring relationship by both STs and CTs (Clarke et al., 2014). Lynn and Nguyen’s (2020) qualitative study of effective mentoring where “Data were drawn from semi-structured interviews, with targeted, rather than random, qualitative samples” (p. 299), showed that rich communication between mentors and mentees in which mentors encouraged the mentees to explore their own ideas and function autonomously (features of the reflective model of mentoring) was critical to the emerging identity of STs.

There is ample empirical evidence, derived from both primary and secondary teaching contexts, which suggests that the frequency and quality of the feedback that is provided to STs by CTs impact on the quality of their relationship and the growth of the STs. (Clarke et al, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2016; Lechem, 2012; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020; Meyers et al., 2017; Nguyen, 2014; Yayli, 2018; Russell & Russell, 2014). For instance, in Gowrie and Ramdass’ (2012) study which dealt with the practical teaching experiences of 36 pre-service primary level teachers at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, it was found that the STs generally received feedback which helped them to make sense of their context, hone their teaching skills and develop their sense of efficacy. The usefulness of the feedback experienced by the STs in Gowrie and Ramdass’ study has not always been experienced by STs in other studies. In Clarke et al.’s (2014) review of research studies of mentoring in various contexts, it was noted that the provision of feedback was central to effective mentoring relationships but mentors seldom provide feedback that “promotes deep and substantive reflection on practice” (p. 175).The

evidence suggests that feedback that truly strengthens the mentoring relationship and impacts the practice of STs is regular and insightful and it allows the STs to reflect on their practice.

It seems that among the most significant factors which determine how CTs engage in mentoring are their motivation and the preparation which they experience (Biggers, Miller, Zangori & Whitworth, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Izadinia, 2015; Koc, 2016; Lafferty, 2018). In the following sections of this review, I will examine these factors.

2.7 CTs' Motivation for Mentoring

The research literature on mentoring during practicum suggests that motivation plays a prominent role in how CTs engage in the mentoring of STs (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Graves, 2010; van Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen, 2016). Although a desire to participate in what they perceive to be a very important exercise may be shared by most CTs, there are a variety of specific factors which drive them to consent to being mentors to STs. A close examination of these factors from various studies suggest that they fall into three broad categories although there are no formal labels that are consistently applied to these factors of motivation.

In the first category, motivation is characterised by the CTs' desire to provide support and impart the knowledge and skills which they possess. The CTs in this category see themselves as the means of success for the STs (Russell & Russell 2011; van Ginkel et al., 2016). In contrast, some CTs recognise the need to share their knowledge and skills but are driven to mentor by the opportunity to engage in reciprocal development (Betterney, Barnard & Lambirth, 2018; Hudson & Hudson, 2018; Johnson, 2003; Lechem, 2012). They see themselves as learning with the STs, not merely facilitating the learning of the STs. In Betterney, Barnard and Lambirth's (2018) intrinsic case study of 8 mentors from various schools in South East UK the mentors admitted that the opportunity for reciprocal learning was a motivating factor. Cavanagh and Prescott (2011) made a similar discovery. They reported that one of the most motivating factors for teachers who functioned as mentors was the acquisition of new ideas which they learned from STs. The third category includes those CTs who are concerned about the welfare of the students in the classroom and the entire education system so they choose to participate in the development of STs as a way of safeguarding the quality of teaching which students experience and the quality of teachers who are introduced into the education system (Clarke and Mena, 2020). This category of motivation aligns with what Meegan et al. (2013) identify as a gatekeeper role. However,

Meegan et al. discussed the roles performed by university supervisors, not CTs, during the initial training of STs.

Because the motivation of CTs is important to how they engage in the process, it should be considered in the training and recruitment of CTs. However, the literature shows that both selection and training of CTs continue to be areas for improvement in initial teacher education programmes for both primary and secondary teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gowrie and Ramdass, 2012; van Ginkel et al., 2016). CTs have to be motivated to engage fully in the mentoring exercise and it is the responsibility of the administrators in teacher education programmes to ensure that the individuals who are selected to mentor are motivated to engage in the process and are trained to do so effectively. In the sections which follow, I will turn my attention to the issues of mentor selection and training as critical elements in the CTs' readiness to participate in the initial training of STs.

2.8 Selection and Training of CTs as Practicum Mentors

The selection and training of CTs has been a key focus of TP studies because of the role CTs are expected to play in the development of STs. Glenn (2006) puts it this way, "Student teaching is a key event in the lives of future educators; it can make or break their success in their own classrooms. The selection of qualified CTs with whom these students will work is accordingly imperative" (p. 85). There is evidence that various criteria are used in diverse contexts for selecting mentors. Among the common grounds for selection are recommendation by the school principal, years of teaching experience, willingness to participate in the practicum exercise, teacher availability, location, grade level and subject. In some contexts, mentors volunteer or are selected for the role which lasts for the duration of the practicum exercise for the specific cohort (Hudson & Hudson, 2018; Rajuan, et al., 2008). In other education contexts, mentors hold a professional position as mentors. In their review of those studies which dealt with the work of the mentor-teachers, Cohen et al. (2013) found that mentors were largely selected on the basis of their availability which meant that they were not directly prepared for their role. This impacted the level of confidence they felt. Similar experiences by CTs in other contexts (Clarke et al, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2017) suggest that training is a critical factor in how CTs engage in mentoring.

Although mentor preparation within the context of the TP has not been the focus of much direct empirical enquiry, it has emerged as a key theme in the experiences of STs and CTs during the practicum exercise. Where it has been directly investigated, there is evidence

that mentor preparation is critical to the success of the mentoring exercise (Franks & Krause, 2020; Lafferty, 2018; Pennanen, Heikkinen, & Päivi, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). To quote Pennanen et al., “the research literature underlines the importance of formal mentor education (over informal and non-formal activities) in supporting a positive mentoring relationship through mentors’ professional development” (2018, p.3). Preparing mentors to fulfil this critical role is essential because mentoring is generally shown to be a complex process that has the potential to impact the development of teachers both positively and negatively (Cohen et al., 2013; Manning & Hobson, 2017). The value of mentor preparation is well established. Likewise, there is a strong contention that a prepared mentor is an effective mentor so I have reviewed the extant literature on mentor preparation and mentor effectiveness.

2.8.1 Mentor training and mentor effectiveness.

Several studies show that mentor training correlates with mentor effectiveness; yet, in some contexts, the CTs do not receive any formal training to become mentors (Cohen et al., 2013; Garcia, 2018; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Graves, 2010; Lafferty, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). Rikard and Veal’s (1996) research involving twenty-three Physical Education CTs from six high schools, ten middle schools and eight elementary schools in North Carolina revealed that twenty-one of the CTs did not receive any formal training to fulfil their role. The CTs drew on their own experiences as STs themselves, and the knowledge they had acquired over their years of teaching to inform their support to the STs they were required to mentor. The result was that there was a variety of approaches to their mentoring practices, some of which were not effective in meeting the needs of the STs. Consequently, the researchers observed that “it is the university’s responsibility to assure that cooperating teachers receive proper systematic supervisory training” (p.292). On the basis of their review of 113 empirical studies, Cohen et al., (2013) concluded that “Mentor-teachers’ professional confidence is partly determined by their mentoring efficacy, which was not strong since they were usually selected according to their availability and were not prepared for their role” (p. 21). Twenty-two years after Rikard and Veal’s study, Garcia, in his 2018 qualitative case study which was set in Trinidad and Tobago made similar observations. In Garcia’s study, which analysed the views of CTs, the university supervisors and STs, it was noted that the CTs also lacked training so they relied on their own teaching experiences in dealing with the STs. Garcia’s study which examined a Caribbean educational context supports the need for CTs to be trained and upholds the connection between the preparation

of CTs to fulfil their roles and the quality of support which STs receive. This is underscored by Lafferty (2018) whose study of 119 pre-service and 146 CTs in ten university-based credentialing programs in California showed a distinct positive difference between the performance of mentor teachers who were prepared for their role as mentors and those who were not. Lafferty pointed out that the effectiveness of the field experience is stifled when CTs are not specifically trained to function as teachers of teachers. The CTs who were specifically trained to mentor scored consistently higher means on the Cognitive Apprenticeship Teaching Questionnaire (CATQ), the instrument which was used in the study to measure the mentoring practices of CTs.

Limited or no training of CTs is not confined to any region and it is still a factor in the training of STs. One important observation is that the CTs themselves invariably connect training with effectiveness (Garcia, 2018; Graves, 2010; Franks & Krause, 2020; Lynn and Nguyen, 2020; Zemek, 2008). The connection between CT training and performance warrants contextual investigation because CTs consistently perceive that a lack of training negatively impacts on their performance as mentors. For instance, Zemek (2008), who focussed on CTs who were working with prospective Music teachers, states that the CTs disclosed the need for specific preparation to effectively mentor Music STs during practicum. More recently, Eddy and Bustamante's (2020) case study account of the practicum experiences of a group of STs, CTs and a university supervisor in New York confirmed CTs' recognition of their need for training to fulfil the role of mentor. The study aimed to get a better understanding of the participants' experiences in relation to the implementation of the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) tool which was a requirement for the certification of the STs, but was not part of the practice of the CTs. The CTs acknowledged that more professional development was needed to keep them up to date with new methodologies. Frank and Krause's (2020) sequential explanatory study of twenty-six Physical Education CTs (PECTs) who were engaged in a Physical Education Teacher Education program in Western United States showed that CTs do not always recognise that they are not fully prepared for the roles they are required to fulfil. The researchers found that the CTs expressed confidence in their preparation for their role as mentors but their research findings "show[ed] inconsistencies between PECTs' perceptions of preparedness and the veracity of their preparedness for their role" (p.374). This indicates that CTs may think they are prepared for their role but their effectiveness may suggest that they are not.

In addition to representing the need for CTs to be specifically trained to mentor, the literature provides some indication of what these training programmes should cover. Although some common topics have emerged from various studies, there is much variation in what is proposed for effective preparation of CTs. The section which follows is a critical analysis of proposals for mentor training.

2.8.2 The content of mentor training.

Those studies which have sought to outline the focus of mentor training for CTs and the forms these should take represent the perspective of either CTs or STs or both CTs and STs but I have not encountered one that included the perspective of the teacher training institution. (Eddy & Bustamante, 2020; Franks & Krause, 2020; Lafferty, 2018; Lu, 2010). It is evident that proposals for mentor training differ depending on the specific contextual situation but, generally, it seems that mentor training should address those “practices that make the greatest difference” (Lafferty, 2018, p. 75) in the quality of STs’ practicum experiences.

One of the recurring themes in the literature on mentor training is that CTs need to learn their roles and responsibilities, particularly how to mentor in the sense of nurturing, supporting and guiding STs in a collegial and mutually beneficial relationship rather than judging and directing them (Ellis, Alonzo & Nguyen, 2020; Franks & Krause, 2020; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Lu, 2010; Manning & Hodson, 2017). Of note, is the perception that mentoring requires different skill sets from teaching so that mentor teachers have to be equipped with specific skills which enable them to mentor effectively (Clarke et al., 2014; Lafferty, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). At the core of such training, however, is outlining what mentoring entails because, as was previously stated, “mentoring is a contextualized practice” (Leshem, 2012, p.413). One primary element of mentor training is clarifying the model of mentoring that is supported in the context and equipping the CTs with the skills to operate within that model. While some proposals for mentor training foreground guidance and collegiality which are characteristics of the reflective model of mentoring, instruction on how to provide quality supervision, has also featured as a need for CTs. An issue arises from the use of the term ‘supervision’ because there seems to be some elasticity in its use. While it could denote authoritative control with an emphasis on the power differential between CTs and STs and an apprenticeship model of mentoring, (Anderson, 2007; Manning & Hobson, 2017), in the context of initial teacher training, the term is more

often used for interactions that are primarily supportive rather than authoritative (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Cohen et al., 2013; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020; Melki, Bouzid & Fathloun, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996). Therefore, one factor that underscores the contextual nature of mentoring is the kind of supervisory approach—authoritative or supportive—the mentor is supposed to adopt.

The importance of quality feedback to STs is another recurring theme in studies which emphasise the possible content of teacher education mentor training programmes (Clarke et al., 2014; Lafferty, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996). Feedback on their classroom performance is critical to the development of STs so it is imperative that CTs be able to provide meaningful feedback. Research studies have indicated that “Most feedback offered by cooperating teachers is observation-based feedback More substantive engagement with a focus on inquiry may offer richer possibilities for student teachers and provide reciprocal learning opportunities for cooperating teachers” (Clarke et al., 2014, p.191).

Another need that appears in several studies is training that equips CTs with the knowledge and skills necessary to help STs reconcile the persistent gap between what they learn in their theory classes and what they encounter in the classroom (Eddy & Bustamante, 2020; Lafferty, 2018; Yayli, 2018). The theory-practice dichotomy has generated some attention on what CTs know versus what they should know, as well as the importance of individuals who are selected to function as CTs being current in their pedagogical practices (Eddy & Bustamante, 2020). However, the matter of reconciling theory and practice goes beyond the training of CTs to include the structure of the teacher education programme itself. Proponents for practical experiences to be intertwined with theoretical learning throughout the training programme or for longer periods of practicum argue that it is unrealistic for student teachers to efficiently incorporate the theory they learn in their teacher education classrooms with the practices they encounter on TP when practicum is a brief period appended to the end of their training (Carter, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Pungur, 2007). Adjusting the structure of the teacher education programme to include longer periods of practicum or make initial training school based would, nevertheless, require adequate preparation of CTs to make the extended time in schools meaningful. Whether or not STs are able to effectively apply theory to practice will depend on the guidance and support they receive from CTs. This puts the expertise of the CTs in the spotlight, but it also has implications for the nature of the interactions between STs, CTs and the teacher education institution. These are aspects of initial teacher training programmes that are referred to but

not well explored in the extant research literature (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Lawson et al, 2015).

A significant question that arises from the proposals for mentor training is the relevance of individualized, differentiated training for mentors as well as training that prepares the mentors to provide individualised, differentiated mentoring to meet the specific needs of STs. The proposals seem to suggest that all mentors in a given context have the same needs and all STs have homogeneous developmental needs. Although there is some indication of an understanding that mentors cannot adopt a uniform approach to dealing with mentees (Leshem, 2012), there is no clear understanding that the training which mentors receive should be differentiated. It seems reasonable that in teacher education institutions, the training received by mentors should be differentiated according to their individual needs but this is not a position that has been explored in the literature.

Another challenge I have identified in proposals for mentor training is the lack of consideration for the complexity of mentoring. Ideas for mentor training seem to suggest that mentoring is a linear process that requires the same type of engagement between STs and CTs from the inception of the relationship to the end of the practicum period. However, there is definite understanding emerging from as early as Kram's (1983) study in the corporate arena that mentoring is not static. The interactions between mentors and mentees change with time, requiring different skills from the participants (Lynn & Nguyen, 2020). There is, therefore, tension between the dynamic, progressive view of the mentoring relationship and how training for mentors is conceptualised.

So far in this review I have provided crucial insights into the mentoring relationships between STs and CTs and the preparation of CTs for the mentor role. The importance of the mentoring relationship to the development of STs and their preparedness to function independently as teachers has been reiterated in studies which enquired into the mentoring relationship from several dimensions, and which were situated in different educational contexts. Qualitative case studies feature prominently among these studies (Lawson et al, 2015) providing solid support for a case study design to facilitate a deep, contextual understanding of how mentoring impacts teacher preparedness. Another aspect of the studies that is instructive to the design of my own study is the theoretical framework which is not clearly established but which seems to favour social constructivism (Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2016; Koc, 2016). In the following section of this review, I will give an account of the

theoretical framework that informs the design, the interpretation of the data and the conclusions of my study.

2.10 Summary

A literature review is a critical, recursive aspect of a research study. It offers multiple benefits to the researcher including an overview of prior empirical activities in the discipline, the epistemological assumptions of various practitioners and the breadth of knowledge which exists in the particular field (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Gray, 2014). This literature review provided me with an understanding of the major concerns about mentoring during TP, and the experiences of STs and CTs as they relate to teacher preparedness, in particular. It was necessary for providing me with a scholarly foundation for my study and for identifying gaps in the research literature. The importance of the initial training which STs receive is part of the narrative in teacher education everywhere. Research studies have established the importance of the TP which is generally accepted to be the most crucial part of the initial training of STs. However, several studies dealing with the practicum during initial teacher training also emphasise imbalances in the literature and a gap to which my research aims to contribute by addressing the perspectives of both CTs and STs.

The various studies that I have explored in order to develop an understanding of what mentoring entails underscore the idea that mentoring is a complex process and both parties – mentor and mentee – contribute to the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. Questions remain when researchers focus on CTs alone or STs alone so my study includes the perspectives of both CTs and STs as well as the teacher training institution. This approach is expected to provide a deeper insight into mentoring in Antigua and Barbuda and add a balanced perspective on the mentoring process in initial teacher training.

Research has shown that CTs, functioning as mentors, are the single most influential factor in what STs experience during TP which suggests that mentoring relationships, not individual personalities, are significant in what STs learn. In several of the studies reviewed, STs reported positive experiences with their mentors, but that has not been the case in all contexts. STs' dissatisfaction with the mentoring they experienced was mainly because CTs were not properly prepared to fulfil their role as mentors. The experiences of mentors have also been shown to be dependent on a number of contextual factors, with particular emphasis on their preparation to fulfil their role. Several studies have highlighted mentor training as a key to improving the mentoring experiences of both CTs and STs, but the lack of consistency

in what such training should entail has implications for the contextual relevance of mentor training that is transplanted from one teacher education context to another. It seems necessary that mentor training be tailored to meet the demands of the education reality it is meant to serve.

The gap is particularly noticeable for the experiences of STs who are preparing for the primary classroom where they are expected to teach Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies because most studies focus on STs' preparation to teach specialised areas such as Music, Math, Science, Agricultural Science, and English as a second language. This situation is linked to an important dimension of the role of CTs in supporting the STs' development of pedagogical knowledge and skills. This is introduced, but not sufficiently addressed in the literature. Including the expectations of both STs and CTs in an examination of mentoring during practicum in the primary education context where four subjects are taught offers an opportunity to better understand the expectations of both CTs and STs and the interactions which unfold during this critical exercise.

None of the studies that I have cited addressed the practice of mentoring in the Eastern Caribbean context. Against the backdrop of key differences in important details from one situation to another, questions are raised about what is meaningful for the Antigua and Barbuda context. There is no study that mirrors the local context exactly so this research is the first empirical study to give voice to the TP experiences of CTs and STs in this twin-island state.

In the following chapter, I provide a comprehensive account of the research design, methodology and methods utilised in this study which was guided by one overarching question and five specific questions. The chapter begins with my ontological and epistemological position before moving into the organic aspects of the enquiry and the ethical considerations that were made in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design, Methodology and Method

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain my philosophical stance before presenting the research design, the methodology and methods employed in the study. I will seek to justify the choice of each element which comprises the design of the study in order to demonstrate the appropriateness of the design to the study of the expectations and experiences of CTs and STs in the ADPE programme in Antigua and Barbuda. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.1 Philosophical Stance

I believe in the agency of individuals, the experiential nature of reality and the social construction of knowledge. Since I am a professional in the field of education in Antigua and Barbuda there is an immediate connection between my role as researcher and my role as education practitioner. Based on my assumption that knowledge is developed through socially constructed and shared meanings, I have focussed on the meanings which both CTs and STs, as principal actors in the mentoring relationship, create from their mentoring experiences. Furthermore, in this study, I am seeking to gain a deeper understanding of mentoring during the ten week TP for students pursuing an ADPE. Thus, the study falls within the ambit of interpretive research. Interpretive studies, according to Gray (2014), “seek to explore people’s experiences and their views or perspectives of these experiences” (p. 37). Similarly, Cohen et al. (2011) contend that “the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience” (p.17).

My ontological position is that reality is tied to the context of the research; I do not embrace the idea of a single reality that is external to the human experience. I am not seeking to identify knowledge that is “hard, objective and tangible” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 6) nor am I trying to test a hypothesis. Furthermore, as an EO in Antigua and Barbuda and a former TE, I am strategically positioned to offer an insider’s understanding of the dynamics of the context. The insider lens is not completely advantageous (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Gray, 2014; Hammond & Wellington, 2013), but great care was taken to mitigate against possible ethical and methodological pitfalls, as discussed in detail in the ethical consideration section below.

Now that I have disclosed my philosophical stance, I will discuss the type of interpretive research and the design of the study that I engaged in. Morrison (2002) and Cohen et al. (2011) note that interpretive researchers diverge on the basis of their particular

emphases, highlighting either qualitative, quantitative or mixed method approaches. Having examined the basic tenets of these approaches, the qualitative approach was chosen as the best match for the research questions, the context of the study, and my ultimate purpose (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Morrison, 2002; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008).

3.2 Qualitative Approach, Case Study Design and Research Questions

I selected the qualitative paradigm because the research questions were best answered through the rich, multi-layered insights of the individuals who participated in the practicum exercise and through whose experiences a deep understanding of the real situation could be obtained. A deep understanding that is communicated verbally is more useful and valuable in this research context than a quantitative study which, according to Lincoln and Guba (1994) does not inherently have superior value to a qualitative study. The data provided ample, context specific details that could be used to address the research questions.

In addition to the advantages which the qualitative approach offered in answering the research questions, the ultimate objective of the research, which is to enhance the training which primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda receive, is best served by analysing the meanings which the insiders ascribed to their experiences. Additionally, my interest in the DTE from the perspective of my current position as an EO and my former role as a Teacher Educator makes the emic perspective more appealing.

I decided on conducting a case study because, according to the extant literature, a case study is appropriate when a deep contextual understanding of a phenomenon is needed (Cohen et al., 2011; Cresswell & Poth, 2018; Gray, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The case study enquiry allows the researcher to give particular attention to the complexities inherent in a situation and it permits the adoption of the ideographic perspective (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Furthermore, it allows for the inclusion of multiple perspectives in exploring a bounded system.

Case studies have been classified according to the nature of the case and the specific characteristics of the enquiry (Cohen et al., 2011). Major classifications are credited to Stake (1994), Gao (1990), and Yin (1984) who identified three types of case studies according to the outcomes. These are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory which represent studies that are a gateway to other studies, provide narrative accounts of situations, or assess theories respectively. Stake also identifies three types of case studies using criteria that overlap somewhat with Yin's. According to Stake, case studies are conducted to gain deep

understanding of the particular case in question (intrinsic), acquire insight into a theory or issue (instrumental), or they combine individual studies to provide a fuller picture of a situation (collective). The realities of the research context led me to settle on an intrinsic case as described by Stake (1994). These realities include the fact that the ASC is the only institution in Antigua and Barbuda which offers an initial teacher education programme specifically for primary school teachers, and the current national drive to improve the quality of teachers in the classrooms in Antigua and Barbuda.

The case in question is mentoring of students pursuing the ADPE during the compulsory TP. The ADPE is a two-year initial teacher training programme. The practicum for the programme occurs in the final semester and lasts for approximately ten weeks. During the practicum, STs are placed in schools and assigned to CTs who are expected to mentor them. Because the focus of this research was mentoring during TP for students pursuing the ADPE at the ASC, it fits the case study characteristics of singularity of focus as well as geographical and time limitations as the practicum is limited to the last semester of the two-year programme.

The research topic was selected because, currently, there is a national and regional thrust to improve the quality of training which teachers receive. However, the spotlight is on the theoretical aspects of the training and there is hardly any discussion of the practical aspect of the training and, more importantly, the role of CTs in the training of STs (Universalia Report, 2017). The quality of training which teachers receive redound to the quality of their own practice as teachers which in turn impacts student performance (Carroll et al., 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Jules, 2018). The ASC is the only institution in Antigua and Barbuda which provides initial training for primary school teachers so the selection of the case was strictly tied to the purpose of the research. A holistic study of mentoring during practicum that includes the perspectives of both STs and CTs offered insights which were critical to the formulation of a framework for improving the quality of mentoring as a crucial aspect of the training which the STs obtain.

The overarching question in this research is: How is the preparation for and practice of mentoring perceived by STs and CTs who participate in the TP for the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda? The following five specific questions guided the enquiry:

1. What role does mentoring play in teacher preparedness for primary school teachers at the ASC?

2. What role do formal and informal professional development experiences play in preparing CTs to mentor?
3. How do mentors perceive the mentoring they provide during practicum?
4. How do STs perceive the mentoring they receive during the practicum period?
5. Could teacher preparedness be improved through more effective mentoring, and if so, how?

3.4 Participants

This is a case study of mentoring during TP for Primary Education STs at the ASC so the participants were the individuals who were involved in the mentoring exercise. In order to increase the quality of the findings, I purposively identified the CTs, the Head of the DTE and three consecutive cohorts of STs to participate in the study.

3.4.1 In-service and pre-service teachers.

In Antigua and Barbuda, STs fall into two categories. The students in one category were hired by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to teach prior to receiving any formal teacher training. They are referred to as In-service teachers. Students in this category teach for various number of years prior to enrolling at the ASC to pursue the ADPE. In this study, the STs were teaching from a range of two to ten years before pursuing the Associate Degree. The other category of students, known as Pre-service teachers are individuals who pursue the ADPE before being hired by the MoE or within the private school system. They have no prior teaching experience whatsoever. In the ADPE programme at the ASC, no distinction is made between these two categories of students during the theoretical component of the programme nor during the practicum.

3.4.2 The research sample

The STs and CTs were recruited from three consecutive cohorts, identified as cohorts 1, 2 and 3. I decided to include three cohorts which represent three sessions of practicum to increase the reliability of the meanings that are created about mentoring during TP. Multiple data sources are an element of rigour in interpretive qualitative studies (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al., 2011) so gathering data from individuals who participated in three instalments of practicum enhanced the quality of the research. Although all the STs and CTs were invited to participate in the study, a convenience sample of individuals who responded to the research

advertisement within a three-week time frame were the participants of the study. Table 1 below shows the total number of students in each cohort and the number of students who participated in the study.

Table 1

Distribution of STs by Cohort

Cohorts	Number of students in the cohort	Number of students who participated in the study
1	23	9
2	22	8
3	19	6
Total	64	23

N = 23 STs

In Antigua and Barbuda, CTs are engaged in the practicum exercise on a one-to-one ratio with STs. The CTs are engaged repeatedly but not all of them function as mentors each year. Over the period, represented by cohorts 1-3, twenty-eight CTs participated in the practicum exercise. All of them were invited to participate in the study and 11 of them consented. There is only one Head of Department who also accepted to participate in the study. Although gender is not a significant variable in the study, it is worth pointing out that 5 of the STs who participated in the study were males which represents a higher ratio of males to females than is the case in any cohort of STs. Among the ST participants, there were one male and five female pre-service teachers.

In total, 35 individuals participated in the study as follows: 23 STs, 11 CTs, and 1 Head of Department. Tables 2 and 3 provide information about the CTs and STs who participated in the study. Table 2 has information for all the STs who participated in the study. There is an asterisk beside the names of those participants who were interviewed in addition to participating in the focus groups.

Table 2*STs' Demographic Information*

Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Gender	Pre-service or in-service	Number of years teaching experience prior to entering the DTE
*Martha	35	F	In-service	7
*Mark	22	M	Pre-service	Nil
*Gloria	32	F	In-service	9
Dinah	48	F	Pre-service	Nil
*Phorsha	43	F	In-service	3
*Waveney	33	F	Pre-service	Nil
Vashti	30	F	In-service	8
Fanny	49	F	Pre-service	Nil
Farina	50	F	Pre-service	Nil
Daisy	44	F	In-service	16
Faith	46	F	In-service	2
Hulda	32	F	In-service	3
Neema	30	F	In-service	8
Mary	32	F	In-service	9
*Naziah	30	F	In-service	2
David	54	M	In-service	20
*Paul	26	M	In-service	2
*Naaman	35	M	In-service	10
Fabisha	35	F	In-service	11
*Festus	26	M	In-service	1
Vesta	44	F	In-service	3
Dora	24	F	Pre-service	Nil
Gilda	27	F	In-service	1
*Participant who gave an individual interview				

It is noteworthy that among the pre-service teachers, there were four persons who were over 26, mature students who had decided to make teaching their career. There is noticeable disparity in the number of years in-service teachers had been teaching before enrolling in the ADPE programme but the structure of the ADPE makes no consideration for the number of years individuals had been teaching or whether they are pre-service or in-service teachers. All trainees follow the same course of study and have the same practicum requirements (JBTE, 2016).

Table 3 provides information about the CTs. It shows that the number of years after graduating from the DTE that the CTs first functioned in that capacity varied from 1 to 5 years which means that the CTs were relatively new graduates when they first served as CTs. All of the CTs who participated in this study were females which reflects the predominantly female teaching force in Antigua and Barbuda.

Table 3

CTs' Demographic Information

Name (Pseudonyms)	Age	Gender	Amount of Post-training Experience (in years) Prior to Becoming a CT
*Ann	39	F	2
Tina	26	F	4
Virginia	44	F	5
*Bonnie	44	F	2
Constance	35	F	1
Linda	33	F	5
Isabel	40	F	4
Judith	34	F	3
Irene	43	F	4
*Kim	39	F	4
*Sally	39	F	4
* participant who gave an individual interview			

Four out of the eleven CTs consented to participate in the individual interviews, while nine of the STs consented. The number of participants represents a reasonable sample size for three main reasons. Firstly, both the STs and CTs who experienced at least one of the three sessions of practicum participated, Secondly, this is a qualitative case study that seeks to elicit rich textual data and data triangulation is part of the research design (Carter & Little, 2007; Yin, 2008).

I did not use matching pairs of STs and CTs because the focus of my study was mentoring and how it was perceived and experienced by the participants as a group rather than how individual dyads functioned.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

I conducted the study using focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. These methods of data collection are typical of interpretive studies, and specifically of case studies (Gray, 2014; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2008). Each of them offered unique advantages in achieving the purpose of the study. Whereas the need for a better understanding of the shared experiences of the STs and CTs was addressed through the use of the focus groups, the individual interviews permitted a deeper exploration of situations that reveal alternative meanings. The document analysis provided formal knowledge of the structures in the context and they were a source of authoritative perspectives. Together, the methods permitted the triangulation of the data and a richer understanding of mentoring in the Antigua and Barbuda initial teacher education context.

3.5.1 Document analysis.

Document analysis was an integral part of the data collection process because I perceived that this data source was important for the discovery of insights that are relevant to my research questions. Furthermore, document analysis facilitated the triangulation of the research data, thereby enriching the quality of this qualitative research (Barbour, 2014; Bowen, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011). Bowen (2009) asserts that,

Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation. ... As a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies – intensive studies producing rich descriptions. (pp. 28, 29)

I engaged in a purposeful examination of those documents which were used by the DTE to guide the practicum exercise and those MoE Documents which included a focus on the quality of training which STs in Antigua and Barbuda receive. I contacted the DTE and requested the documents that were used specifically to guide the practicum exercise and particularly the mentoring aspect of the practicum. This request yielded four documents: The ADE Handbook, The Assessment Tool for Teachers, the Cooperating Teacher Handout, and the report checklist for CTs. The other documents were obtained from the MoE. The following documents were examined:

- The ADE Regulations Handbook
- The Assessment Tool for Teachers

- Cooperating Teacher Handout
- CT report checklist
- The Antigua and Barbuda Sector Plan
- 2015 Ministry of Education Statistical Digest
- Evaluation and Reform of Teacher Education report

The data that was obtained from the documents were analysed individually using content analysis and then synthesised. I reviewed the documents to identify the structures that existed for TP, the role of the practicum in the ADPE program and the significance of initial teacher training to teacher quality and student achievement. The synthesised data was used to inform the development of the primary data collection tools, i.e., the focus group and individual semi-structured interview protocols. The document data was also compared and amalgamated with data that I obtained from the other data sources in order to draw conclusions and generate the knowledge which this thesis communicates.

3.5.2 Focus groups interviews.

Focus groups are characterised as a convenient way of acquiring insightful qualitative data from a small number of individuals who share common characteristics and experiences that are central to the researcher's line of enquiry (Cohen et al., 2011; Gray, 2014; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). I considered focus groups a valuable inclusion in this research because they provided an opportunity for the participants who would not volunteer for an individual interview to participate. They also allowed me to elicit meanings that were co-constructed by the participants even though it was important that the participants give a true account of their own expectations and experiences. Furthermore, the focus groups permitted the inclusion of a larger number of individuals and the collection of a larger body of data than would have been possible if only individual interviews were used in the limited scope of this research. Table 4 shows the composition of the focus groups and the total number of people who volunteered for the individual interviews.

Table 4*Composition of Focus groups and individual Interviews*

Participants	Focus Group (FG) Interviews				Individual interviews (Interview)
STs (ST)	FG1 6	FG2 3	FG3 6	FG4 8	9
CTs (CT)	8	3			4
Head of Department					1
Total	6				14

The STs were grouped according to cohorts. The participants in FG1 and FG2 were from cohort 1 while those in FG3 and FG4 were from cohorts two and three respectively. The literature suggests that an effective focus group should not exceed twelve individuals (Cohen et al., 2011; Gray, 2014; Patton, 2002). In fact, Barbour (2014) notes that, “Focus group researchers recommend aiming to recruit a maximum of 6-8 individuals although it is possible to run focus group discussions with smaller groups” (p. 140).

The focus groups functioned as ‘evaluative tools’ (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007, p.110) providing deep insight into the expectations and experiences of the STs and CTs during practicum at the ASC in the period covered in the study. These focus groups were conducted on Zoom and they lasted between 1h30 and 2h00 approximately. At the beginning of each focus group, the purpose of the study was reiterated, the participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary and the participant consent form was read to them before they were asked to provide verbal consents individually. Provisions for confidentiality were reiterated and participants were reminded that they were being recorded. After the initial routine was completed, I proceeded with the interview protocol (see appendices H & I) which covered the following focus areas:

- The purpose of practicum
- The participants understanding of mentoring

- The role of the CT
- The mentoring experiences of the participants
- Perspectives on how the mentoring process could be improved

I tried as much as possible to elicit responses to the various issues that were raised in the discussions from all the participants but this did not happen in every case. However, I was satisfied that all participants were fully engaged in these interviews.

3.5.3 Individual semi-structured interviews.

As shown in Table 4, a total of 9 STs who participated in the ST focus groups and 4 CTs from the CT focus groups agreed to participate in the individual interviews. Demographic details for these participants are provided in tables 2 and 3 respectively. The Individual semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection tool which allows the researcher to meet with the participant privately to elicit their views or share their experience and perspective (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Gray, 2014). They are essential when rich verbal data is necessary as part of a qualitative research design to provide answers to the research questions.

In keeping with the guidance provided in qualitative research literature, I employed an interview schedule which lent structure to the discourse but also gave much latitude for the participants to share their perceptions and experiences as well as for me to probe and seek clarification for the utterances that were made by the respondents. According to Patton (2002), individual semi-structured interviews permit the collection of data with added “depth, detail and meaning at a very personal level of experience” (p.17). Through the individual interviews in my study, the participants were given an opportunity to share individual perspectives and experiences that they might have been reluctant to share in the group setting. Additionally, they ensured triangulation of the data and an avenue for cross checking the information that was collected in the focus group interviews. Furthermore, the interviews allowed me to get a fuller understanding of the complexities of the mentoring exercise as lived and reported by STs and CTs who participated in the practicum for the ADPE.

The focus group interviews, which covered a set of pre-determined open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions which were formulated during the interviews, were useful for accessing the shared understandings of the group members and they also permitted the validation of what was voiced by individual participants (Gray, 2014). On the other hand,

the individual semi-structured interviews which addressed questions from the focus groups as well as other questions that were formulated after the preliminary analysis of the data derived from the focus groups, provided a distinct opportunity for me to elicit more details on topics that were raised in the focus group discussions. I was able to amass a large amount of rich data that provided deep insights into aspects of the mentoring experience that could not be captured from quantitative instruments.

Because of the need for social distancing resulting from Covid-19 protocols, all the individual interviews, like the focus group interviews, took place remotely using skype, zoom and the telephone according to what was agreed on by the participants. The individual interviews were guided by interview schedules (See Appendices H & I) which had the same category of questions as the focus group protocol to permit cross referencing of what was shared and also to give participants the opportunity to elaborate on the perspectives which were shared in the focus group interviews. The individual interviews for the STs and the CTs lasted approximately 30 minutes each, while the interview with the Head of Department lasted fifty minutes.

3.6 Approach to Interview Data Analysis

The focus group and individual semi-structured interview data were transcribed and then analysed using an approach which follows Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis design. This design covers familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, revision of themes, definition and naming of themes and production of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis was done because I believed that, given my ultimate purpose, it was critical that I evaluated the patterns in the data that was obtained from all the sources.

The following steps were taken:

1. Immediately after each interview, I reflected on the exercise and noted my impressions such as the level of engagement from the participants and anything that stood out in the responses that were received.
2. The recordings were listened to and then carefully transcribed. The recordings had to be listened to several times to ensure that I was transcribing exactly what was said in the interviews.

3. Once I was satisfied with the transcriptions, I created initial descriptive codes before examining the transcripts sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph to find significant utterances that could be coded using a combination of descriptive and interpretive coding. At the same time I was engaged in re-reading and analysing the documents. The data from all of the data gathering exercises were compared and contrasted. Some codes were discarded and others were created. I documented all the codes from each data source.
4. The codes were grouped to create themes, I created definitions for the themes, and I gathered the data that fit the various themes. In several instances, data extracts fitted more than one theme and these were assigned accordingly. Table 3 shows the final themes and the definitions that were created for each theme.
5. I reviewed the themes and engaged in some amount of revision, eliminating some and combining others. I aligned the themes with the research questions and discussed them against the backdrop of social constructivism and *Mentoring Up* theory.
6. The analysis, interpretation and discussion were interrelated as I was engaged in analysis and interpretation even as I wrote the discussion.

In the initial coding, the following codes were generated: purpose of practicum, what STs do, role of the CT, criteria for CT selection, peer interaction, ST appreciation, and ST dissatisfaction. Upon further analysis, several other codes were generated which were combined and reformulated to create themes.

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the steps taken in gathering and analysing data using the three methods.

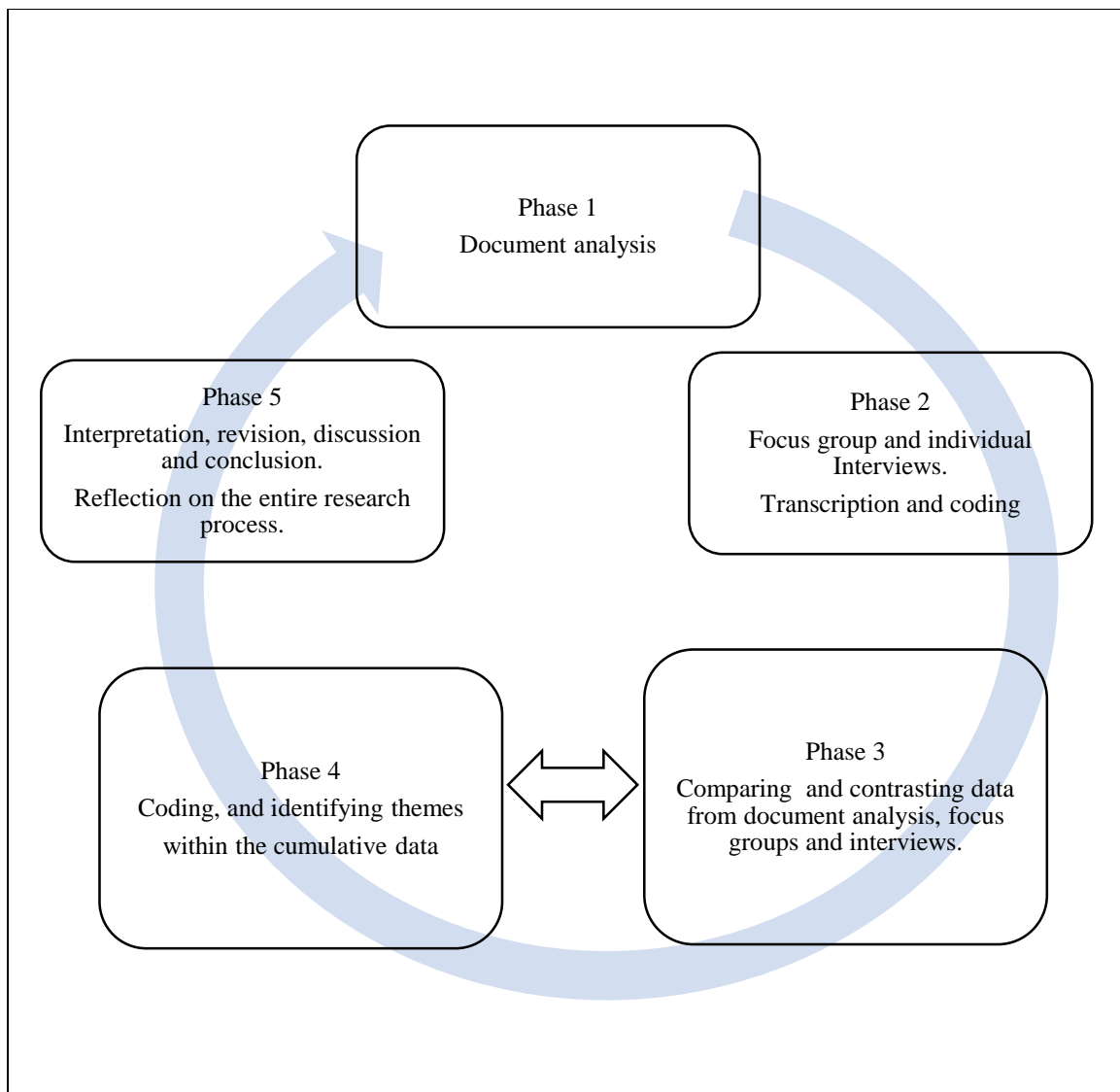


Figure 1.

Phases and Integration of Research Methods

Figure 1 shows the interconnectedness of the steps that were taken in conducting the research and the significance of the document analysis to the entire process. Phases 3 and 4 were very fluid so that although the entire process was recursive, there was greater interconnectedness in these two phases. As discussed in Chapter 3, the interpretation of the data was conducted against the backdrop of social constructivism and the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019). I decided to utilise social constructivism, which has been previously applied by other researchers to situations of mentoring within TP (Izadinia, 2016; Kim, 2006), and combine it with *Mentoring Up* theory which was derived from a nursing context. The *Mentoring Up* theory explains the process involved in mentoring relationships and the

different phases of mentoring so I was interested in examining how the findings of my research aligned with the description of mentoring presented by Hale and Phillips.

This enquiry of how CTs are prepared for their role as mentors and what STs and CTs expect and experience in relation to mentoring during practicum for the ADPE at the ASC was conducted with the ultimate goal of improving the training which teachers receive at the ASC. A qualitative case study design was most appropriate for this and the enquiry was necessary given the current heightened awareness of the need for data driven decisions within education in Antigua and Barbuda (Antigua and Barbuda Education Sector Strategy, 2014-2021). Because teacher training is fundamentally experiential (Darling-Hammond, 2006), this empirical study which foregrounds the emic perspectives of the participants but also utilises a theoretical framework in the interpretation of those experiences provides a sound basis for decisions that would enhance the initial training of teachers.

3.7 Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism and Mentoring Up Theory

The explicit identification of theory in qualitative research is a contentious issue but there is growing support for the idea that, notwithstanding the particular philosophical bias that underpins qualitative studies, acknowledging a theoretical framework is an important aspect of the research process and it offers definite strengths to the research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Two theories, Social constructivism and the *Mentoring Up* theory, served as continuous reference for the design of this case study and the interpretation of the data, adding rigour to the research and bringing a fresh perspective to the study of mentoring during TP. Social constructivism has been cited as a sound framework for understanding mentoring (Jenkinson & Benson, 2016) and it has been the driver of much educational enquiry and instructional policies. In this study, the theory operates on two levels. On the one hand, it is the epistemological framework that guided the design of the study and on the other hand, it is the lens through which the interpretation of the data is partly derived.

3.7.1 Social constructivism.

Social constructivism emerged from ideas that were developed by Lev Vygotsky as well as other theorists and philosophers but it is Lev Vygotsky whose name is most closely associated with the paradigm. Historically, several concepts have been subsumed under the umbrella of social constructivism, but the belief essentially foregrounds how knowledge is created and the nature of knowledge (Oxford, 1997). According to this paradigm, individuals develop knowledge from their own experiences in interaction with others, making knowledge

a subjective construct which is situated within a particular social and cultural milieu (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructivism is the basis of the assumptions that I, in my role as researcher, have made in designing this study and it informs the significance that is assigned to the perspectives of the participants in the study. Thus, in this research, it is both a relevant learning theory and an interpretive framework.

A core assumption of social constructivist thought which is applied to this study is that interaction is the key to social and cognitive development (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Individuals construct knowledge in a social setting while interacting with a more knowledgeable other. Not only does this tenet hold significance for how STs learn during the critical period of the practicum but it also suggests that the experiences that they have during this period are pivotal to what is learned (Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2015). Focussing on the mentoring experiences which STs and CTs have during TP is an acknowledgement of the salience of those experiences in the construction of their knowledge. Boghossian (2006) notes that “learners construct or find meaning in their subjective experiences ... each person’s subjective experience is just as valid as anyone else’s” (p.714).

Additionally, scaffolding, a key tenet of social constructivism, is relevant to the mentoring relationship. Social constructivism posits that scaffolding enables learners to accelerate their learning by employing skills such as reflection, problem solving, critical thinking, and planning which advance cognitive and psycho-social development. Scaffolding, is a significant concept for the selection and training of mentors because it suggests that mentors must, by necessity, possess knowledge and skills from which the STs, in interaction with them, can construct new knowledge and skills. It also suggests that mentors need to be willing and able to scaffold the development of STs.

Another relevant tenet of Social constructivism is that social dialogue is the conduit through which development is triggered, intensified and anchored. What is communicated as individuals interact with others is crucial to the construction of knowledge. The mainstream view is that oral language is the bedrock of social interaction which facilitates learning. Because communication is transactional, all the participants are active in the process of meaning making which means that learners are active participants in their own learning but this is only effected through the dialogue which attends social interactions. From the perspective of social constructivism, communication between CTs and STs is critical for

reciprocal learning. Moreover, the feedback which is provided by the CTs has implications for the cognitive development of the STs.

The social constructivist thought is a suitable framework for understanding and explaining the interactions which STs and CTs have in their mentoring relationship and it is a sound match for the case study design of this research which seeks to uncover the multiple perspectives of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.7.2 Mentoring Up Theory.

Mentoring Up theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) is a novel theory of mentoring relationships which emerged from a classical grounded theory research conducted within the nursing arena. The researchers examined the mentoring experiences of fifteen nurse protégés and devised a theory of nurse to nurse mentoring from the perspective of the protégés. The creators of the theory posit that mentoring is a process which unfolds in the context of a professional relationship. The primary objective of the mentoring relationship is *confidencing* which is the term applied to the process of getting to the stage where the mentee can work independently of the mentor. Mentoring has three dimensions – earnest intention, filial bond and trustworthiness. The effective mentoring process, *confidencing*, goes through five phases which are seeding, opening, laddering, equalising and reframing.

Hale & Phillips (2019) argue that in effective mentoring relationships, the mentor and mentee must be willing participants in the process, they must develop a bond as in a strong friendship or even a family relationship and a high level of trust must prevail. At the onset of the relationship, seeding and opening occur. In these phases, the relationship is established and tested. The main mentoring phase is laddering which is a period of profound interactions between the mentor and the mentee leading to the mentee's development of knowledge and skills which increase the mentee's confidence. The last two phases, equalising and reframing bring the mentee to the point where he or she is on an equal standing with the mentor in terms of professional efficacy and where the mentee is able to reflect on the mentoring relationship and acknowledge the huge impact the mentor has had on their development.

The idea that the mentoring relationship goes through a variety of phases echoes Kramm's (1983) model of mentoring based on a qualitative research conducted among eighteen pairs of managers and young employees. However, Kramm, like Lynn & Nguyen (2020) who also identified phases of the mentoring relationship, did not devise a theory of mentoring. Furthermore, Kramm's study focussed on the psychosocial and career factors that

generate and propel the relationship from one phase to another. Hale and Phillips' (2019) study which represents the perspectives of mentees aligns more closely with mentoring within practicum because the primary focus of the relationship is the professional development of the protégé.

I chose this novel explanation of mentoring for two main reasons. Firstly, I wanted to bring a fresh perspective to the interpretation of the experiences which STs have in their interactions with CTs during the TP period. Previous mentoring studies have employed various theories, or no theory at all but I have not encountered another study which has utilised *Mentoring Up* as the theoretical lens for interpretation of the mentoring relationship. Secondly, the fact that the theory emerged from the perspective of the protégés is significant because consideration of the experiences of the mentees in a professional learning context is critical in ensuring quality experiences which will redound to quality development. This theory offers a backdrop against which the mentoring relationship between STs and CTs could be evaluated. Although the fundamental understanding behind the theory - mentoring relationships are complex, fluid connections - has been shared by other researchers, the theory is a formal avenue for explaining and synthesising the interactions that take place between CTs and STs in the context of initial teacher training. Furthermore, because *Mentoring Up* emphasises the interactions between the mentors and the protégés, I believe it is a viable lens to evaluate the quality of the relationship between STs and CTs and it was deemed a suitable complementary interpretive framework to be used along with social constructivism.

3.8 Modification of Research Methods

Initially, the design of the study included observations of two mentors and their mentees from the cohort that was engaged in practicum at the time of the research. I planned to conduct the observation during the final phase of the practicum but that was not accomplished because the face to face practicum exercise was aborted due to the country going on lockdown to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In addition, the University of Liverpool had put a ban on face-to-face data collection procedures. The students had already completed the first phase of their practicum and continued to teach online but the online platform did not permit my classroom observation of the interactions between the STs and their CTs because the online time was restricted to teaching the students. However, this did not adversely affect my ability to address the research questions nor did it reduce the validity of the study. Although observation would have added another method to the triangulated

data, the confluence of evidence that is procured by the document analysis, interviews and focus groups should engender adequate credibility. The methods of data collection which were employed allowed me to obtain sufficient data from which in-depth analysis and reasonable conclusions could be drawn. Throughout the process of gathering the data, I was reflecting on and analysing what was collected but after collecting all the data, I immersed myself in repeated cycles of reading and analysing.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Recognising my ethical responsibility to do what is right in the conduct of this research, I was careful to consider and address all issues of risk, informed consent, confidentiality, transparency and security. Cohen et al. (2011), Atkins and Wallace (2012) as well as Creswell and Poth (2018) assert the importance of researchers maintaining high ethical standards at every stage of the research process. Antigua and Barbuda does not have a developed research culture but there is currently a shift towards recognising the value of data driven decisions and actions. Consequently, more persons, particularly within the field of education, are willing and eager to participate in research studies. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is encouraging participation in and the conduct of research (Education Sector Plan, 2015-2021) so potential participants in this study do not have to fear for their jobs and they are not expected to experience any adverse physical effect. However, although this study was timely and did not pose any physical or psychological harm to the participants, there were some issues that needed to be addressed.

The MoE, where I work, coordinates the education sector in this state. Because I am an EO, the issues of a power differential between myself and the participants and possible risks to the participants are relevant. Creswell and Poth (2018) point out that, “We need to be sensitive to ... imbalanced power relations, and placing participants at risk” (p.54). Persons may wonder whether the participants were coerced into participating in the study so measures were taken to ensure that no charges of coercion could be validated. Firstly, I did not approach any of the CTs or STs directly; they made contact with me in response to the research advertisement which was mailed to them. Secondly, as a curriculum EO, I do not have any influence over the employment of the participants. This was made clear in all participant-facing information about the study. The research advertisement made it clear that participation was voluntary and only individuals who wished to participate in the study needed to contact me. In addition, the participant information sheet reassured participants that

they were free to withdraw from the study at any point prior to the transcription of the data when their real names were replaced with pseudonyms. The consent forms reiterated the voluntary participation and the opportunity to withdraw at any point prior to the application of pseudonyms to the transcribed data. In addition, at the start of each data collecting exercise, the participants were reminded of the items in the participant consent sheet and verbal consent was obtained. Trust was built through reassurances of confidentiality and by encouraging the participants to express any concerns they had. During the focus group and individual interviews, no leading questions were asked.

Because the ASC is the only institution which offers teacher education in Antigua and Barbuda through its Department of Teacher Education, which has one Head of Department (HoD), keeping that person's identity confidential was an issue that needed to be addressed. The individual is not named in the study but it is not difficult to identify who the HoD was at the time of the case study. This was made clear in the participant consent form and the HoD agreed to participate in the study in spite of the risk of being identified. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the MoE and the ASC so there is no expectation of professional harm from the person being part of the study; yet, the HoD was given a pseudonym and the opportunity to read the transcription of the interview and modify or retract any statement that was made during the interview.

There was also a minimal risk of the cohorts of STs and the CTs who participated in their practicums being identified. The fact that I have mentioned the impact of Covid-19 on one group would make it easy to identify the cohorts even though the specific cohorts are not indicated in the study. However, the identities of the CTs and STs who participated in the study are not disclosed. All the participants were given pseudonyms. Direct quotations in this thesis are ascribed to the focus groups in which they were uttered or a pseudonym in the case of individual interviews. No identifying information has been provided for the individual participants. Before data were collected, I reassured the participants that sharing their experiences was critical to the study and it did not constitute betrayal of the ASC. They were informed that the MoE, with the full understanding that the data might represent the ASC negatively, provided consent for the research to be conducted.

One risk that must be acknowledged is the risk to the self-image of the mentors that could result from the findings of the study. However, that risk has to be considered in the context of the specific details of this research. Individual dyads are not referenced in the

study so no mentor is at risk of having her personal image tarnished. All the participants were aware of the purpose of the study and the use that will be made of the data. In addition, the benefits which the CTs as a group can derive from sharing their lived experiences exceed the minimal risk to their self-image; yet, no sensitive information was disclosed in the study. Furthermore, the ultimate aim of enhancing the initial training which STs obtain justify an enquiry that takes a close look at what the participants in this study experienced.

Once the participants agreed to the interviews, consent forms were sent to them and they were asked to study the consent forms, fill them and return them to me before the date of the interviews. Participants were given all the information that was necessary for them to provide informed consent. They were told the purpose of the study and were assured that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any point prior to the completion of the transcription and the application of pseudonyms to the data. They were also assured that everything that was disclosed in the study would be kept in strict confidence. To ensure the confidentiality of the data, a confidentiality clause was included in the consent form which the participants signed. The confidentiality clause bound the focus group participants to keeping the participants and everything that was said in the focus group discussions confidential. All participants were made aware of the risk that other participants could still violate this clause.

I have included all the steps that were taken in the conduct of the research to ensure that everything was transparent and that reviewers had all pertinent information to make informed judgements about the quality of the research. The value of qualitative studies is often called into question (Cohen et al., 2011; Patton, 2002) so it is very important that there is absolute transparency to minimise doubt.

I took appropriate steps to ensure the security of the data. All research files were kept under lock and key and stored on my personal laptop computer which can only be accessed with a password. The data was stored on my University of Liverpool OneDrive and access was shared only with my supervisors.

In order to ensure that valid data was collected, the data source was triangulated and more than one cohort were included in the study. In addition, I invited the participants to review my analysis and interpretation of the data.

Finally, I have submitted a copy of this thesis to the MoE and the ASC and a soft copy is available to all the participants upon request. Every effort was made to ensure that the

ethical issues that arose at every stage of this project were adequately addressed. I am satisfied that this research was engaged in responsibly, and it is a worthwhile addition to the corpus of research studies in Antigua and Barbuda and the Eastern Caribbean region. In the next chapter, I will present the rich data that I obtained in the study and provide an analysis which was a recursive process of coding, reflecting, identification of themes, and aligning themes with the research questions. However, before I present the analysis of the data, I will discuss the criteria for judging the rigour of my research.

3.10 Criteria for Judging the Rigour of the Study

The notion of rigour in interpretive studies is particularly important given that knowledge is created through the subjective experiences of the research participants and the perspectives that the researcher brings to the research process. However, there is much debate in the extant literature about the criteria that should be applied to judging the quality of research studies which are essentially different in focus and intent from positivist studies. Yet, practices which engender reliability and validity are relevant to the soundness of any research (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). For the interpretive paradigm in which this case study is situated, these features are realised through various factors which support the trustworthiness of the study, making it suitable for scholarly focus as well as practical application.

A fundamental element of the validity and reliability of this case study is the appropriateness of the study's design to the research questions. The details which are provided about the participants, the research methods and the analysis are a basis for determining the extent to which the study provided valid insights into mentoring during the practicum for the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda. Thus, construct validity, the extent to which the study investigated what I claim to have investigated was addressed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). I have provided a detailed account of every pertinent aspect of the study in order to engender confidence in the readers. In addition to defining how key terms such as mentoring, CTs and STs are operationalised in this study, the individual interview and focus group schedules (Appendices E to I) were piloted with three primary school teachers to ensure that the questions were clear and that there were no leading questions or questions which revealed researcher bias. The revisions which were recommended were applied to the final version of the schedules in order to achieve content validity.

Additional elements of the rigour of my study are the processes I engaged in during the collection and analysis of the data. Data was collected from multiple sources—documents, CTs, STs and the HoD as the representative of the DTE— and both focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews were included in the study in order to achieve data source triangulation. Triangulation is highlighted in the literature as a sound mechanism for ensuring confidence in the evidence presented for case studies because the knowledge that is generated is derived from localised experiences and practices (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Once the data was collected, I engaged in iterative cycles of analysis and reflection which is another way to triangulate the data according to Stake’s (2010) view that triangulation is “to look again and again, several times” (p. 123) . I also invited the participants to review the transcribed data and check my analysis and preliminary findings so that member checking could be added to the grounds for trustworthiness.

I provided ample evidence from the data to support my analysis and interpretations which is another way of demonstrating validity. Other researchers can examine the data that is presented to determine whether the evidence supports the analysis which I made. Gray (2014) contends that this approach to strengthening validity is enhanced when the researcher provides an explicit account of their own philosophical perspectives and I have also done this in section 3.1. The information that is provided in this thesis about the context of the study and my position in relation to the study is intended to show the transferability of the study as well as secure credibility. Some researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue that transferability and credibility, rather than external validity, are criteria for rigour which are relevant to qualitative enquiries. In my case study, external reliability—“the extent to which the findings of a study can be replicated” (Gray, 2014, p. 624)—is secondary to my concern that I can engender confidence in my interpretations and that my findings can influence contextual change.

Another action which supported the rigour of my study was the presentation of the research at three conferences which allowed for peer debriefing. In the first instance, the research proposal was presented at the conference organised by the University of Liverpool for the EdD students. This provided an opportunity for critical friends who consisted of my peers and the lecturers of the university, including my supervisors, to scrutinise the design of my study and provide feedback. I was able to refine my research and engage more critically with the ethical considerations. The second presentation was made at the inaugural research seminar organised by the MoE in Antigua and Barbuda after I had completed my preliminary

findings. The final presentation was the University of Liverpool's conference for EdD students making their second presentation on the research journey. Two findings of the research were challenged at the inaugural research seminar and feedback from the EdD conference suggested that I needed to engage more with the theories that I had selected for the study. The feedback I received from these presentations prompted me to engage in further critical reflection which added to the iterative reflexivity that is a feature of the rigour which I applied in the research process.

Finally, the validity of my study was enhanced through the literature review and the inclusion of a theoretical framework. The literature review permitted me to compare and contrast my findings with what previous researchers who focussed on the experiences of CTs and STs during the practicum for initial teacher training found. The inclusion of a theory is significant because the relevance of theory to case studies in the qualitative paradigm is a contentious issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 2008). Nevertheless, I used the *Mentoring Up* theory and Social constructivism to enrich the interpretation and strengthen the assertions that have been made in the study. Thus, both the literature review and the use of two theoretical frameworks added to the rigour of this research.

3.11 Summary

I conducted this research because I wanted to obtain a deeper understanding of the mentoring experiences of CTs and STs during the compulsory ten-week TP for the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda. My interest stemmed from the critical importance of the practicum and the role which CTs play in the initial training of teachers. Against the backdrop of a call for improved student achievement and teacher quality, and a corresponding concern over the quality of preparedness for the classroom with which the STs were leaving their initial teacher training programme, I devised an intrinsic case study utilising a qualitative approach.

The case study approach has distinct advantages for providing extensive data from multiple sources in order to formulate an emic perspective of the local situation. In keeping with the methods of data collection that are appropriate for a qualitative case study, I utilised focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Social constructivism and the *Mentoring Up* theory served as the theoretical framework that informed the design of the study and the interpretation of the data.

The ethical issues of anonymity, confidentiality and security that are relevant to the conduct of this research were considered, and appropriate measures were taken to ensure that the participants would not experience any adverse effects from taking part in the research. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent. I also catered for the security of the data.

The criteria for judging the rigour of my study include features which demonstrate elements of reliability and validity that are suitable for this case study which was conducted within the qualitative paradigm. These features support validation from my perspective as the researcher as well as the perspective of the participants and the intended audience of the study. Thus, triangulation, member checking and clear and consistent bases for my interpretations strengthen the quality of this inquiry.

In the chapter that follows, I will present the analysis and findings. The analysis of the data was a recursive process which yielded a deep understanding of how the CTs and STs perceived their mentoring experiences.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present my findings from the inductive analysis of the data. I engaged in iterative examination and interpretation of the data, identifying themes and subthemes which linked the common experiences of the participants as well as underscored differences in their experiences. The findings show that there was greater divergence in some aspects of the participants' experiences than others which provided me with a clear picture of the contextual nature of mentoring within the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda.

To protect the identity of the research participants and enhance confidentiality, the following abbreviations will be used to refer to the HoD and the participants in the focus groups.

HoD – (Head of the DTE)

ST_FG1 – (ST focus group 1)

ST_FG2 – (ST focus group 2)

ST_FG3 – (ST focus group 3)

ST_FG4 – (ST focus group 4)

CT_FG1 – (CT focus group 1)

CT_FG2 – (CT focus group 2)

HoD_Interview – (DTE Head of Department interview)

Pseudonyms (see Tables 2 and 3) will be used for all individual interviewees except the HoD

The following is an extract that depicts the coding of data from ST_FG1. It is presented here to illustrate the careful reading of line by line and the notes that were made as an integral part of the process:

Student Teacher Focus Group Interview: ST_FG1

Dearyn (Researcher): Please tell me what, from your perspective, is the purpose of the teaching practicum which student teachers are required to complete?

Martha: Well, I think it is to **equip teachers with skills and knowledge** necessary for academic success for our children, and it also **aligns with the education Act where we have to provide quality education to the students**. So I think that, for me, that is the purpose for the **practicum**.

Dearyn: Is what Martha said everybody's view?

Chorus: Yes.

Dearyn: OK, Would anybody else like to add to what Martha said?

Deish: Yes, Aja, Collin, Doshahere. Yes, I am of the opinion that although we would have gone through the theoretical part of our studies, the practicum **gives us hands-on experience**. And during that time, if there's blurred parts, because we were there doing the work, participating, and being engaged in the teaching, there are aspects that are being corrected and adjusted so that at the end of it, we are **better able to teach the objectives of being an effective teacher**.

Dearyn: OK, now you've told me what the, what you consider to be the purpose of the teaching practicum, could somebody describe for me what it entails? What exactly does it entail?

Gloria: You basically have **to be in the role of the teacher that you're training**. So you have to conduct prayers, ensure that they're lined up orderly, total works, the entire work to ensure that your classroom is being managed in the way that it ought to. You also have to do statistics, reports, registers.

Martha: For the practicum it entails that you are **able to apply all the theory that you have** through, for the year and a half in real life setting, also it **tests you, it wants to say, I won't say a reality check but a psychological (psychology)**. If this is for you or not because theory is just sit down acquiring information and giving it back, but when you have to apply it and with all the dynamics are together that is when self comes in. Also, you have to be able to execute **what are words to say what a good teacher is**.

Dearyn: So it's actual teaching in a real world setting, a real classroom with actual students.

Martha: Yes, Yes.

Dearyn: Do you have to prepare lesson plans and things like that?

Gloria: Yes, **lesson plans have to be prepared**. The usual **preparation of lessons, welcoming students, learning, communication, the entire activities** to the whole process has to be followed.

Dearyn: So, in other words, you **you** assume all the responsibilities of a regular classroom teacher. Am I right?

Gloria: Yes, ma'am.

Dearyn: OK, so are you the only person in the classroom while you are on practicum, then?

Gloria: No, we're not. The cooperating teacher is there.

Dearyn: What's the role of the cooperating teacher?

Deish: **He/she is there to give you support throughout the experience**. And I am speaking about general support. That cooperating teacher was there with me **to give advice, to give feedback** and the support that was needed. Let me say to **help to shape me**. I had an experience whereby generally there was communication between myself and the Cooperating teacher pertaining to all matters concerning the children.

Dearyn: Does anybody else have anything to add?

Deish: I guess, I'm sitting here and listening to the others, **they had a wonderful experience, but mine was far from being wonderful**.

Dearyn: You just said your practicum experience was far from being wonderful so could you share what you experienced that led you to that conclusion?

Deish: Number one, **the lack of involving other students** that they use to choose the supporting teachers, because in my or in my opinion, some of them should not be supporting teachers.

Dearyn: What do you mean?

Deish: In the first phase when I was, when I went to the school, I was supposed to observe the teacher. **The teacher was supposed to model for me. I didn't get that, I had to venture out to another school, to another teacher so model for me because I didn't get it from that teacher**.

■ Purpose of practicum
 ■ What STs do
 ■ Role of the CT
 ■ Criteria for CT selection
 ■ Contrasting Exp.

Dearyn Collins
Purpose of practicum

Dearyn Collins
What STs Do (Immersion)
Routine duties
Managing students

Dearyn Collins
What STs Do

Dearyn Collins Thursday
Impact of practicum on ST?

Dearyn Collins
Theory vs practice

Dearyn Collins
Role of the CTs
Support
Advise
Give feedback
Shape STs
Communicate with STs

Dearyn Collins
Contrasting experience

Dearyn Collins
Criteria for CT selection

Dearyn Collins
Role of the CT
Model best practices

Dearyn Collins
Contrasting experience
Unfulfilled expectation

Figure 2

Coded Data from ST_FG1

A similar process was engaged in with all the data. Figure 3 is an extract from data obtained from CT_FG1. It is included to demonstrate the consistency of the process that was engaged in and also to show that the themes were evident across data sets. For example, a number of roles that were performed by the CTs were coded and these were later combined under a sub-theme, 'Multiple role performance for CTs' which falls under a broader category of, 'Understanding of what mentoring entails'.

30 July 2020
CT_FG1 (Cooperating Teachers Focus group 1)

Desryn Collins: Could you explain to me what is the purpose of the teaching practicum which student teachers complete?

Constance: I think the teaching, teaching practicum aspect of teacher **trainee is to basically bring together all the components that you would have learned over the two year, over the period of time that you would have spent in the classroom, getting information and learning new teaching strategies and techniques** so that **teach that that trainee** aspect, the practicum aspect is for you to actually put to **display what you have learned** and to basically display what you have learned, **to show and demonstrate that you have an understanding of** what it is or **how it is you put components together to get children from point A to point B.**

Desryn Collins: Any other ideas about the role of the practicum?

Linda: Linda here. Hello?

Desryn Collins: Yes, Linda, go ahead.

Linda: Yes, I think the role is **to implement from the classroom, now, the theoretical part of it.** **You're now going to put into practice everything that you've garnered over the period of time that you spent at the college.** You have **to display**, you know, your **teaching skills, strategies** and **work along with a cooperating teacher** who is going **to act as a mentor** throughout the entire process.

Desryn Collins: Ok, thank you. Any other ideas from anyone else?

Bonnie: Bonnie here, Mrs Collins

Desryn Collins: Yes

Bonnie: Basically just as Linda and Constance said, I think it's all about putting all the **theories that you have learned while at teaching prac, teacher trainee, jgg.** You're **putting everything into practice**, basically is the trainee **taking all the theories and looking at the practical aspect of it** and **getting help** from us, the cooperating teacher for that.

Desryn Collins: Thank you, again.

Bonnie: You're, uqu're welcome.

 Desryn Collins
Purpose of practicum
[Wondering: Is the time adequate?]

 Desryn Collins
Also shows the role of the CT

 Desryn Collins
Understanding of a theory- practice divide

 Desryn Collins
CT as helper

Figure 3

Coded Data from CT_FG1

Figure 3 also illustrates how the multiple perspectives of the research participants contributed to the knowledge that was created in this study. Both Figure 2 and Figure 3 reveal the process of identifying codes and they give the audience an insight into the process that was engaged in during the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Table 5 provides a complete overview of the findings by presenting the themes and sub-themes resulting from the analysis. Eight themes emerged from the analysis of the data: Understanding of what mentoring entails, finding a way, motivation to mentor, relationship and mentor practices, challenges in mentoring, mentor engagement and contrary practices. These themes reveal the experiences and expectations of CTs and STs, and they provide an understanding of the context of the study. Table 5 includes a brief description of each theme and it indicates the sub-themes that were subsumed by each theme.

Table 5*Themes and Subthemes that Emerged from the Data*

Themes	Subthemes
<p>Understanding of what mentoring entails</p> <p>Definition: Covers how mentoring is perceived in the context in terms of what CTs do, the benefits STs derive and the areas of development experienced by STs.</p>	Multiple role performance by CTs
	Lesson planning and instructional strategies
	Classroom management
	Extra-curricular duties
<p>Finding a way</p> <p>Definition: Depicts the overarching response of the CTs to the preparation they received to fulfil the role of mentor.</p>	Professional Development experiences and expectations
	Professional Development experiences and effectiveness
<p>Motivation to mentor</p> <p>Definition: The CTs motivation to mentor covers what drives them to engage in the process of mentoring the STs.</p>	Custodial motivation
	Altruistic motivation
	Generative motivation
	Role rejection

<p>Relationship and Mentor Practices</p> <p>Definition: How CTs and STs related to each other and the day-to-day practices of the CTs.</p>	<p>Approaches to mentoring</p> <p>Mentoring as a professional development experience</p>
<p>Challenges in mentoring</p> <p>Definition: The difficulties experienced by the CTs in the process of helping the STs during the period of mentoring STs.</p>	<p>Willingness of STs</p> <p>Prior teaching experience of the STs</p> <p>Relationship between CTs and DTE</p>
<p>Mentor engagement</p> <p>Definition: The STs perceptions of the efforts expended by CTs in helping them to develop according to their individual needs.</p>	<p>Perception of being mentored</p> <p>Perception of not being mentored</p> <p>Communication and feedback</p>
<p>Contrary practices</p> <p>Definition: systems and procedures within the context which do not align with the expected standards set by the DTE.</p>	<p>Selection and training</p> <p>Differences in mentor expertise</p>
<p>Achieving more effective mentoring</p> <p>Definition: Actions which need to be taken in the context to enhance the mentoring experiences of CTs and STs.</p>	<p>Mentor training/ preparation</p> <p>Monitoring and support</p>

I made the decision to address the themes separately, presenting the findings (themes and sub-themes) in a narrative in order to provide an immediate account of what the study yielded in relation to its purpose. In discussing the themes, I have provided quotes from the data sources in order to show the perspectives of the participants and support the argument that is presented in the study.

4.1 Understanding of What Mentoring Entails

The data suggest that mentoring advances the professional learning and development of the STs, and fosters their preparation for their own primary classrooms. The process of mentoring also awakens STs to the realities of practical teaching in the primary classroom in addition to introducing them to the extra-curricular duties of teachers. There is consistent evidence in the data that by the end of the practicum period, the STs are expected to display what it means to be a good teacher. In one focus group, this was expressed very succinctly, “You have to be able to execute what ... a good teacher is” (ST_FG1). According to the standard of the ADPE, a ‘good teacher’ demonstrates proficiency in the following areas which appear in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE (2013)).

- Lesson planning
- Execution inclusive of the use of appropriate instructional strategies for the subject area as well as the use of effective classroom management strategies
- Classroom environment
- Reflection

Mastery of these areas of learning and development represents the STs’ readiness for the primary classroom, and CTs are expected to contribute to their readiness through mentoring. The CTs’ understanding of what mentoring essentially entails is captured in this statement from the first CT focus group:

Mentorship is sharing what you know, so you can guide that person to become the best that they can be ... So when they leave you, they are competent, they can stand on their own and will be able to deliver what they have learned (CT_FG1).

The evidence suggests that the CTs were expected to possess knowledge which the STs lacked. Mentoring the STs meant that the CTs shared their knowledge in order for the STs “to become the best they can be”. The STs’ development, notably, is tied to the CTs’ expertise, ‘sharing what you know’.

The STs also emphasised the active role of the CTs in helping them in a personalised way to improve their knowledge and skills. In one of the ST focus groups it was stated, “The teacher should take you from where you are at. ... constantly watching you, guiding you and

taking you from one threshold to the next.”(ST_FG2). These comments contrast with another view of mentoring that is best expressed in this statement from the first ST focus group: “the CT is someone who guides, supports. ...And this creates opportunities for the teacher to develop into his or her own identity” (ST_FG1). Mentoring, as a process during which the STs develop critical skills as primary school teachers and experience a feeling of readiness or confidence for independent teaching (stand on their own), is further emphasised in the following representative statement from another ST focus group, “Well, it was a case as well to sharpen the skills ... to master new skills and become more comfortable in teaching” (ST_FG2).

The expectation that the CTs support the growth of STs’ pedagogical knowledge and skills was also expressed by the HoD who stated:

The first part of the practicum involves the teacher ... actually watching and learning from the CT. ... the CT is supposed to fade into the background ... guiding the teacher trainees as they plan, helping them to select resources, ... strategies and so on and as they execute the lessons, the CT should be there watching and giving feedback ... Allowing the teacher to learn from their mistakes, allowing them to suggest possible alternatives and so on (HoD_Interview).

Thus, the data suggest that mentoring is an active process in which the CTs primarily help the STs to experience growth in their ability to teach.

4.1.1. Multiple role performance by CTs.

The data further suggests that, under the broad umbrella of supporting the STs in their development of pedagogical knowledge and skills, the CTs fulfilled a number of different specific roles. The most significant roles based on how frequently they were mentioned are: guide, motivator, advisor, monitor, supporter, career coach, supervisor, director, colleague and teacher. The CTs disclosed that they fulfilled multiple roles at the same which suggests complex interactions with the STs during the period of the practicum. This is a situation which underscores the significance of mentoring by the CTs in the context of this research. The most common role seemed to be guide which implies supportive interaction that is sensitive to the needs of the STs, but the understanding that the CTs also fulfilled other roles such as monitor, director and teacher indicate that there were shifts in the nature of the

interactions which took place between CTs and STs. The roles which the CTs fulfilled and representative data highlighting them are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Roles Performed by CTs in the Process of Mentoring as Perceived by the CTs and the STs

Role	Supporting data
Guide	<p>That person ... guiding you and taking you from one threshold to the next (ST_FG2).</p> <p>The role of the CT [is to] guide you along the best practices in every situation for the sake of the students and for you as a ST (ST_FG3).</p> <p>That teacher would look at your lesson plans, give you some tips and work together to ensure that ... you become confident in dealing with the various students (ST_FG2).</p>
Motivator	<p>I'd dialogue with her also to encourage her and, and to congratulate her if she had done something well in her teaching (Ann).</p>
Advisor	<p>The CT was there so that they can give you the best advice that could help propel you to the end of the journey (ST_FG3).</p>
Monitor	<p>My role is to ... support the teacher, monitor her, provide input where necessary, and just encourage her overall development, as a new teacher (CT_FG1).</p>
Supporter	<p>The key word is support, providing that avenue that the teacher is able to use to attain the goals that they're reaching for (CT_FG1).</p>
Career coach	<p>The mentor also guides you through your career path and helps you set goals to achieve more into that career path (ST_FG1).</p>
Supervisor/ supporter	<p>I (...) mould the ST with improved skills... I was expected to supervise, advise. Just be there for them. Scaffold the teacher into performing what was expected from the DTE (Sally).</p>

Director	The mentor is there to show you the right way of teaching and assessing students, (...) show you how to cater for the different learning styles in the classroom (ST_FG2).
Colleague	I am more satisfied with seeing the growth of my trainee. I am able to build relationships with different individuals whom I've never met (CT_FG2).
Teacher	How I approach my lessons and different strategies that I use in the classroom came from what she taught me (ST_FG1).

In the next chapter, where I discuss these findings, I will elaborate on the significance of the different roles. The specific areas of benefit which the STs derived from their mentoring experiences were perceived as a significant part of what mentoring entails. The STs experienced growth in lesson planning and instructional strategies as well as classroom management. They also began to develop an appreciation for the extra-curricular duties of the primary school teacher.

4.1.2. Lesson planning and instructional strategies.

The STs who had favourable mentoring experiences were in agreement that the guidance they received from the CTs was instrumental in their developing skills in lesson planning and instructional strategies. A picture of purposeful mentoring which is consistent with the process of *Mentoring Up* (Hale & Phillips, 2019) was created by the STs. For instance, in the first focus group (FG1), it was noted that the STs were specifically taught lesson planning and instructional strategies by the CTs. One of the participants voiced, “How I approach my lessons and different strategies that I use in the classroom came from what she taught me” (ST_FG1). Similar ideas were expressed in each of the other focus groups as illustrated in the following quotes:

The cooperative (sic) teacher ... also provide tips with your lesson plan ..., whatever strategy I'm utilize, ... He or she would be able to tell me, well, you can improve by doing X, Y and Z or desist from doing X, Y and Z (ST_FG3).

Despite I was already a teacher ... I had a better understanding as to why some children learn the way they do. I also was able to, you know, perfect my art a little more with my teaching skills (ST_FG4).

The focus on increasing skills in lesson planning and instructional strategies was corroborated by the CTs in both the focus groups and individual interviews:

My teachers came in shaky ... both teachers became so very successful at planning and putting components together to develop their plans (CT_FG1).

We will plan our lessons ... to make sure that the lesson plan has been put together correctly. ... We would basically come together and we would discuss the lesson (CT_FG2).

She assisted by looking over my prep. She, if there was anything missing or anything that was off with me, she tried to keep me in line (Gloria).

She had a good grasp of what was expected of me. ... She was very helpful in lesson planning (Paul).

These extracts suggest that mentoring played a definite role in helping the STs to hone foundational competencies that they needed as primary school teachers. They also suggest a difference between those CTs who collaborated with the STs and allowed them to be responsible for their learning and those who adopted a more directive approach to interacting with the STs.

4.1.3 Classroom management.

The evidence that the CTs supported STs' development in lesson planning and the use of instructional strategies, is matched by evidence that mentoring helped the STs to develop their classroom management strategies. The following extracts from the data illustrate the role mentoring played in preparing the STs to manage their primary classrooms effectively:

The interaction that I had with her allowed me to be more confident inside of the classroom in regards to classroom management (ST_FG1).

One of the things that I learned is classroom management. During ... phase one my classroom management was a bit shaky and my CT was able to give

me some tips on how to better manage the classroom. Her advice really did work (ST_FG2).

I learned a lot from her, especially watching how she would regulate the behaviour of the students. ... I would actually be a better teacher when I go back to the classroom (ST_FG3).

Evidently, as far as classroom management is concerned, STs engaged in observational learning as well as they benefitted from direct instruction by their CTs. This combination of observation and direct instruction mirrors how they developed other competencies during the practicum period.

4.1.4 Extra-curricular duties.

The collective data suggest that part of the preparation for the role of teacher in a primary classroom is understanding that teachers have other responsibilities in addition to teaching. The mentoring experience also benefited the STs by providing guidance as they engaged in these other responsibilities. The following testimonials are examples of what the STs experienced in this regard.

So you have to conduct prayers ... total works, the entire work to ensure that your classroom is being managed in the way that it ought to. You also have to do statistics, reports, registers etc. (ST_FG1).

Other things were required of you as a teacher, you had to become part of the school. ...It wasn't just about sitting down planning. ... We were also required to be a part of the social aspects of the school (ST_FG3).

The analysis of the data further suggests that the role which mentoring played in the preparedness of individual STs was partly dependent on the CT's expertise. This insight will be developed in section 4 of this chapter and discussed in chapter 5. Having examined the theme, understanding of what mentoring entails, I will now turn my attention to the second theme: Finding a way.

4.2 Finding a way

In the previous section, I presented data which suggest that the participants perceived that mentoring supports the learning and development of STs in specific critical aspects of professional practice. Another major theme, 'finding a way', which encapsulates the

experiences of the CTs, emerged from the analysis of the data. The theme covered two sub-themes—professional development experiences and expectations, and professional development experiences and effectiveness. Professional development experiences fall into two categories—formal and informal. Formal professional development activities are taken to mean those activities that are organised by the DTE and are specifically planned to equip CTs with the knowledge and skills that they need to mentor effectively. Formal experiences contrast with informal professional development activities which are self-directed, not officially organised, but which empower CTs to engage in the mentoring of the STs in their charge. The data suggest that the CTs were not given a blueprint on mentoring but they found ways of helping the STs to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills by mainly drawing on their internal drives and what they gathered from their own research.

4.2.1 Professional development experiences and expectations.

The data shows that there is a mismatch between what the CTs understood to be professional development activities in preparation for mentoring and what they experienced in preparation for their role as mentors. Furthermore, the data suggest that the expectations of the DTE were unclear to some of the CTs which led to them being unsure of how to engage in the mentoring exercise. The evidence from the document analysis indicates that the DTE held a meeting with the CTs and provided them with a list of expectations but what the CTs shared in the focus groups indicates that the meeting was not attended by all of the CTs and some of them did not receive the list of expectations or paid any attention to it. The following testimonial from one of the focus groups represents the experience of some of the CTs.

I didn't have any meetings, but for me, training would be to elaborate exactly what it is that they needed from me to give to the trainees. ... And teach the supporting teachers how to deal with the methods (CT_FG1).

This statement which suggests no interaction with the DTE and a complete lack of preparation conflicts with the data obtained from other CTs, the interview with the HoD and what could be concluded from the document analysis. There is ample evidence that a meeting featured as a form of formal professional development but it is significant that the majority of the CTs did not understand it to be training for the role of mentor. In fact, only one of the eleven CTs in the study viewed the meeting as preparation for mentoring. She expressed this in the following statement:

I've had training. ... For me, it was basically like two in one. It was like a mini meeting and then demonstrations were given as to expectations. They just looked at everything covered in one. Expectations, demonstrations, do's and don'ts, everything in one. ... It was compact. About one and a half hours (CT_FG2).

An opposing view of the role of the meeting is prominent. The two following statements are examples of how the majority of the CTs viewed the meeting that was organised by the DTE:

I don't think I had a training per se. What did happen was that on one occasion, I was called officially into a meeting ... it wasn't really training, because I don't think it was adequate time to engage in any in depth training (CT_FG1).

If we're going to be honest, I've only been to a meeting. ... I don't know of any official training. I've never been to one (CT_FG2).

Evidently, the CTs perceived that real training to mentor should take the form of formal programmes that were specifically organised for their preparation. In their view, formal training would require their active, sustained participation which explains why they did not consider the meeting to be training to mentor. The data show that the lack of formal professional development experiences impacted the effectiveness of some of the CTs but some of them had informal professional development experiences which compensated for the lack of formal experiences.

4.2.2 Professional development experiences and effectiveness.

The data reveal that the CTs perceived a connection between the experiences which informed their mentoring and their effectiveness. Their effectiveness, according to their understanding, was the extent to which they were able to positively impact the professional development of the STs. The following quotes are explicit examples of the CTs' view that there is a distinct connection between mentor training and their effectiveness as mentors.

I was nervous ... sometimes, frustrated. I would have given the teacher advice as to what I thought ... and then when the ... lecturer or the assessor comes, it is something different (Sally).

I wasn't really ready. I had to use my experience from when I was being, when I was a teacher trainee to help to guide the STs so I wasn't really ready

to be ... a supporting teacher. I think if we were being trained, I'd have done better (Kim).

By the CTs' account, they could have done better if they were better prepared. However, lack of formal training did not prevent them from engaging in the role. The following statements are examples of how some of the CTs approached mentoring in light of their lack of specific mentor training.

Based on what happened when I was on practice, I basically came into the classroom, helped my trainee (CT_FG1).

We impart our knowledge, and also all our little experiences in the classroom to the teachers (CT_FG2)

Using their own teacher training experiences and what they learnt as teachers of their primary grade students may not be enough to inform their mentoring practices given the fundamental difference pointed out in the extant literature between teaching primary school children and mentoring STs who are adult learners. This issue was raised by the CTs who consistently remarked that they needed to be trained specifically for mentoring, as best illustrated in the following quote:

I think if we were being trained to show how we are supposed to interact with the teachers ... I wasn't prepared to give somebody instruction like that.

I can instruct my children but adults is [sic] different. (Bonnie)

The testimonial suggests that lack of training to mentor the STs is an issue that CTs felt very strongly about. There is consistent evidence that the informal activities which some of them engaged in during the process of mentoring did not compensate for their lack of adequate preparation. This leads to the next theme, which highlights what drove them to mentor in spite of their lack of training.

4.3 Motivation to Mentor

Another significant finding from my analysis of the data is that the CTs were propelled by a variety of factors which nurtured their motivation to become mentors. Although they, generally, perceived mentoring to be challenging, they perceived that their motivation was a key factor in the mentoring process. This is evident in the quotes below.

I just saw it as an opportunity for me to assist someone as best as possible, as I said, to ensure that best practices are being done in the classroom (CT_FG2).

When I did my teacher training, I had a very rough experience. And, after I was contacted by my principal, I thought that I wasn't ready to do it. Anyway ... I decided, OK, I will do it and be different from what I got (CT_FG2).

What motivates me is the opportunity to impart my math skills and knowledge. ... It's really a joy ... I have to stay on the cutting edge. I have to make sure that I'm up to date with, you know, the methods. Seeing them ... ending up with a higher grade for the math ... is what really motivates me and causes me to want to go back and do it again (CT_FG1).

These statements illustrate three factors of motivation:

1. commitment to helping the ST and safeguarding the learning of the primary grade pupils,
2. desire to demonstrate supportive mentoring, and
3. satisfaction from transferring specific content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Because the data have consistently converged along these three factors, I have classified them as special drives which are sub-themes subsumed under the umbrella of the overarching theme, motivation to mentor. Figure 4 is a visual representation of the sub-themes.

4.3.1 Custodial motivation.

The first drive is what I refer to as “custodial motivation” which is similar to what Meegan et al (2013) describes as the gatekeeper role performed by university supervisors during the initial training of teachers. In my research, the CTs who displayed “custodial motivation” are those who claimed to have mentored the STs because they are concerned about the quality of instruction that takes place in the classroom.

4.3.2 Altruistic motivation.

The second sub-theme under motivation to mentor is another drive which I refer to as “altruistic motivation”. In this instance, the CTs are motivated by the desire to provide mentoring that is better than the mentoring they received. This differs from what Graves (2010) refers to as the “altruistic desire” of one of her mentor participants to help the teaching profession. Graves’ “altruistic desire” has a greater similarity to what I am referring to as “custodial motivation”.

4.3.3 Generative motivation.

The final drive and subtheme is what I have labelled “generative motivation” because the CTs invested their specific expertise in the development of the STs. Their efforts were focussed on passing on their knowledge and skills to the next generation of teachers. They saw themselves as having a responsibility to help the STs develop skills and confidence in teaching specific subjects. In some cases, the motivation of the CTs was nurtured by more than one factor.

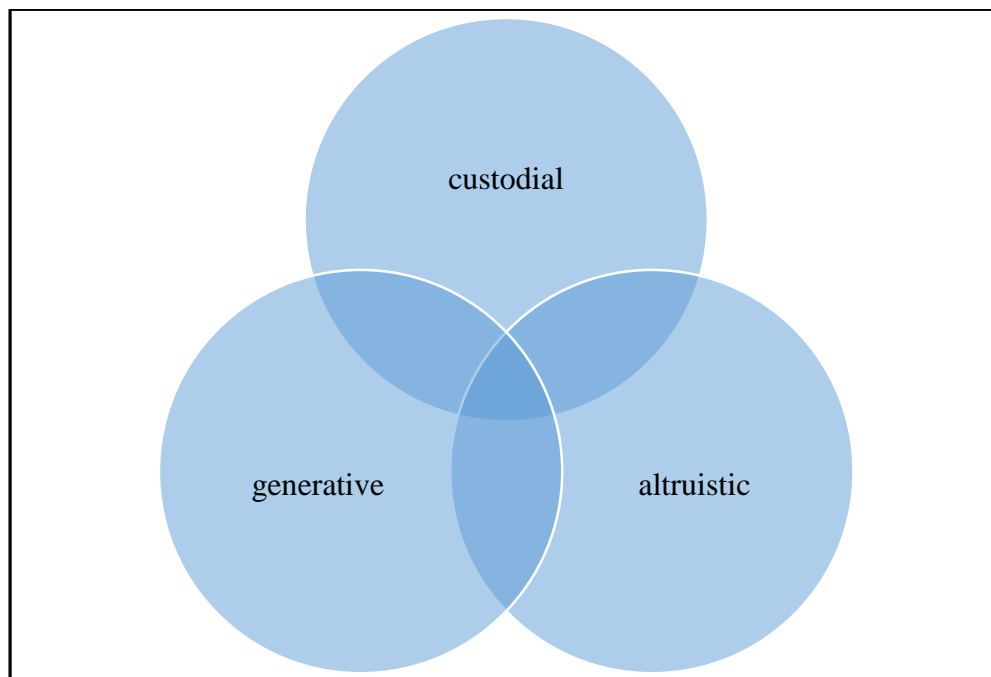


Figure 4.

The CTs’ Drives of Motivation for Mentoring

Any one or a combination of these motivating factors inspired the CTs’ effort in the mentoring relationships. However, not all of the CTs were motivated to engage in the

development of the STs. Thus, another sub-theme, role rejection, emerged under motivation to mentor.

4.3.4 Role rejection.

Some CTs rejected the mentor role and refused to support the STs because they were dissatisfied with the manner in which they were selected and prepared for mentoring, or they did not form a bond with the STs during the practicum period. Claims to this effect were made in the focus groups and in individual interviews as is shown below:

I did not volunteer, I was assigned ... I wasn't given an option ... so I just go with the flow (CT_FG1).

I've never really thought about it as a mentorship because, as I said, (...) I was thrown into it (Kim).

Obviously you would have an attitude because you said no and (...) it [mentoring a ST] was forced upon you (CT_FG2).

Role rejection by some of the CTs could explain some of the experiences which were shared by a number of the STs. These experiences are analysed and presented in section 4.4. under the theme, relationship and mentor practices.

4.4 Relationship and Mentor Practices

All of the CTs recognised that their relationship with the STs was an essential component in the mentoring which they provided. As one CT disclosed, "I had to deliver so it formed a relationship between the STs and I" (Sally). However, not all CTs formed a bond with their STs. Sally's experience contrasted with experiences where a bond was not formed. For instance, in describing one of her experiences as a mentor, another CT noted, "I just wanted to tell him just don't come back or go somewhere else partner or something" (Ann).

Overall, the interactions between the CTs and STs revealed different approaches to mentoring which is a sub-theme of relationship and mentor practices. This sub-theme is presented in the next section.

4.4.1 Approaches to mentoring.

This theme is closely aligned with the theme—understanding of what mentoring entails. The data obtained from the CTs’ focus groups and individual interviews indicate that the CTs mainly adopted an approach which emphasised scaffolding of and collaboration with the STs, but this is not the only approach that was evident in the experiences which they shared. The following statements are examples of an approach that foregrounded scaffolding:

My role is to support the trainee to ensure that she is improving ... monitor her, provide input where necessary, and just encourage her overall development, as a new teacher (CT_FG1).

It's more guidance, is more giving them that level of guidance. ... So it's not that you're basically just come in and tell them oh, do this, do that. ... I would say that you're the more knowledgeable other so you are giving them that sense of guidance throughout the whole process (CT_FG2).

As the CT I mould the ST with improved skills ... Just be there for them. Scaffold the teacher into performing what was expected from the DTE (Sally).

In addition to the collaboration with the STs which is highlighted in the data, there is evidence that some CTs also experienced collaboration with other teachers at their schools including teachers who were not CTs themselves. In some cases, this led to a collaborative approach to mentoring. This is best stated in the following testimonial:

Myself (sic) and Judith [pseudonym], we're both at the same school so we ... provided a team effort of support ... the trainees that we had ... they had the full support of, not just one teacher, but both of us (CT_FG1).

In addition to the collaboration between mentors, some CTs were aided in their mentoring by the support provided by the entire school. In one focus group, it was noted, “In terms of whole school, well, we did have a lot of input from the other teachers in terms of our teacher trainees, general comments and observations” (CT_FG1). It was also revealed that, “At my school when the teacher trainees come, basically the whole staff gets involved in helping ... so everybody benefitted in the same way” (CT_FG1). This latter comment hints at an effective community of practice but the data does not provide further evidence of this.

However, as was stated earlier, not all of the CTs provided mentoring which reflected a constructivist approach and a reflective model. Some CTs saw themselves as the repository of knowledge and skills which they imparted to the STs and they expected the STs to do as they were told. For instance, one CT expressed this directive perspective of mentoring in this way, “I was there to show or demonstrate to her what was needed. What she needed to do. ... I showed her. I gave her” (Kim). This approach that depicts the ST as a passive learner was not strongly represented in the data but it is worth highlighting because it suggests a disparity in the way STs are mentored and it has implications for the preparedness of the STs for the primary classroom.

Another subtheme of relationship and mentoring practices is the learning and professional development that CTs derived from the relationship.

4.4.2 Mentoring as a professional development experience.

There is consistent evidence in the data which suggests that some of the CTs perceived mentoring as a professional development experience. This sub-theme highlights the professional growth and development of both CTs and STs. In the first focus group, the CTs noted that, “As you develop the person, you also develop in skills” (CT_FG1). This perception of mutual growth threads the data from the CTs. In another exemplary statement, one CT asserted that, “It [mentoring] formed a relationship between the ST and I [Sic]. We learned from each other” (Sally). The data further suggest that the CTs experienced professional development by learning directly from the STs, and by engaging in self-directed activities to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills they needed to support the STs’ development. Learning from the STs is evident in this exemplary statement, “I’ve learned things from them as well. Is not like they come blank slate, you know, they have ideas and they have great lessons” (CT_FG2). A similar impression of learning from the STs is portrayed by, “They came with their different techniques as well and I have learnt as well” (Ann). What the CTs learnt from the STs complemented what they learnt on their own as is noted in the testimonial, “What I had to do, I had to do my research because I realized that over the years the content and the skills would have changed. So it was both a learning and a teaching experience for me” (Sally). The phrase, “develop the person” that appears in one of the testimonials quoted above underscores the mentoring relationship which the CTs forged with the STs. Although the expression was used in reference to the development of the STs, it is also applicable to the CTs. However, in their attempt to support the development of the

STs, the CT's often encountered difficulties or challenges. This is the subject of the section which follows.

4.5 Challenges in Mentoring.

Another theme that emerged from the data is 'challenges in mentoring'. These were circumstances which the CTs perceived made their efforts to support the STs difficult. Notwithstanding their motivation, and their perceived ability to support the STs, the CTs believed that the process of mentoring was challenged by three main factors which emerged as sub-themes. These factors are the STs' willingness to learn, the STs' previous teaching experience and the relationship between the CTs and the DTE. Although the understanding is that the CTs have the responsibility of helping the STs grow, some CTs perceived that their STs were unwilling to accept their guidance which was frustrating to the CTs, especially as they felt a disconnect with the DTE. Another challenge which the CTs faced is the prior teaching experience of the STs. The CTs were not prepared to handle the needs of the pre-service STs who were totally unfamiliar with school routines and they were also challenged by those STs who had been teaching for a number of years and used their prior teaching experience as grounds to disregard their CTs. These sub-themes are presented with supporting data in Table 7.

Table 7

Challenges in Mentoring

Source of the challenge	Supporting data
The willingness of the STs to learn	<p>It has to do a lot with their willingness and their open mindedness because a lot of them They're not willing to change (CT_FG2).</p> <p>Once they're willing, ... that motivates me to keep pushing, assisting the teacher (CT_FG2).</p>
The STs' prior teaching experiences	<p>My teacher was a pre-service teacher and we had a lot of conflicts ... it didn't seem like</p>

	<p>what I was saying was getting through to her (CT_FG1).</p> <p>She was a pre-service teacher so she knew nothing about being inside of a classroom. So that posed a challenge for both of us(Sally).</p> <p>A lot of them [STs] come and they don't really learn because they feel like they've been teaching ... they don't come with an open mind (CT_FG2).</p>
<p>The relationship between the CT and the DTE</p>	<p>I think they should liaise with each teacher before ... you can't call a teacher and tell them they're going to have a teacher trainee next month or whatever (Bonnie).</p> <p>I think they should have ... more interaction. ... By having somebody from the Teacher Training Department come in ... just to ... see what they can do in developing the supporting teacher, both teachers (Ann).</p> <p>I would have given teachers advice as to what I thought the lecturer [TE] is looking for and then when the person comes ... it is something different they're looking for. Like I said in the beginning, nothing was said to us about expectations (Sally).</p>

These challenges underscore the complexity of mentoring and the value of including the CTs' voices in this examination of mentoring in the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda.

Although the CTs were generally motivated to mentor the STs, the difficulties which they encountered have implications for the quality of mentoring provided by the CTs and the consistency of the preparedness which the STs experienced. In chapter five, I will discuss these findings with reference to how the CTs perceived the mentoring which they provided.

In the next section of this chapter, I will present the findings on the theme, mentor engagement.

4.6 Mentor Engagement

This theme relates to the STs' perceptions of the level and quality of communication, guidance, support and feedback received from their CTs. The experiences of the STs, in terms of the level of engagement by the CTs, form a continuum from attentive and supportive to indifferent. As explained in Chapter three, any given cohort of STs in this study comprises both in-service and pre-service students. The in-service STs had been teaching for a number of years prior to beginning the ADPE. In this study, the number of years the in-service STs had been teaching ranged from 1 to 20 years while the pre-service STs were pursuing the ADPE prior to any teaching experience. However, some pre-service STs were mature persons who had been working in other fields. The data suggest that mentor engagement led to the STs having experiences which fell into three broad categories. These categories are in relation to the role that they perceived mentoring by the CTs played in their preparedness for the classroom. These are

- experiences that led both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers to believe that the mentoring which they received was very effective in helping them to acquire important knowledge and skills and refine their teaching competence;
- experiences that led both pre-service and in-service STs to perceive the mentoring they received to be useful to their development in some aspects of teaching competence outlined in the Teachers Assessment Tool (JBTE, 2013) but limited in other aspects; and
- experiences that caused some of the STs to claim that they were not mentored by their CTs, but received mentoring from other sources including their peers.

The data that were obtained from the STs suggest that some STs perceived that they were mentored and a contrasting perception by other STs that they did not receive any mentoring from their CTs. I will now present data for each of these two broad sub-themes. I

will begin by presenting data in relation to the perception of being mentored effectively and the areas of teacher preparedness which the STs experienced through the mentoring efforts of the CTs.

4.6.1 Perception of being mentored.

From the perspective of the STs, there were specific elements that illustrated a supportive mentoring relationship. The CT's consistent attention to the needs of the ST was one of the key elements of a supportive experience. Another key element of the perception that they were mentored was receipt of direct help and guidance related to specific areas of assessment that appear on the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013). These perceptions are captured in the following statements from the first ST focus group:

My CT ... was supportive of what I was doing. She was very helpful. ... The interaction that I had with her allowed me to be more confident (ST_FG1).

Throughout my stay, the teacher was present to give me any necessary support that I needed. ... So ... that CT was there with me to give advice, to give feedback and the support that was needed (ST_FG1).

The STs admitted to receiving support that resulted in growth in each of the following areas: skills in lesson planning and instructional strategies, classroom management strategies, awareness of the connections between theory and practice, and school norms and practices. The perception of being mentored also included receiving career guidance. One of the STs noted, "My mentor also guided me through my career path and helped me set goals to achieve more" (ST_FG1). However, a picture of the CTs as expert, experienced professionals who supported the learning and development of the STs in the areas outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013) is more evident. Similar to what was noted in the way the CTs interacted with the STs, there is some diversity in how the STs represented the manner in which CTs interacted with them. Although an approach that emphasised guidance is more prevalent, there is evidence that some of the STs also perceived that they were mentored when the CTs adopted a more direct approach in instructing them.

My CT ... had a good grasp of what was expected of me, so ... she would make sure that I was doing what I was taught to do ... in every facet, she was very helpful (Paul).

She will guide me as to if the lessons are workable. And then after each lesson would give me some, what should I say? She'd give me some tips. ... she did a good job in mentoring me (ST_FG2).

Some pre-service and in-service STs perceived the mentoring they received to be useful to their development in some aspects of teaching but limited in other aspects. These STs believed that the CTs supported them but not to the full extent that they expected as revealed in the following testimonial that illustrates the views of the STs who expected their CTs to be more consistent in providing regular feedback on their teaching performance:

I was getting some support from her but the support was, it was very limited. ... When I really needed her, I wasn't getting any support from her (ST_FG4).

The statement below depicts another area of dissatisfaction expressed by some of the STs who thought that they should have been given more guidance to inform their planning and execution:

I felt as though my mentor could have been a bit more hands on ... She showed me the ropes. But I just think it could have been ... more proactive, me being a pre-service teacher. ... I just felt as though I needed more help with unit planning and lesson planning and so on. ... I got most of my support from, what do you call it? So, yes, my peers (ST_FG2).

Thus, there were intermediate experiences which revealed some support but not enough for the STs to give their CTs full credit for their development. These experiences were opposed to those STs who thought they did not receive any mentoring from their CTs. This sub-theme is presented below.

4.6.2 Perception of not being mentored.

Some STs' experienced interactions with their CTs which did not support their growth. Speaking specifically to the support received during the practicum period, one of the STs stated, "In reference to getting support, especially in lesson planning, I did not get that. ... Lesson planning was all done on my own" (Phorsha). Both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers had experiences that did not match their expectations for mentoring. The experiences of both pre-service and in-service teachers which were shared in different focus groups are represented below:

I was a pre-service teacher going into practicum. It was my first experience teaching in the classroom. ... I had to call the head of department to ask her the purpose of the CT because I tried to get assistance from her, I asked for assistance and I didn't get assistance from her (ST_FG4).

The teacher was supposed to model for me. I didn't get that ... Now, I heard Dinah [pseudonym] that she got help with lesson planning and going through the lessons on a daily basis. I did all that on my own without getting assistance from nobody (FG_FG1).

I didn't learn anything. As I said, I was basically just on my own per se ... I had some experience before because I was in the classroom before I went to teacher training so I just draw from that, from those experiences (ST_FG2).

According to my analysis of the data, those students who claimed they were not mentored perceived a lack of commitment on the part of the CTs which matches some of the CTs' own disclosure of being unwilling or reluctant to mentor. The data obtained from the CTs, however, did not provide a graphic impression of the impact of their unwillingness. From the perspective of the STs, the unwillingness of the CTs to mentor resulted in them not fulfilling any of the roles identified in section 4.1.1.1. Because they did not perceive that they were being mentored, some STs held the view that the first phase of the practicum period when they are expected to observe the CTs modelling best practices was a waste of time. One ST expressed this very forcefully by saying, "I had a bad experience ... The observation phase don't [sic] make any sense ... I didn't learn anything from her" (CT_FG3).

Those STs who did not receive support from their CTs were supported by other teachers and their peers. This is best expressed in the statement, "I got a lot of help from other teachers and not really my support teacher" (ST_FG4).

In the next section I will present findings suggesting that the STs' perceptions of being mentored or not were linked to their understanding that communication and feedback are critical to the mentoring process.

4.6.3 Communication and feedback.

Another sub-theme that is associated with mentor engagement is communication and feedback. From the STs' perspective, supportive mentoring relationships were characterised

by regular communication between the CTs and the STs. The following is an exemplary statement of the STs' appreciation of feedback from the CTs:

She assisted me where I needed her. She gave feedback and that's what I liked. If I wasn't going the way I should, she told me straight up, you know what you need to do and what not you need to do (ST_FG3).

Frank, open communication was cited as an essential component of the mentoring relationship. The STs clearly valued feedback on their performance that helped them to improve. They also valued communication that showed respect for their ideas. When the CTs listened to the STs and accepted their input during their discussions of the STs' lesson plans and their execution of lessons, the STs perceived that the CTs earnestly cared about their professional growth. These feelings are illustrated in the following statements:

Thank God He allowed me to have somebody who could listen when I made observations and also gave me positive information in ways in which I could improve (ST_FG3).

It was the case that you are able to have an input ... you're working together instead of just drawing from the individual. ... Something positive come out. Ideas, creativity from both ends (ST_FG4).

The communication and feedback which the STs experienced were part of the broader mentoring relationship which they had with the CTs. Communication between CTs and STs covered pedagogical elements such as lesson planning and classroom management, and it also had a social and emotional dimension. The social and emotional aspect of the support which the STs received from their CTs is best captured in the two following testimonials:

We would message via WhatsApp in the morning from at home. So we know that both of us, we are feeling all right and we know we are going to try to make it safe to school, so we start off with that every morning (ST_FG2).

My CT, she was very friendly off the bat and she made herself sociable, if that's the word. ... I would have asked her anything ... she did a good job in mentoring me (ST_FG4).

In contrast to communication and feedback that led STs to conclude that they were effectively mentored, are experiences which were marked by inadequate communication and feedback from the STs' perspective. The following examples were drawn from data which revealed what some of the STs experienced:

One of the things that caught me off guard is when I first started ... I was not aware or fully aware if I was on the right track and I did not get that feedback from the mentor ... So I think a mentor is supposed to be well prepared to give feedback (Phorsha).

I did not receive feedback from her, I remember one time I asked her after completing a lesson, that was in the final phase and I asked her, "how was it?" And she just said, "It was ok" and that was it. I never really got a feedback from her (ST_FG 2).

The difference in the level of support and instructive feedback which some of the STs experienced has implications for the level of preparedness for their own classroom teaching with which the STs left the DTE. Overall, the data shows that communication is a critical aspect of the mentoring relationship. Where mentoring took place, there was collaboration, constant communication and instructive feedback while the opposite was experienced when STs perceived that they were not mentored by the CTs.

The findings which were outlined in sections 4.1 to 4.6 are closely integrated with the last two themes that emerged from the data. The aggregated data suggest that the current mentoring practices showed definite departmental shortcomings, but that there are specific actions that could be taken to address these issues. I will address each of these broad themes in the sections which follow.

4.7 Contrary Practices

The data suggest that currently there are practices associated with mentoring in the DTE of the ASC which could be subsumed broadly under the theme, 'Contrary practices'. These practices contradict the important role which mentoring is expected to play in the preparation of STs for their own primary school teaching. Selection and training of the CTs, and differences in the expertise of the CTs are areas of shortcoming which result in inconsistencies in the mentoring which the STs as a group received during practicum.

4.7.1 Selection and training.

The selection and training of CTs is one aspect of the current practices with which both STs and CTs expressed dissatisfaction. Although the DTE's CTs Handout stipulates that,

A CT should be recommended and approved by the Ministry of Education, as well as by the DTE and selected on a volunteer basis only after the professional responsibilities associated with this position are discussed and agreed upon by the prospective CT (Cooperating Teacher Handout, n.d).

Some of the STs perceived that the CTs did not want to mentor. The CTs themselves claimed that they did not volunteer for the role. The result is that in some cases, they expressed their unwillingness to mentor but were, nevertheless, assigned a ST. This position was made very clearly in one of the focus groups, "I did not volunteer; I was assigned. I was basically told I'm going to get a teacher trainee so I wasn't given an option. When I voiced an objection, it was pointed out to me that I should be more cooperative" (CT_FG1).

Selecting individuals to function as mentors who do not have an interest in mentoring has implications for what the STs experience and ultimately their preparation for their own teaching as professional teachers. One comment that represents this interpretation clearly is, "she did not say anything to me pertaining to that [whether or not she volunteered to be a CT] but I know that I did not feel welcome ... she didn't want to be a supporting teacher" (ST_FG4).

Another shortcoming in the selection process is the number of years of post-training teaching experience which CTs have before they are selected to function as mentors. The DTE's Cooperating Teacher Handout, (n.d) specifies that the CTs "should have completed a minimum of three (3) years of successful teaching experience with a minimum of one year of successful teaching experience in the area/level at which s/he will supervise" (p.2). Yet, the CTs claimed that they started to function as mentors at different points in their career starting from as early as the year after graduating from DTE themselves. According to the HoD, the teachers who are selected to mentor are teachers, "who show a certain amount of ability in terms of not just how they themselves perform within the classroom, but their ability to pass on ... best practices to someone else" (HoD_Interview). However, the data suggest that not all of the CTs met this expectation. An exemplary statement that reveals this interpretation is, "At one point, I had to be going to other teachers to try and help me to put things in a way so

she could understand but I don't think we really got through" (Kim). Some of the STs also commented unfavourably on the ability of the CTs to provide the support they needed. One representative comment to this effect is,

My support teacher told me she was not strong in language, so I had to seek outside help. Lesson planning was all done on my own. My executing, sometimes when I asked for feedback I realized, well, much could not be told to me, so I didn't bother continue asking for feedback. Honestly, I did not get the help I should have gotten from my supporting teacher (Phorsha).

All of the issues which the CTs and STs pointed out in relation to the selection of the CTs represent violations of documented official stipulations which means that the DTE did not adhere to its own established principles.

The experiences of the STs and the CTs also revealed that the lack of training for the CTs was a contributing factor in ineffective mentoring. The following pieces of data are presented to support my interpretation of how training impacted the effectiveness of the CTs and, ultimately, the preparedness of the STs.

I think that mentoring teachers should be trained to mentor ... [without training] the mentoring teacher might ... lead the teacher in the wrong direction (Ann).

I have no clue what the expectations are for me ... I have some serious concerns with that area that you call training. I didn't receive any. ... Years ago, I just went to a meeting and they were just addressing us as teachers. ... As the invigilators come in and they talk to me or provide feedback from what they observe ... then is when I am picking up other things that shouldn't be happening that I don't know about (CT_FG1).

I don't think the teachers were adequately prepared for us to come to them. So I think that from my point of view I think there is a necessity for upcoming teachers, that ... the mentors should be trained (ST_FG3).

The last three pieces of data provide clear insight into what the CTs experienced as far as training is concerned, the STs' perception of the CTs' readiness to mentor and the perception of the CTs in terms of the value of training to their role as mentor. These are

critical contextual issues which will be discussed in chapter five. I will now present my findings for the sub-theme, differences in mentor expertise.

4.7.2 Differences in mentor expertise.

My analysis of the data reveals that some of the CTs were unable to provide adequate guidance in all four subjects that STs were required to teach. The STs were expected to teach Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies but even if the CTs were teaching all four subjects, some of the CTs did not demonstrate that they were experts at all four. Besides, at some schools, the teachers are only assigned one or two subjects to teach so multiple teachers teach each class yet only one CT is assigned to each ST. This means that a ST may not be receiving any guidance whatsoever in the subjects which their CT was not teaching. This is best captured by one ST who stated,

They [the teachers at the grade] were subject teaching and my CT was teaching only two subjects so I wasn't getting much guidance in the other two because she didn't teach those two (ST_FG1).

Some of the STs, as was noted in section 4.6.2, did not receive any guidance in lesson planning and unit planning and some were dissatisfied with what was modelled for them in classroom management. This situation speaks to another level of inconsistency that was found in the context. Mentor expertise and inconsistent mentoring are linked because my interpretation is that what STs experienced varied according to the expertise of the CTs. The root of these contrasting experiences is the lack of training for CTs and inadequate rigour in selecting the CTs and matching them with the STs. It was noted in the third ST focus group that, "They needed to have a fair training across the board to have a fair experience across the board for all STs" (ST_FG3). In addition to what is presented here, there is evidence that the CTs adopted different approaches to mentoring as was presented in section 4.4.1. This added to the inconsistency across the mentoring field. The different approaches do not necessarily result in ineffective mentoring but they may result in different skills being developed by the STs. However, the correlation between the approach they experienced and the development of specific skills is beyond the scope of this thesis and will not be explored further.

4.8 Achieving More Effective Mentoring

The final theme which the data yielded is achieving more effective mentoring. The participants perceived that teacher preparedness could be improved through a number of

factors that would lead to confidencing on the part of the STs and more consistent engagement from the CTs. Proper selection and training of CTs, close monitoring of the mentor-mentee relationship and support for the CTs during practicum were cited as elements which would improve mentoring and the preparation of the STs. Subsumed under monitoring and support from DTE are calls to strengthen ties between the DTE and CTs, and to provide avenues for feedback from STs and CTs.

4.8.1 Mentor training/ preparation.

For mentoring to be effective, the individual who fulfils the role of mentor must have appropriate knowledge and skills. In Antigua and Barbuda where mentors are assigned to STs, the process should begin with the selection of suitable persons to fulfil the role of CTs. This necessary action was felt by both STs and CTs in the following terms:

The DTE must be very particular in the selection of mentors because some of the mentors that they choose do not provide the necessary mentorship (Vashti).

Select teachers who were recently trained, especially in the new strategies, the new developments in education. ... my teacher had been trained over ten years ago ... Though she was trained, she wasn't familiar (ST_FG3).

The ... department should allow teachers, ... to at least be in the service for three years, ... before giving them a teacher trainee, ... they should feel willing ... rather than ... coaxed into it (CT_FG2).

The evidence from both focus groups and individual interviews suggests that willingness, adequate experience, currency in pedagogical knowledge and skills and ability to support the developmental needs of the STs should drive the selection of the CTs. All of these are important elements that would safeguard the process of mentoring up. Another action that is perceived as necessary is specific mentor training of the individuals who are selected to mentor. This view is evidenced in the following representative comments:

We weren't given an even playing field because our teachers were trained in different eras. ... They have different experiences, ... nothing solid was given to them, so they're basically using their own experience, their own knowledge from what they would have gained over the years (ST_FG3).

There is very little training provided by the department, to be honest with you. There's usually a meeting at the start ... there is need for more training, there is need for us to do more (HoD_Interview).

There should be training for support teachers ... There must be some sort of training ... how to support that teacher to ... reach their full potential (CT_FG1).

Teaching someone else to teach is a big job. So ... I think having a course or even having someone coming there to teach the ropes of being a CT would definitely be ... a sensible initiative (ST_FG2).

The participants were very clear that specific mentor training is a necessary action. They were also clear on the justification for specific training on the basis of the confidence training would provide to the CTs and the importance of CTs being up to date in their pedagogical knowledge:

Knowledge is always changing so there were so many things that needed to be addressed. ...I personally don't consider myself having been trained for the position of a CT (CT_FG1).

I think that ... mentoring teachers should be trained to mentor ... I think that the mentoring teacher should be confident going in to train, to assist in the practicum (Ann).

I think the training would also help us if we know what to expect from the beginning, because we are getting a lot of conflicting messages and we only have the teacher, the teacher trainee to depend on to give us ... whatever information they have or they understand it to be (CT_FG2).

These pieces of data represent the views that training is essential to provide the CTs with the expertise they need.

The participants also suggested specific content for the training which CTs should receive. I have summarised the various areas of training they have identified in Table 6. Also included in the table are representative statements for each area of training.

Table 8*Specific Focus Areas for Mentor Training*

Area of training	Supporting data
Understanding personal philosophy of teaching and learning	There should be consideration of the CTs' philosophy because they will deal with the ST according to their philosophy (ST_FG1).
DTE expectations of CTs	<p>There needs to be some means of coming to a common understanding as to what is expected or the level of cooperation that the teachers need to give (ST_FG1).</p> <p>They needed to have something like ..., "this is what we expect. This is what we expect from you, This is what you should expect from your trainee. This is what we need you to do, etc., etc., so that it could be a fair training across the board to have a fair experience across the board for all STs (ST_FG 4).</p>
Understanding of DTE expectations of STs' pedagogical knowledge and skills development during the practicum period	I think we should get more experience on the do's and the don'ts and how to deal with our teachers that we're getting (CT_FG1).
Andragogy	I think if we were being trained to show how we are supposed to interact with the teachers, ... I wasn't prepared to give

	<p>somebody instruction like that. I can instruct my children. But adults is different (Kim).</p>
<p>Best practices for the individual subject areas</p>	<p>I would have given the teacher advice as to what I thought the lecturer is looking for and then when the, that person comes, the lecturer or the assessor comes, it is something different they're looking for (Linda).</p>
<p>Currency with new trends in education (methodological, technological)</p>	<p>One of the things that I would have observed is that when these individuals would have gone through teacher training years ago, you'll find that within that period of time there are things that would have changed and hence they will say to you that I don't know everything. ... They need to get up to date (ST_FG1).</p>
<p>Accepting diversity</p>	<p>Train teachers who are going to be dealing with other persons because as humans, it's natural for conflicts to arise amongst two people in one space so I think that training would make us a bit more open to all of that (CT_FG1).</p>
<p>Building relationships (communicating effectively, developing collegiality)</p>	<p>We need training on how to deal with the teachers that are coming in to us (CT_FG1). Supporting teachers need to develop a relationship, a better relationship with</p>

	trainees so that they get the sense that we are truly there to support them (CT_FG2).
Providing feedback	So, I think with training, there should be certain skills that we should have and certain knowledge about pinpointing errors (CT_FG1).
Dealing strategically with pre-service teachers	There should be training for support teachers, definitely, ... I need to know what particular quality I need to help this teacher to work on, especially if they're pre-service (CT_FG1).
Leadership	<p>If I were a professionally trained mentor then I would have been able to combat some of the issues that confronted me at that time in a more efficient and practical manner (Bonnie).</p> <p>We need training ... so that we're able to help them to overcome whatever challenges that they may find difficult (CT_FG1).</p>
Providing emotional support	<p>I think another aspect of training we need is not just in the classroom, but also emotional support for our trainees (CT_FG1).</p> <p>The cooperative teacher should be able to give basic psychological support so that the teacher gets a little more motivation in terms of executing tasks (ST_FG1).</p>

The wide range of areas for training that were suggested by the participants is an indication that a meeting for CTs prior to the start of the practicum does not permit sufficient

preparation. Specialised training for CTs that prepare them to mentor effectively must, however, be complemented by monitoring and support during the practicum process. This is the focus of the next section.

4.8.2 Monitoring and support.

One of the more pervasive ideas in the data is that there is definite need for the provision of support to the CTs and closer monitoring of the mentoring process. The call for closer monitoring and support is linked to the awareness of both the CTs and STs that the role which mentoring is expected to fulfil could be protected through better monitoring. The following quote is representative of this view:

Most times, quite frankly, all the times trainees are simply sent into the classroom and we as the supporting teachers don't hear from teacher training department and they don't really know what is happening within the classroom (CT_FG2).

One element that both CTs and STs perceived to be important in monitoring is the introduction of formal opportunities to provide feedback to the DTE during the practicum exercise:

In my opinion, feedback is always necessary... I don't think we had a clue that we had that opportunity to communicate with the department that this is what you're experiencing (ST_FG3).

There's nothing at all unless you are spoken to when an invigilator is there with the teacher. There's nothing that says, OK, this is my opportunity to provide my feedback to the department (CT_FG2).

The perception of the CTs and STs on the question of monitoring and opportunities to provide feedback conflicts with the information provided by the HoD. From the HoD's perspective,

There is an informal process. There's not a form that they will fill out to provide this feedback, but in their weekly seminars they, ... have a chance to speak about what is happening in the classroom ... The CTs will generally speak to the principals and our teachers speak to us. We monitor the relationship (HoD_Interview).

The seminars referenced in the statement above are designed to provide information and guidance to the STs as they complete a portfolio which is part of the requirements for the completion of the ADPE. The STs claimed that providing feedback in that forum was incidental, and the tendency was for them to share their experiences with each other and not with the DTE. The dominant view among the STs was that “There needs to be an outlet for feedback from STs and ... some form, a level of support for mentors” (ST_FG2). Furthermore, there is no indication in any of the data sources that principals relayed the concerns of the CTs to the DTE.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the findings of my analysis with supporting evidence from the data. My inductive analysis suggests that there are specific themes which thread the data from the four sources: documents, the Head of DTE, STs and CTs.

I found that the primary purpose of the mentoring which takes place during the practicum exercise is the development of the STs who begin the practicum with differing needs according to the areas of teacher preparedness that are outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers. The CTs, who could be either willing or unwilling participants in the practicum exercise, do not experience any formal professional development to prepare them to engage in mentoring of the STs but the ones who are willing to mentor the STs are driven to do so by one or a combination of three factors which I am referring to as custodial, altruistic and generative drives. In spite of their lack of formal training, the willing CTs find ways to support the development of the STs. They fulfil a variety of roles under the overarching title of mentor, adopting one of two main approaches to their interactions with the STs. These approaches are directive (do as I say) versus a collaborative approach where the emphasis is on providing guidance.

Both STs and CTs perceived that the relationship which they forged with each other was critical to the preparedness of the STs for their own primary classrooms. Several factors, inclusive of the CTs’ disconnect from the DTE, challenge the mentoring which the CTs provide. In general, the STs’ perception of the mentoring they received form a continuum from full satisfaction with the mentoring they received to a feeling of neglect from the CTs. The participants in the study are of the view that the shortcomings that are currently evident in the mentoring process could be addressed if the DTE made specific changes and/or improvements to current practices of selection, training and monitoring.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the key findings in relation to the research questions and the existing body of knowledge that was reviewed in chapter two.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This intrinsic case study examined the expectations and experiences of cooperating teachers (CTs) and student teachers (STs) in the Associate Degree in Primary Education (ADPE) in Antigua and Barbuda. In Chapter 4, the data presentation and analysis chapter, I presented the themes and subthemes which I derived from my inductive analysis and interpretation of the data. The richness of the qualitative data was preserved so that a deep understanding of the experiences of the CTs and the STs could be obtained by the audience.

The following are the key insights from my analysis:

- Mentoring is valued by all the participants as a critical aspect of the initial training which STs receive
- The lack of formal training for the CTs led the CTs to adopt different approaches to mentoring based on their understanding of what mentoring entails
- The experiences of both CTs and STs were shaped by a number of personal and contextual factors which ‘flavoured’ mentoring for the CTs and created an uneven “playing field” for the STs
- The mentoring experiences of the CTs and STs could be enhanced if some specific actions are taken by the DTE, namely careful selection of CTs, strategic assignment of CTs to STs, the training of CTs, close monitoring of the mentoring process and support for CTs during practicum

In this chapter, I discuss these findings in relation to the literature reviewed as well as *Mentoring Up* theory and social constructivism. I have chosen to organise the discussion around the key findings in order to foreground the understanding that was derived from the case study. I will begin by arguing that mentoring was valued as an important facet of the initial training which STs received for the ADPE. I will go on to argue that although mentoring is valued, there is no formal training for mentors which resulted in the CTs adopting a variety of practices which led to uneven experiences for the STs. I will posit the idea that *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) is a viable framework for interpreting the mentoring experiences of the CTs and STs before completing the discussion with the

ideas that emerged from the study for enhancing the experiences of the CTs and STs and strengthening the preparation which all the STs receive during practicum.

5.1 The Value of Mentoring

This study revealed that the mentoring experience during the practicum exercise was crucial to preparing the STs to function effectively in their own primary classrooms. Thus, my first research question which asked, “What role does mentoring play in teacher preparedness for ADPE student teachers at the ASC?” was addressed. The expectation was that the STs would benefit from mentoring which was realised through modelling, teaching, support, collaboration and guidance. The STs generally expected mentoring to meet their individual needs in the development of pedagogical knowledge and skills which are required for effective primary school teaching. These areas of knowledge and skills are specified in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013) which is used to evaluate teachers during the assessment phase of the practicum exercise. The tool has four dimensions: planning, execution, classroom environment and reflection. Specific skills are subsumed under each dimension. For instance, under planning, it is specified that students must select “appropriate strategies for the subject being taught, as well as the age and stage of the students”, and “using appropriate classroom management strategies” appears under execution. This is an important element of the insight derived from this study because it reveals commonalities in teacher preparedness for ADPE students in Antigua and Barbuda and the expectations for initial teacher training programmes in other contexts such as those studied by Hudson and Hudson (2018, Koc (2016) and Garcia (2018). Furthermore, the insights that preparedness of the STs was linked to their interactions with their CTs, and that the CTs played a pivotal in the initial training of the STs is crucial because in earlier studies, those insights were not always derived from the perceptions of both mentors and mentees. Unlike my research which included both CTs and STs, most of the studies that were reviewed dealt with the perspectives of STs only. Another important feature of the account of mentoring provided in my study is that it has clarified the value of mentoring in this context by making a clear connection between the mentoring experiences of the STs and the areas of assessment which STs must master for successful completion of their initial training. Consequently, in contrast to prior studies, there is a concrete reference for the effectiveness of the mentoring which STs experience. However, the possibility of the participants restricting the outcomes of mentoring to those areas that appear in the assessment tool cannot be overlooked. This may be one explanation for the limited mention of emotional support and career guidance by the

participants. It is possible that since career guidance is not featured in the assessment tool, it was not mentioned by the participants even if it was a subject of the communication which took place between the CTs and STs.

Nevertheless, the finding that mentoring made a positive contribution to the preparedness of the majority of the STs is critical for the Antigua and Barbudan education context because mentoring by the CTs is a key aspect of the practicum for initial teacher training. Primary school teachers are generally expected to teach all four subjects – Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts so the mentoring which they receive in these subjects has important implications for their own practice. According to my knowledge, this is the first study that has been carried out in the territory on what CTs and STs experience during the TP so the understanding that mentoring helped the majority of STs to hone the essential pedagogical knowledge and skills identified in the assessment tool and develop confidence to function independently in the primary classroom strengthens the argument for the important role which CTs play in the initial training of teachers. This is evidence that I can use in my position as a gatekeeper of the quality of education in Antigua and Barbuda to support closer attention to the preparedness of CTs.

A critical finding is that the CTs did not always fulfil the role of mentor and, although some of the STs were supported by their peers and primary school teachers who were not CTs, others did not benefit from any mentoring whatsoever. Those STs who fall into this category represent a population for whom the initial teacher training programme is not fully effective in preparing them for their own primary classrooms. This signals a critical issue for the education system in the territory, particularly as it relates to pre-service training. One possible reason why some CTs might not be supportive of the STs is that they are not remunerated or given any incentive for their efforts, and they are engaged to participate in the practicum exercise even when they are unwilling to do so. Other research studies have highlighted lack of tangible incentives for mentors as a hindrance to effective mentoring (Alhija & Fresko, 2014; Biggers et al., 2019). This is particularly concerning given Brown et al.'s (2015) contention that the practical component is the most essential aspect of teacher preparation programmes. This situation has implications for my actions as an EO in terms of the support I provide to newly qualified teachers, and the efforts that I expend towards strengthening the efficacy of teachers who function as CTs. It also has implications for the JBTE which is the certifying body for teachers in the OECS. The JBTE should strengthen its

own monitoring and put structures in place to ensure that teachers across the region are experiencing comparable mentoring when they are on practicum.

Those STs who developed confidence through their interactions with their CTs to the point where they could “stand on their own” (CT_FG1) mirror the goal of mentoring described in *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019). Similar to the process of mentoring in *Mentoring Up* theory, the STs’ journey to standing on their own, becoming confident practitioners depends on both mentor and mentee having fixed earnest intentions which prompt them to invest time and effort in developing their relationship. However, unlike *Mentoring Up* theory which presents the experiences of protégés who were already a part of the nursing profession but were acquiring new knowledge and skills, my research included mentees for whom the mentoring experience preceded their entry into the teaching profession. Furthermore, in the theory, the idea that “confidencing” is the goal of mentoring is derived from the perspective of the nursing protégés alone whereas in my study, “confidencing” as the key objective of the interactions between mentors and mentees is derived from the perspectives of both the CT and the STs. Although an emphasis on “confidencing” is implied in earlier studies in other educational contexts, the direct connection between the input of the CTs and the growth of the STs was made explicit in this case study. The role which mentors performed led to the mentees acknowledging their contribution to their development, the essence of “reframing” in the *Mentoring Up* theory. This suggests that the role of CTs in the initial training of teachers should not be overlooked. In fact, the role of the CTs is so critical that their preparation has emerged as a significant consideration in their mentoring practices.

5.2 CTs’ Preparation and Mentoring Practices

The finding that the CTs adopted mentoring practices based on their understanding of what mentoring entails is significant for two main reasons. Firstly, it provides a possible explanation for the finding that the approach to mentoring adopted by some of the CTs was not effective in meeting the needs of the STs. Secondly, it suggests that the lack of formal training for the CTs resulted in incongruent practices which reflected great variation in the expertise of the CTs and their preparation for mentoring. The majority of the CTs acknowledged attending a meeting which lasted for less than two hours, but they did not have any formal professional development experience which they acknowledged prepared them to engage in the mentoring of the STs; therefore, they were basically forced to find a way to

navigate the responsibility that was thrust upon them. The amount of time invested in preparing the CTs does not match the integral role they are expected to play in the training of the STs. It seems that the meeting, which was not attended by all of the CTs who were involved in the TP, was designed to fulfil an administrative requirement rather than prepare the CTs to mentor effectively. Furthermore, it is possible to conclude that because the practicum period is supposed to complete the training for the ADPE, the emphasis of the DTE was on securing a practicum grade for each student and not so much on ensuring that there was significant growth in the students' ability to function as classroom teachers.

Similar to the apparent lack of formal professional development opportunities, no explicit reference was made by the CTs to any informal professional development experiences which prepared them to mentor. This 'silence' on informal professional development may indicate that the CTs were unaware of what could be considered informal professional development activities or that they did not consider the activities they engaged in to be preparation for their role as mentors. The latter is a reasonable explanation given that the CTs made mention of informal activities which they engaged in during the process rather than in preparation for it. This suggests that they make a distinction between training on the job (which is informal and mainly self-directed) and training for the job (which they were adamant they did not experience). Additionally, although some of the CTs admitted that they drew on their experiences as primary school teachers to mentor the STs, they also expressed the view that teaching their primary students was different to teaching the STs so activities which they engaged in as primary classroom teachers were not considered preparation to mentor. Evidently, the CTs made a clear demarcation between their roles as classroom teachers and their roles as mentors to the STs. Also, they seemed unaware that their development as classroom teachers is transferrable to their role as mentors to STs even though some aspects of it such as instructional approaches are transferrable.

In the absence of formal and informal professional development experiences specific to mentoring, the CTs invariably relied on their own initial teacher training experiences to guide their mentoring practices. This finding is consistent with findings of research in various contexts where there was no formal mentor preparation for CTs (Garcia, 2018; Graves, 2010; Lafferty, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). In Rikard and Veal (1996) and more recently in Garcia (2018), it was shown that when CTs are not formally trained for the mentor role, they resort to their own practicum experiences and their teaching experiences to guide their interactions with STs. This may explain why the expectations of some of the STs in my

study were not met. It may be that those CTs who were mimicking the CTs they had for their own practicum were satisfied with what they experienced as STs, but the STs that were assigned to them had different needs which were not fulfilled. This points to mentor preparation for mentoring that is specific to the needs of the STs and it underscores the importance of greater care in matching STs and CTs.

Although empirical evidence which makes a direct connection between CT preparation and their effectiveness is not available, the extant literature suggests that effective mentoring, like effective teaching, is associated with adequate preparation for mentors (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Franks & Krause, 2020; Izadinia, 2016; Leshem, 2012; Orland-Barak, 2010; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). It is repeatedly suggested that requiring classroom teachers to mentor STs without adequately preparing them implies disregard for the specialised role of mentors and the impact they have on the initial training of teachers. Training is needed to provide mentors with a clear understanding of what is required of them and to prepare them to interact effectively with their protégés. Although the *Mentoring Up* theory does not specify the need for specific mentor training in the mentoring relationship, definite preparation for the role is assumed in the “laddering” phase of interactions between mentors and mentees and in the understanding that the mentors are equipped to facilitate the professional development of the mentees. The researchers noted that, “*Laddering*, the most complex phase of *Mentoring Up*, is an intense period of reciprocal interactions between mentors and protégés and is a necessary catalyst for protégés to develop decision-making capabilities and to achieve professional expertise” (Hale & Phillips, 2019, p. 167).

My findings are in line with prior research which show that mentors are not always formally prepared for mentoring and this negatively impacts their sense of preparedness for their role and the quality of mentoring which they provide (Alhija & Fresko, 2014; Izadinia, 2015; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). For example, Franks and Krause’s (2020) study of CTs’ perceptions of their readiness to mentor STs revealed that even among those CTs who expressed confidence in their capacity to mentor, participants expressed the need for formal professional development opportunities specific to the role of mentoring. The impact of formal preparation on mentor effectiveness has led to repeated calls for formal training in mentoring for CTs (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Franks & Krause, 2020; Izadinia, 2015; Mackie, 2018; Orland-Barak, 2010; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008).

One finding that could be attributed to the lack of specific mentor training is that the CTs interacted with the STs in different ways and they fulfilled a variety of roles. Two distinct approaches to mentoring are evident from the roles which the CTs fulfilled. On the one hand, terms like “guide”, “support”, “scaffold”, “help” and “share” were used by both the STs and the CTs to describe the interactions of the CTs with the STs. Furthermore, consistent dialogue, co-learning, and an image of the CT as the “more knowledgeable other” (Galloway, 2010; O’Connor, 1998; Ormrod, 2000; Woolfolk, 2010), scaffolding the learning of the STs, feature consistently in the mentoring experiences described by some of the STs and the CTs. These descriptions suggest an underlying social constructivist approach to mentoring and a constructivist understanding of teaching and learning (Kim, 2001; Knapp, 2019). Consistent dialogue and interaction was experienced by all the STs who perceived that they were mentored effectively. I have inferred that the interactions which mirrored social constructivism met the expectations of the STs because it aligned with the approach adopted by the teacher educators during the four semesters of theory. In contrast to the approach that reflected elements of social constructivism, some of the interactions between the CTs and the STs were strictly directive and are best described as a transaction in which the CTs, who were the founts of knowledge, gave or transferred their knowledge and skills to the STs. The idea that the CTs “pass on ... best practices” (HoD_Interview) suggests that the STs were passive learners, who merely collected what was passed on by the CTs. The practices of those CTs who direct the learning of the STs have implications for the professional growth of the STs and their own practice as classroom teachers. Teacher Education literature suggests that the directive approach limits the STs’ growth in the ability to reflect incisively on their practice and construct knowledge (Cohen et al, 2012). The ability to reflect, a necessary skill for effective teaching, is also one of the elements of the Teacher Assessment Tool (JBTE, 2013). In the context of 21st century education, teachers who are not critically reflective practitioners and who do not provide opportunities for their students to develop this skill are restricting opportunities for advancement that can be harvested for themselves and their students (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Furthermore, the STs who experienced directive mentoring throughout the process are likely to adopt a similar approach to teaching the primary school children because this study confirmed that the CTs influenced the preparedness of the STs for their own classroom teaching. Kourieos, (2019) notes that, “Cooperating teachers acting as mentors are key participants in determining the quality of learning for student teachers during this period;

therefore, the mentoring practices they adopt are crucial in determining the extent to which student teachers will benefit from this field experience and grow professionally” (p. 274).

The view that practicum is an opportunity for STs to acquire the “right way of teaching” (ST_FG2) which the CTs possess in order “to direct you” (ST_FG1) also has implications for the relationship that develops between the CTs and the STs. Whereas the reflective approach promotes mutual development of the CTs and STs and reciprocal analytic feedback as is noted in Buchanan and Clarke (2021) as well as Cohen et al., (2013), the directive approach stifled this type of relationship between the CTs and the STs. Furthermore, the directive approach could be the source of conflict between CTs and STs because it is also associated with a judgemental approach to mentoring which Manning and Hobson (2017) found hindered the professional growth of teacher students and created tensions between them and their CTs. Developmental social interactions cement the filial bond which has to be maintained between mentors and mentees, and they are necessary to facilitate “laddering” which mentees must experience as they develop confidence in their own effectiveness. Laddering is not static so the quality of the interactions between CTs and STs is important for moving the ST along to confidence. This is particularly important as CTs engage in “surveillance” and “debriefing” which in the context of the practicum amounts to the CTs observing the STs teach and providing instructive feedback.

The contrast between the directive approach and developmental social interactions which were experienced by the majority of the STs is critical because it potentially adds to the unevenness of the ‘playing field’ which STs experienced. However, there is empirical evidence that effective mentoring is not limited to a single approach. Rather, culture, curriculum, the CTs’ prior experiences as STs themselves, the personality of CTs and, less prominently, the specific developmental needs of the ST influence the mentoring approach that is adopted (Cohen et al, 2013; Glenn, 2006; Lechem, 2012; Orland-Barak, 2010). Notably, it appears that the developmental needs of the STs were not a factor in the approach adopted by the CTs in my study. It is interesting that both approaches were highlighted by the same CTs and STs in a manner that suggests that some of the participants considered them to be complementary. Even the HoD’s account of what mentoring entails suggested a dual approach in which the STs could be either passive recipients of the CTs’ knowledge or actively involved in their own learning. On the one hand, the CTs are expected to “pass on best practices” and yet they are expected to “allowing the teacher to learn from their mistakes, allowing them to suggest possible alternatives and so on” (HoD Interview).

Apparently, from the perspective of the DTE, the approach that facilitates the STs' learning evolves with time during the mentoring process. This matches the expectations of *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) which describes a change in the approach to the mentees' learning in the mentoring relationship from the initial stages to the more advanced stage of the mentee's development. However, the issue in this case study is that contrary to what appears to be the DTE's expectation and what is described in *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019), some CTs and STs tended to see the whole process of mentoring as directive. Both approaches were utilised with pre-service as well as in-service STs which is another matter that warrants consideration given that the STs had from 0 to 20 years teaching experience prior to entering the ADPE programme. Arguably, the developmental needs of the STs were more significant than the prior teaching experience which they had, although one may expect that the approach taken with someone who has never functioned as a primary school teacher would be different to the approach employed in mentoring someone who had been teaching for 20 years. However, the preparation that the CTs received prior to engaging in the practicum exercise did not permit intentional differentiation that took the STs' teaching experience into consideration.

5.3 Mentoring Experiences of CTs: Factors of Flavour

The experiences of both CTs and STs were shaped by a number of personal and contextual factors which 'flavoured' mentoring for the CTs and created an uneven "playing field" for the STs. In this section of the discussion, I will address those factors which caused the CTs to formulate an overall impression of mentoring which amounted to a flavour identified by the sense of taste. The metaphor is taken from one CT who announced that her mentoring experience left "a bitter taste in my mouth" (CT_FG1) but it expresses the feelings conveyed by the CTs in general. I am proposing that the impression which each CT formulated about the mentoring experience can be characterised metaphorically as a flavour which determined their willingness to engage in future mentoring exercises. However, as this research revealed, participating in the practicum exercise is not optional for those teachers who are selected to function as CTs.

The factors which combined to give the CTs an overall impression of mentoring within the ADPE were the CTs' motivation, their relationship with the DTE, their collaboration with fellow teachers, the prior knowledge and experiences of the STs and the CTs, and the willingness of the STs to accept the guidance provided by the CTs.

5.3.1 Differences in CTs' motivation.

The CTs' motivation to mentor was the driving force that propelled them to assume a variety of supportive roles and invest their time and resources in the development of the STs. It was the primary factor which 'flavoured' their mentoring experience because, notwithstanding the challenges which they encountered, those CTs who were motivated found a way to support the STs.

The CTs who were intrinsically motivated were driven by three main factors. These are

1. commitment to helping the ST and safeguarding the learning of the primary grade pupils (custodial),
2. desire to demonstrate supportive mentoring (altruistic), and
3. satisfaction from transferring specific content knowledge and pedagogical skills (generative).

These factors of motivation are very important since the CTs are not financially compensated for the work they do as CTs, and they do not usually volunteer for the role. Their motivation is a component of their earnest intention to invest in the professional growth of the STs. Because of the heightened focus on the academic achievement of primary grade students and the professional development of teachers (Jules, 2018; Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2015), the custodial and generative factors take on particular significance. These interconnected factors of motivation are key components in engendering a collegial culture in schools which could mushroom into communities of practice. It may be, too, that those CTs who disclose custodial and generative factors in their motivation are at schools with collegial cultures and/or communities of practice. The horizontal accountability associated with communities of practice (Wenger, 2010) may be one reason why effective mentoring took place when the CTs were driven by custodial and generative factors of motivation. Regardless, these factors stimulate professional growth and safeguard the quality of instruction which students receive. Thus, the second aspect of the custodial motivation – safeguarding the learning of the primary grade pupils – is connected to the first aspect and to the generative factor. The altruistic factor is interesting because it was influenced by the CTs' own experiences of supportive mentoring when they were on TP as well as experiences of unsupportive mentoring which caused them to commit to providing a different experience to

the one they got. The satisfaction that some of the CTs get from transferring content knowledge and pedagogical skills for one or more subjects is also noteworthy because it suggests that, although the CTs may be very confident about their ability to teach one or two of the four core subjects, they are conscious that they do not possess expertise in all four subjects—Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science—that they are expected to provide mentorship in. This is instructive of their perception of the mentoring which they provide, and it has implications for the primary education system in Antigua and Barbuda as a whole because it may be inferred that, although primary school teachers have to teach four subjects, they are not teaching all four equally well or with equal confidence. The generative motivation drive also means that the STs as a group benefitted from different areas of expertise highlighting the view that they were not given an ‘even playing field’.

Notably, the desire to help STs and safeguard the education system have been motivating factors for CTs in other contexts (Clarke et al, 2014; Clarke & Mena, 2020; Russell & Russell, 2011; van Ginkel et al., 2016). However, the three factors of motivation that emerged in my study represent a contextual confluence of motives that contrasts with what was discovered in other contexts. For instance, van Ginkel et al identified two motives for mentoring in their questionnaire study among 726 respondents from thirteen Dutch teacher education institutes. Their ‘generative outcome motive’ for mentors includes the satisfaction covered by the generative factor in my study among other factors and it contrasts with a ‘personal outcome motive’ which covers the personal growth and satisfaction which the mentors in van Ginkel et al.’s study obtained from mentoring. The opportunity to learn is an element in the personal outcome motive in van Ginkel et al.’s study and it has also been cited by CTs in other studies as a key motivating factor. This significantly contrasts with my study where the CTs perceived their own learning and development to be incidental to the mentoring process and not a driving factor.

The important point here is that the CTs’ are motivated by one or a combination of the factors outlined above as they engage in the mentoring process. Motivation forms what may be considered a platform for their experiences. This finding suggests an important parallel between mentoring during the initial training of the STs and mentoring as described in *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) where the motivation of the mentor is germane to the mentoring relationship, but it also contrasts with the theory in that *Mentoring Up* does not differentiate different factors of motivation. My study did not advance a correlation between motivation and the roles which the CTs fulfilled, but it may be that different roles

were associated with different factors of motivation. In the section which follows, I will discuss the different roles which the CTs fulfilled.

5.3.2 Role variation.

Irrespective of the factors which motivated the CTs, the mentoring which they provided encompassed a variety of roles, some of which featured more prominently in the CTs' experience than others. It may be that the roles which featured prominently were the ones which dominated the CTs interactions with the STs or it may be that the CTs fulfilled those roles more effectively, but these assumptions cannot be verified by this study. The idea that mentors perform a variety of roles making mentoring a complex process is well established in the literature. The range of roles which the CTs in this study performed during the course of mentoring highlights the potential complexity of mentoring within a context where the CTs actively participate in the initial training of the STs. Clarke et al. (2014) presents the idea that the complexity of the task CTs perform differs depending on the level of participation which they have in the practicum. The pervasive characterisation of CTs as placeholders, practicum supervisors, or teacher educators is not even an adequate representation of the substance and nature of how CTs participate in practicum. Nevertheless, the key point is that the complexity of the task increases as CTs become more involved in the development of the STs. On the other hand, Leshem (2012) and Lynn and Nguyen (2020), among others, have noted that mentors fulfil various roles at different phases of the mentoring process, which may impact on their practice if they are not adequately prepared to mentor. In the context of this study, it is clear that the CTs did not fulfil the same roles but it is unclear whether the roles performed changed at different phases of the mentoring process.

The variety of roles which the CTs performed also highlights the impact on the STs' preparedness for their own primary school teaching when the CTs failed to meet the expectations of the DTE and the STs to whom they were assigned. Moreover, it underscores the seriousness of the finding that the criteria which the DTE has for the selection of individuals to function as CTs are not stringently adhered to, and that the CTs are not specifically prepared to mentor. Considering that the STs had various needs depending on whether they were pre-service or in-service as well as a variety of personal factors compounds the seriousness of the situation, and it underscores the importance of greater care being taken in the selection of individuals to function as CTs.

The *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) posits the understanding that the roles which mentors perform evolve over the mentoring period which suggests the need for mentors to be flexible in their approach to mentoring and it also suggests that the matching of mentors and mentees should not be an arbitrary endeavour. In situations where mentors and mentees do not voluntarily align themselves with each other, such as was the case for the CTs and the STs in this study, the need for the CTs to enter the mentoring arrangement with a clear understanding of what it entails, and be equipped with the relevant qualities to mentor effectively cannot be overstated.

5.3.3 Commonalities and inconsistencies in communication and feedback.

The literature on mentoring during practicum suggests that communication and feedback are essential to effective mentoring experiences (Clarke et al., 2014; Cohen et al., 2013; Izadinia, 2016; Lechem, 2012; Lynn and Nguyen, 2020). This study supports this understanding by revealing that consistent communication and feedback featured prominently in the mentoring which some of the CTs provided. The DTE handout for CTs shows clearly that it is the written expectation of the Department that CTs engage in daily communication with the STs, but this did not always occur.

Dialogue is an important aspect of learning in the social constructivist paradigm and the importance that some of the CTs assigned to it in their mentoring relationship with the STs is further evidence for a social constructivist orientation in their mentoring practices. This orientation can be attributed to their own experiences as STs since this is the most consistently cited source of the practices they adopted in mentoring. The presence of a social constructivist orientation to learning is consistent with what is expected in the context given the emphasis on interpersonal skills and interaction that are outlined in the Regulations for the ADE (JBTE, 2016). However, it should be noted here that not all of the STs benefited from consistent dialogue and feedback which is a finding that will be discussed further in section 5.5.

In *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019), dialogue is an integral part of the relationship between mentors and their protégés. It is essential in the seeding and opening of the relationship when the mentors and mentees develop a filial bond and it is critical to the maintenance of that bond, the strengthening of earnest intentions and the different categories of laddering. The parallel between what the theory outlines and what the CTs in my study disclosed in relation to dialogue and their relationship with the ST is further grounds for the

applicability of the theory to the TP context. This is significant because the theory was derived in the context of nurse to nurse mentoring. The participants in the study that the theory was based on were drawn from different areas of nursing and they were at different stages of their nursing careers. My conclusion is that the elements that are similar in the situation that gave birth to the theory, and mentoring within the context of this study are more significant than the elements that are different. Once mentoring is the primary purpose of the relationship between a neophyte and an experienced professional, consistent communication and meaningful feedback are necessary for effectiveness.

5.3.4 Interactions with the DTE and other school teachers.

Two other important aspects of the way the CTs perceived the mentoring they provided are their relationship with the DTE and, to a lesser extent, their collaboration with other teachers at their schools. Here again, there is inconsistency in the CTs experiences with the DTE before, during and after the TP period. This adds to the flavour metaphor. The understanding that some of the CTs were not contacted by the DTE, did not receive the CT hand out from the DTE, and there is no system in place to ensure that the CTs are fully cognizant of the expectations of the DTE, or even that they possess the necessary knowledge and skills to mentor effectively, represents fundamental shortcomings in current practices. This situation calls into question whether or not the DTE truly perceives the CTs as partners in the initial training of the STs because there is a clear contradiction between what the Department practices and what it claims as policy.

In addition to their preparation for engaging in the mentoring process, some of the CTs were dissatisfied with the monitoring which took place during the process. CTs repeatedly advanced the view that difficult situations could have been eliminated or prevented from escalating with closer monitoring by the DTE. One of the interesting aspects of the CTs' interactions with the DTE was the practice of the DTE supervisors when they visited the STs. Conflicting practices were evident which suggests a need for clear standards that guide the interaction between the CTs and the DTE supervisors. The overall impression that was obtained by the CTs was that they were not an important part of the initial training of the STs and the practicum process because they did not receive any feedback on their performance or acknowledgement for their service at the end of the period. The relationship between CTs and university supervisors, as well as the significance of collaboration between universities and school mentors in the training of STs has garnered some attention in initial

teacher training research (Ellis et al., 2020; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012). CTs are generally dissatisfied with their relationship with the universities and their interactions with university supervisors but there is compelling evidence that the initial training of teachers benefit when there is greater collaboration between CTs and the university, and when CTs receive adequate support in mentoring (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ellis et al., 2020).

However, although some of the CTs in my study expressed the view that they were totally on their own and left to ‘hit in the dark’ (CT_FG1), other CTs claimed that the mentoring they provided benefitted from school-wide support. So, for some mentoring experiences, “the whole staff gets involved in helping” (CT_FG1), but for others, the CTs were alone in supporting their STs. Although the scope of this research did not allow for deeper probing of what seems to be communities of practice at some schools, this is an area that is worthy of further investigation and possible promotion as an example of best practice for the mentoring of ADPE STs in Antigua and Barbuda. School-wide participation in the mentoring of STs during their initial teacher training programme is not a finding that has been raised in any of the studies that I have explored so this phenomenon may be unique to this context. However, models of initial teacher training that is entirely school based exist (Carter, 2015), and researchers have explored the benefits of multiple mentors and multi-level preparation for STs, finding that STs leave their initial teacher training programme better equipped to negotiate the dynamics of teaching when they experience variations to the dyadic mentor-mentee relationship (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ellis et al, 2020; Menter et al, 2010; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019; Orland-Barak, 2010).

In summary, from the perspective of the CTs, the mentoring which they provided to the STs was generally effective in helping the STs to improve their knowledge and skills in order to complete their practicum exercise successfully and be ready to function effectively as teachers in their own primary classrooms. Consistent with the principles of *Mentoring up* theory, some of the CTs developed a bond with the STs and worked earnestly to ensure that the process of confidencing materialised. However, as a group, the motivation of the CTs, the approaches which they adopted in mentoring and the roles they performed, their relationship with the DTE, as well as support from other teachers at their school reflect variation and inconsistency, even contradictions in some cases. The result of this is that although all the CTs were expected to invest their expertise in preparing the STs for their teaching careers, there was much disparity in their experiences of mentoring.

5.5 Uneven Playing Field – the STs’ Perspectives

The experiences of the STs mirror the experiences of the CTs. However, the STs provided greater insight into how mentoring was perceived when the CTs rejected the mentoring role. This is critical because, although some CTs admitted to being unwilling to mentor and hinted at issues that resulted from them being unprepared to fulfil their role, their account of their experiences during mentoring does not fully capture what the STs experienced. It will be evident from my discussion that an uneven playing field, the metaphor I have borrowed from a ST to represent the experiences of the STs as a group, emphasises the variations experienced by the STs. These variations parallel the inconsistencies in the experiences of the CTs.

5.5.1 The mentor-mentee relationship.

Generally, the STs understood that the relationship which they had with their CTs was crucial to their experiences during practicum. Although the CTs and STs were assigned to each other and they were not acquainted with each other prior to the start of practicum, effective mentoring required that they engage in a multifaceted relationship that was built around support for the STs. However, one of the most significant findings of this study is that not all of the STs experienced supportive relationships with their CTs. The majority of the STs were satisfied with the relationship they developed with their CTs but some pre-service and in-service STs were among those who experienced relationships that were not supportive. This situation warrants the attention of the DTE because the centrality of the mentor-mentee relationship in initial teacher training is presented in several studies in the extant teacher education literature. For instance, Clarke et al. (2014); Cohen et al. (2013); Izadinia (2016); Lechem, (2012); Lejonberg et al. (2018), and Lynn and Nguyen, (2020), all underscore the importance of the mentor-mentee relationship in helping STs to experience growth during the practicum exercise. The *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) provides a possible explanation for the lack of a supportive relationship between some of the CTs and the STs in my study because the theory foregrounds a filial bond between mentors and mentees and earnest intentions on the part of both members of the dyad as foundational to a supportive relationship. The finding that some of the CTs rejected the mentoring role but were still assigned to STs and that mentoring and bonding had to take place simultaneously challenged the establishment of a supportive relationship for some STs. In this regard, the unevenness of the playing field was manifested in the experiences of the STs which suggest that they left

practicum with different levels of preparedness resulting from whether or not the relationship they had with their CTs permitted necessary growth.

As regards the STs' perceptions of the role their CTs played in their preparedness for the classroom, a continuum from supportive mentoring to no mentoring is evident. Most of the STs felt that they were effectively mentored and they were fully satisfied, or mentored but not fully satisfied, but a few of them felt they were not mentored by their CTs. The significance of this is that most of the STs perceived the mentoring they received to be very instrumental in their preparation for the primary classroom. Mullen and Klimaitis (2019) identify instrumental mentoring as that aspect of mentoring that has career functions. In this context, instrumental mentoring specifically refers to mentoring which allowed STs to acquire or hone the necessary knowledge and skills outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013). In contrast, other STs (the ones at the extreme end of the continuum) claimed that they were not mentored by their CTs mainly because the mentoring practices of the CTs did not advance their development of the necessary knowledge and skills. This has implications for the quality of the training which the STs as a group receive and their performance as newly qualified teachers. In the following subsections, I will discuss how the expertise of the CTs contributed to the unevenness of the mentoring the STs experienced.

5.5.2 Uneven practices and expertise of CTs.

This research, like others (Ellis et al., 2020; Franks & Krause, 2020; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Grave, 2010; Izadinia, 2015), underscores the value of STs' perceiving that their CTs, by virtue of the pedagogical knowledge and skills they possess, are capable of supporting their development. The expertise of CTs is important in inspiring confidence in the STs that the practicum period is a meaningful aspect of their training and it also contributes to the STs' development of confidence in their own expertise. Expertise, however, is not clearly defined or quantified in the literature but with reference to CTs it refers to multifaceted abilities which are manifested in the quality of support which STs receive (Clarke et al., 2014). STs' expertise is evidenced in the pedagogical knowledge and skills they exhibit confidently (Izadinia, 2015).

One of the striking findings that led to the metaphorical representation of what the STs experienced as an uneven playing field is that the CTs' expertise did not always align with the needs of the STs. Of great significance is that the CTs did not always teach all four of the subjects that the STs are required to teach. This means that the STs who were placed

with CTs who were not teaching all four subjects did not get the same level of guidance as those STs with CTs who were teaching all four subjects. Even when the CTs taught all four subjects, they did not possess content and pedagogical expertise for all four and there is no evidence that deliberate attempts were made to match the CTs who were strong in particular subjects with the STs who needed greater support in those subjects. Some of the STs needed greater guidance in particular subjects but their CTs lacked efficacy in the very subjects they needed greater support in. This was particularly true for Language Arts as is expressed in the following statement, “I did not get the modelling ... I had to venture to another school for a teacher to teach a whole class demonstrating how I should go about teaching Language Arts” (Phorsha). Evidently, the experiences of some of the STs conflicted with the recommendation in teacher education literature that STs should have access to high quality subject expertise (Carter, 2015). The variable support which the STs received in the four subjects contributed to the unevenness of the ‘playing field’ which they experienced as a group. Considering that the experiences which STs have on practicum influence the pedagogical and content knowledge which is transferred to their own teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006), the implications of CT expertise for the security of student learning in primary classrooms in Antigua and Barbuda are serious.

Another significant aspect of the deficiency in appropriate expertise was the CTs’ ability to engage in effective adult teaching and learning. Mentor teachers need more than the subject knowledge and pedagogical skills that are used to teach primary students; they need to be expert teachers of teachers which can only result from specialised mentor training (Ellis et al., 2020; Izadinia, 2016). This is a consideration that underpins the success of the mentoring exercise because it impacts the interactions between the CTs and the STs.

Furthermore, the arbitrary adoption of different approaches to mentoring is further indication of how the CTs’ expertise or lack thereof influenced the STs’ perception of their experience. Although different approaches do not necessarily result in ineffective mentoring (Glenn, 2006), when an approach is not strategically adopted to meet the needs of the ST being mentored, the result is a dissatisfied ST who perceives a conflict between their understanding of what mentoring entails and the understanding of their CT. Furthermore, since the CTs are expected to model pedagogical skills, the approach taken by the CTs may result in the neglect of necessary pedagogical skills which the STs should master.

Another aspect of unevenness is the guidance which the CTs provided in key elements of the assessment tool such as lesson planning, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and classroom management. Both pre-service and in-service STs in my study had experiences that led them to conclude that some of the CTs were mentors in title, but not in practice. In essence, some of the STs perceived that the CTs lacked the necessary expertise to support them effectively in those specific areas.

Some STs were satisfied with the mentoring they received because, in addition to providing guidance in lesson planning, teaching strategies and classroom management, their CTs consistently helped them to identify or create materials for their lessons as well as they provided “Straight-up feedback” (ST_FG3) on their performance. Frank feedback was valued because it communicated that the CTs were interested in the development of the STs, and it forced the STs to reflect on their teaching and make necessary adjustments for improvement. However, assistance and instructive feedback were not uniformly experienced by the STs as a group or even by individual STs. This contributed to the continuum of perceptions ranging from support to neglect.

One explanation for some STs concluding that they were not mentored is that there was a mismatch between the CTs’ approach to mentoring and what the STs expected. The importance of STs and CTs having the same expectations for what mentoring entails has been established by studies in other education contexts so one consideration for the DTE as they prepare CTs and STs for the practicum exercise is the need to clarify the approach/es that will be used in mentoring (Graves, 2010; Izadinia, 2016; Manning & Hobson, 2017; Meegan et al., 2013, Patrick, 2013). Graves (2010) contends that the provision of opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet prior to the start of the practicum to establish expectations is a solution for mismatched expectations and dissatisfied STs. The STs’ perception that some of the CTs displayed a lack of commitment to mentoring matches some of the CTs own disclosure of being unwilling to mentor, yet they were selected to function as CTs. Although this research did not permit the matching of those who experienced a lack of mentoring with those who admitted to being unwilling to mentor, the connection is a reasonable one, particularly so against the backdrop of *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) which presupposes willing involvement of the mentor.

5.6 Applicability of the Mentoring Up Theory

The expertise of the CTs which includes their ability to provide quality feedback to the STs during the mentoring process intersect the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale and Phillips, 2019) and the principles of social constructivism. The interactions which the STs described as supportive reveal a social constructivist approach to mentoring where interaction, dialogue, and the modelling of best practices by the CTs stimulated the STs' construction of knowledge. The social constructivist orientations are congruent with the process of mentoring up because the concept socially mediated knowledge in social constructivism is a necessary foundation for the mentoring relationship and it influences the quality of laddering in mentoring up. Laddering depends on consistent, high quality interactions between mentor and protégé and the supportive guidance of the mentor. Those STs in my study who perceived that they were mentored by their CTs recounted experiences which showed elements of the laddering and reframing phases of *Mentoring Up* theory. Thus, there is evidence that mentoring up took place in the context of the ADPE TP. This is noteworthy considering that the STs and the CTs did not know each other prior to the start of the practicum and they had a fixed period for the mentor- mentee interaction. In the original situations that generated the *Mentoring Up* theory, the mentors and their protégés knew each other and had formed a bond prior to the mentoring phase of their relationship. As discussed in Chapter 2, the mentoring up process unfolds in five stages. These are seeding, opening, laddering, equalising and reframing which cover the phases of the mentoring relationship from its inception to the stage where the mentee reflects on and acknowledges the mentor's contribution to their development.

In contrast to the linear progression of the mentoring relationship that is presented by *Mentoring Up* theory, my research suggests that the experience of successful mentoring – achieving confidence – could occur with 'seeding' and 'opening' overlapping and merging into the subsequent stages. This matches the fluidity of the phases of the mentoring relationship described by Lynn and Nguyen (2020). The 'equalising' and 'reframing' phases of the mentoring relationship were evidenced in the experiences of both pre-service and in-service teachers thereby suggesting that they had received adequate preparation for their own roles as classroom teachers. Conversely, there were STs who contended that the CTs did not possess the necessary expertise, as well as CTs who admitted to being unwilling and unprepared to mentor. The result is that some STs did not experience the laddering that they should have experienced in collaboration with the CTs and expressed strong criticism of their

CTs rather than the commendation expected of ‘reframing’. Nevertheless, my study suggests that *Mentoring Up* theory is a viable framework for understanding mentoring within the context of the ADPE TP. This is particularly so since some of the practices in the local context challenge the development of sound mentoring relationships. In the next section, I have discussed those practices that made the experience of “confidencing” for all of the STs difficult.

5.7 Contrary Practices

Current practices fail to foreground the crucial role mentoring plays in the preparedness of teachers for the primary classroom. Although this study found that the practicum period and the mentoring provided by the CTs are perceived by all stakeholders who participated in the study to be integral to the development of the STs, what some of the CTs and the STs experienced suggests otherwise. The haphazard selection, lack of formal training and the loose relationship between the CTs and the DTE suggest that the impact CTs have on the preparedness of STs is not rigorously taken into account.

5.7.1 Selection and training.

The selection and training of the CTs featured most prominently among practices that threatened the quality of mentoring which took place in the ADPE. From the perspective of the DTE, only qualified, experienced and willing teachers are selected to function as CTs. However, my finding is that, in reality, there is no standard qualification that is adhered to, experience varied significantly and CTs were made to engage in the mentoring of STs even when they lacked primary skills and were unwilling to participate in the practicum exercise. This insight is important because, as I discussed in the literature review, the CT is the most significant factor in the practicum experience of STs (Clarke et al., 2014; Izadinia, 2015; Leshem, 2012). Unwillingness on the part of the CT is a serious issue because unwilling CTs lack motivation to mentor. A reasonable assumption that could be made from my findings is that those STs who claimed that they were not mentored, were paired with unwilling CTs who decided to “go with the flow” (CT_FG1). Unwilling participation by CTs and STs’ dissatisfaction with the mentoring they received have been noted in other contexts (Ambrosetti, 2014; Clarke, Triggs & Nielsen, 2014; Mukeredzi, 2017; Zemek, 2008), so this is not unique to the ADPE at the ASC. However, the situation has great significance here, because the CTs have made claims that contradict the written position of the ASC.

Furthermore, the ASC is the only institution in the territory which offers an initial teacher training programme for primary school teachers.

The possession of pedagogical knowledge and skills, as well as specific communication skills that fit the teacher to be an effective mentor, are important elements of the selection criteria that are not always taken into account. The HoD stated that the teachers who are selected to mentor are teachers, “who show a certain amount of ability in terms of not just how they themselves perform within the classroom, but their ability to pass on ...best practices to someone else” (HoD_Interview). However, I found that not all of the CTs met this expectation, even by their own evaluation. Some of the CTs admitted to their inability to “put things in a way so that [the ST] could understand” (Kim), and some of the STs also commented unfavourably on the ability of the CTs to communicate effectively.

Another observation is that the selection practices convey a negative message to the CTs which could impact the relationship between them and the STs. The statement, “I think just calling and letting you know, well, you're going to have a teacher trainee the next week or something like that is just not cutting it. And I find that is grossly disrespectful” (Bonnie) is illustrative of a conflict between how the DTE goes about enlisting CTs and engaging them in the practicum exercise and what the CTs consider to be appropriate. It is also representative of the loose relationship between the CTs and the DTE; but, even more significant is the impact which the emotion expressed here had on the relationship between the CTs and the STs. It appears that the DTE is not sensitive to the impact perceptions like the one shared in the utterance quoted above has on how the CTs engage in mentoring. This has grave implications for the education system as a whole because using the lens of the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019), the whole mentoring process and, consequently, the practicum aspect of teachers' initial training would be jeopardised if ‘earnest intentions’, ‘filial bond’ and ‘trustworthiness’ do not permeate the mentoring relationship.

Another contrary practice is the training which the CTs received before they were assigned to the STs. What the CTs experienced in the meeting which was held by the DTE conveyed a notable incongruity between what the DTE communicates in theory and what is practised. Although, theoretically, the DTE recognises the importance of the CTs to the initial training of the STs, they did not provide adequate training for them to fulfil their role effectively. Both CTs and STs in my study lamented the preparation which the CTs received

prior to engaging in the mentoring of the STs. Thus, the understanding of both the CTs and STs is that the lack of specialised training for the CTs impacted the effectiveness of the mentoring which the CTs provided and, ultimately, the preparedness of STs for their own primary school teaching. This finding is consistent with the position that mentor training is critical for effective mentoring relationships (Ellis et al., 2020).

5.7.2 The relationship between the DTE and CTs.

Insights into the nature of the relationship between the DTE and CTs were derived from what participants disclosed about the support and guidance for the CTs during the practicum period, the monitoring of the relationship between the CTs and the STs, and the feedback provided to the CTs after the completion of the practicum exercise. Once the CTs were enlisted for the practicum exercise, they were generally left on their own. They disclosed that, at the end of practicum, they never received feedback on their performance nor expressions of gratitude from the DTE. The way the DTE related to the CTs suggests an underlying placeholder conception of the role of the CTs (Clarke et al., 2014) rather than the teacher educator role that is communicated by official DTE documents. The CTs are expected to be teacher educators but, in reality, they are treated as if they play an insignificant role in the training of the STs.

Another concern that arises from the relationship between the DTE and CTs is that the current situation limits the professional development potential of the experience for the CTs. Clarke et al. (2014) suggest that the interactions between CTs and university teacher educators have professional development potential for CTs which is valued by CTs. Yet, in Antigua and Barbuda, the CTs were not monitored and supported. In fact, there was little interaction between the CTs and the TEs before, during and after the practicum period. These are notable issues considering that the CTs are drawn from the same pool of teachers year after year. Teacher education research literature advocates strong ties between teacher education institutions and CTs in order to safeguard the quality of training which STs receive (Orland-Barak, 2010; Clarke et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gowrie & Ramdass, 2012; Koc, 2016). Empirical evidence suggests that in various international settings, the relationship between the providers of initial teacher education programmes and CTs threaten the effectiveness of the mentoring which CTs provide. Enhanced communication between stakeholders, support for the CTs and close monitoring of the practicum process are advanced as recommendations for addressing the need for systems that secure the quality of training

which STs receive. These recommendations were echoed by the participants in my study who generally perceived that the current relationship between the DTE and the CTs affects teacher preparedness on an individual level as well as on a national level. The participants perceived that more effective mentoring could be achieved by correcting the current practices that deviate from the understanding that the CTs are an integral part of the initial training which STs receive. In the following section of this discussion, I will present those ways that the participants perceived that the current practices could be corrected in order to achieve more effective mentoring.

5.8 Ways to Achieve More Effective Mentoring

Effective mentoring can be achieved if the conditions which safeguard the different phases of the mentoring relationship are present. To this end, the participants in my study have called for mentor training. Prior research in other education contexts has established that mentor training is essential for effective mentoring because good classroom teachers do not necessarily make good mentors of STs (Franks & Krause, 2020; Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley & Smith, 2012; Mackie, 2018; Rikard & Veal, 1996; Zemek, 2008). My study confirms the need for CTs to be specifically trained to mentor. Mentor training would enhance what CTs do as a group so that there will be consistently effective preparation of the STs. The understanding that proper selection and training of CTs, and close monitoring of the mentoring process, which includes support for the CTs while they engage in mentoring, corroborate stipulations for effective mentoring that were made in other studies (Lafferty, 2018; Manning & Hobson, 2017). However, the exact content of the mentor training, and the criteria for the selection of mentors may be tailored to account for the unique circumstances of the initial teacher training for primary teachers in this territory.

5.8.1 Focus of mentor training/ preparation.

For mentoring to be effective, the individual who fulfils the role of mentor must have appropriate knowledge and skills. In Antigua and Barbuda where mentors are assigned to STs, the process of ensuring that the STs are effectively mentored should begin with the selection of suitable persons to fulfil the role of CTs, and continue by equipping them with appropriate knowledge and skills. Research which focussed on other teacher training programmes around the world have underscored the need for CTs to have adequate teaching experience and be current in their pedagogical knowledge and skills (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Lafferty, 2018; Mackie, 2018; Manning & Hobson, 2017; Orland-Barak, 2010). The

need to focus on the currency of the CTs' knowledge was well expressed by one CT who noted, "Knowledge is always changing so there were so many things that needed to be addressed" (CT_FG1).

Equipping CTs with appropriate pedagogical knowledge and skills builds their confidence, prevents them from "basically going into it like we're walking in the dark" (CT_FG1), and ensures that they are prepared to provide effective support for the STs. One fundamental aspect of the training which the CTs need is making a distinction between teaching primary school children and teaching adults. The CTs recognised their limitations in this regard (as I presented in 4.2.1.2). The need for the CTs to be trained to work with adults is upheld in the research literature (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ramdass & Gowrie, 2012).

Another skill which the CTs need to develop is the ability to diagnose the specific needs of the STs and differentiate their support to meet the individual developmental needs of the STs. This is particularly critical as the STs could be pre-service or in-service and the in-service STs have varied years of teaching experience prior to enrolling in the ADPE programme. The pre-service STs include school leavers and mature individuals who may have worked for years in other fields. Given this contextual situation, differentiated mentoring is a critical skill for mentors to develop in order to meet the particular needs of the STs assigned to them. One possible outcome of this is that the STs will transfer what was modelled for them, in terms of differentiation to their own practice as teachers. As underscored by Latz et al (2008) and Kokkinos (2020), differentiated instruction is a critical component of the teaching and learning process and is key to ensuring optimum learning for all students. Closely connected to this aspect of the training which the CTs need is the suggestion that special attention should be paid to training CTs to meet the needs of pre-service teachers. My study suggests that there is a strong perception that mentoring pre-service teachers requires distinct skills. I noted a clear understanding that the CTs may have to fulfil different roles depending on whether they are mentoring in-service or pre-service STs. This is a perception which I believe warrants further investigation so that it can be incorporated into the preparation of the CTs.

The ability to provide emotional support is yet another area of training that both the CTs and STs cited as necessary. This is not unique to the local situation because this aspect of support that STs need from mentors has been highlighted by other researchers (Hudson & Millwater, 2008; Mukeredzi, 2017; Orland-Barak, 2010). Providing emotional support to the

ST is also a key aspect of the mentoring relationship according to the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019). A close bond which is strengthened with time permits reciprocal emotional support and it accommodates the mentor's commitment to ensuring that the protégé is emotionally safe. However, the theory suggests that the provision of emotional support is not the result of formal training. Rather, it emanates from the bond which is developed between the participants in the mentoring relationship. This has implications for how and when the CTs and STs are matched and the opportunities that they get for bonding before and during the practicum period.

This focus on mentor training as a means of improving the quality of mentoring which CTs provide and the readiness of the STs for the primary classroom supports imperative two of the OECS Education Sector Strategy. Imperative two concentrates on improving teachers' professional development with "improved teacher quality" (OECS, 2012 p. vii) among the outcomes. My case study suggests that quality CTs require mentor training that provides the CTs with common skill sets. Ultimately, investments in the training of the CTs will redound to the quality of teaching and learning which takes place in the primary classrooms.

5.8.2 Valuing CTs and the mentoring process in practice.

The value which the DTE places on the mentoring aspect of the practicum is reflected in their relationship with the CTs and the attention that is paid to what the CTs and STs experience during practicum. The current recruitment, preparation, monitoring and support processes suggest a low value for the role the CTs play in the initial training of the STs. The majority of the CTs disclosed that they were informed by their principals just days before the start of the practicum that they were going to get a ST. This practice communicates disrespect for the CTs and a disregard for the impact which CTs have on the development of the STs. This recruitment practice means that the CTs are not properly prepared to engage in the mentoring. Additionally, there are no formal provisions for them to provide feedback on their experiences to the DTE. According to the participants in the study, the creation of avenues for the provision of feedback from both the STs and the CTs is one way that both monitoring of the mentoring process and support for the CTs could be facilitated.

Close monitoring of the mentoring process and the provision of support to the CTs are themes which appear in the empirical literature on initial teacher training and there is evidence that mentor teachers benefit when their mentoring is supported and monitored by the university or another external body. For instance, Ulla (2016) observed the important role

played by teacher educators as well as national governing bodies in ensuring quality preparation for STs. A similar view is presented by Carter (2015) and Lawson et al. (2015) who underscore the role of mentors in the initial training of teachers. In Antigua and Barbuda where the initial training of all primary level teachers rests with the DTE, there is obvious value in ensuring that the CTs get adequate support to help them to fulfil their mentoring role effectively.

5.9 Summary

This study has shown that the participants recognised the critical role which mentoring plays in the initial training of STs, but actual practices contradicted the expectations for effective mentoring and adequate preparation of the STs as a group for their own primary classroom teaching. Some of the CTs were driven by one or a combination of three factors of motivation and they played an important role in preparing the STs for their own classroom teaching by providing the guidance and support needed by the STs. These motivated CTs fulfilled a variety of roles which highlight the complexity of mentoring within the TP for the initial training of teachers. However, the preparation needed by the STs was not fulfilled by all the CTs so that some of the STs ended the practicum with the view that they were not mentored. The root of the STs' perceptions of not being mentored is that the processes that currently operate for selecting, monitoring and supporting the CTs contradict the DTE guidelines and the participants' expectations. This conflict between what was expected and what was experienced was, to a large extent, due to the mismatch between the CTs' expertise and the STs' needs.

The impact of the practices adopted by the CTs is that the STs experienced an uneven 'playing field' which resulted in them entering the primary classroom for their role as classroom teachers with varying areas of preparedness depending on what they experienced on practicum. This has implications for the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the territory.

Although it is evident that the *Mentoring Up* theory (Hale & Phillips, 2019) is a viable framework for understanding the relationship which emerged between the CTs and the STs, the processes of selecting CTs and assigning CTs to STs challenged the seeding and opening stages of the mentoring process and the establishment and maintenance of a filial bond between some of the CTs and the STs. Thus, the *Mentoring Up* theory provides a useful lens for understanding both satisfactory and unsatisfactory mentoring experiences.

In the chapter which follows, I reiterate the key elements of the study and outlined the conclusions which I drew from the inductive analysis and interpretation of the data. The chapter also addresses the implications of the research for the local context and the impact the study is expected to have.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This study was motivated by my interest, as a former teacher educator and a current EO, in the effectiveness of the initial training which STs who are pursuing the ADPE receive. Against the backdrop of heightened focus on teacher quality as a means of improving student achievement at the national and OECS levels (Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2015; OECS Education Sector Strategy, 2020), and the understanding that initial teacher training significantly impacts teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2006), I decided to focus my research on the initial training of STs in Antigua and Barbuda, specifically the mentoring experiences of CTs and STs because that key aspect of the initial training of STs was previously neglected in proposals to reform teacher education (Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2015; Universalia, 2017). I determined that a close examination of what both the CTs and the STs experienced during the TP could provide a better understanding and valuable insights into the mentoring which the CTs in Antigua and Barbuda provide in order to improve the quality of training which STs receive.

The ultimate aim of this qualitative case study in which I employed *Mentoring Up* theory and Social Constructivism as interpretive lenses was to garner context specific information that could contribute to the national and regional thrust to improve teacher quality as one of the integral factors in student achievement. Thus, this intrinsic case study was designed with one overarching question and five guiding questions that have generated insights which, if acted upon, could improve the quality of mentoring which the CTs provide and enhance the preparation of the STs for the primary classroom. In this final chapter, I recap the major findings, reiterate the implications of these findings and the significance of the study before sharing the limitations of the enquiry and making suggestions for future research.

6.1 Major Findings

The results of this study suggest that, in the context of the ADPE in Antigua and Barbuda, mentoring during TP is valued by the stakeholders – STs, CTs and the DTE – as a crucial part of the initial training of teachers. The expectation of the DTE is that the CTs will support the professional development of the STs. Through the mentoring relationship, the STs are expected to hone the knowledge and skills outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013), thereby completing their preparation to function as classroom

teachers. The CTs and the STs share this expectation but there are a number of haphazard practices that challenge its fulfilment. These practices ‘flavour’ the mentoring experiences for the CTs and contribute to creating what I have referred to as an ‘uneven playing field’ for the STs.

6.1.1 Uneven playing field

The main point of the perception that the STs experienced an ‘uneven playing field’ is that mentoring by the CTs was not consistently effective for all of the STs. The CTs possessed various areas of expertise that did not consistently match the development needs of the STs that were assigned to them. This insight could be inferred from the CTs’ experiences but it was the STs’ experiences which highlighted the specific areas of expertise that they needed their CTs to have, underscoring the need for the DTE to re-examine the criteria that is used to engage CTs in the practicum exercise. The disparity between the needs of the STs and the expertise of their CTs is also justification for the DTE to engage in more careful matching of CTs and STs. The DTE also needs to institute formal avenues for feedback from the STs. Furthermore, the DTE needs to examine the mentoring relationship between CTs and STs to determine how best the process of “confidencing” could be secured for all of the STs. This is important because the impact of the CTs’ expertise was greater for some STs depending on whether or not they were in-service or pre-service, the number of years of experience they had as in-service teachers, and the support that they encountered from sources other than their CTs. All of these were elements which contributed to the unevenness of the preparation which the STs experienced for their own primary school teaching.

6.1.2 Factors of flavour

In contradiction with the role mentoring is expected to play in the initial training of teachers, the CTs, generally, had experiences during the practicum process which left them with an unpleasant impression or ‘flavour’ of what it means to be a CT. These experiences include the manner in which they were enlisted to mentor the STs, inadequate preparation to mentor, and unsatisfactory monitoring and support from the DTE. The effects of these experiences were compounded or alleviated by their own motivation, their prior teaching experiences, and the willingness of the STs to accept guidance from them.

The critical importance of CTs to the initial training of STs (Clarke et al., 2014; Lynn & Nguyen, 2020) suggests that the experiences of the CTs impacted the quality of training which the STs experienced. This has implications for the teaching which newly qualified

teachers do. Therefore, these factors which flavoured the mentoring experiences of the CTs highlight areas of the mentoring process that should be addressed in the interest of improving the quality of teaching which takes place in the primary classrooms.

6.2 Implications of the Findings

The findings which I outlined in section 6.1.1 – 6.1.2 have implications for the effectiveness of the initial training of STs in Antigua and Barbuda. This redounds to the quality of the teaching force at the primary level because, as I mentioned in chapter one, the DTE controls the training for primary school teachers in this territory. It is critical that the experiences of the CTs and the STs be taken into account in the current drive to improve the quality of teachers, and, ultimately, student achievement.

6.2.1 Effectiveness of STs' training.

The overarching implication of the findings is that the newly qualified teachers enter the primary classroom with very different levels of preparation depending on what they experienced during the practicum. They do not get consistent support in all four of the subjects they are expected to teach and the guidance they receive in specific elements of teaching that are outlined in the Assessment Tool for Teachers (JBTE, 2013) such as lesson planning and classroom management differs from CT to CT. This ultimately affects the quality of teaching they do and the academic achievement of their students because teacher preparation impacts teaching quality and teaching is “a key element in improving student outcomes” (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p.294). Consequently, in order to ensure that there is consistency in this aspect of the training which primary school teachers in the territory receive, there is a need for the DTE to make radical changes in the way the teaching practicum is operationalised.

6.2.2 Selection and preparation of CTs.

A fundamental aspect of ensuring consistency in the quality of training which STs receive is the selection of individuals to function as CTs. The current practice has to be reshaped to eliminate the apparent incongruence with the written stipulations of the DTE. The stipulations specify that individuals who are willing, have adequate teaching experience, sound content knowledge and pedagogical skills in the four core subjects that are taught at the primary level, and who are capable of sharing their knowledge and skills with STs should be selected as CTs, but the research revealed that individuals who match the stipulations were

not consistently selected. If the right persons are not selected to mentor, then it jeopardizes the whole mentoring process and the development potential of the TP. There is ample research evidence that supports the view that the mentor is the most critical factor in the TP experience of STs so it is important that individuals who can effectively support the professional growth of the STs be enlisted to participate in this aspect of their training (Izadinia, 2015; Leshem, 2012; Orland-Barak, 2010).

Furthermore, it is clear from the STs and CTs` testimonials that the training of CTs has to be prioritised in recognition of their role in the initial training of teachers and the complexity of mentoring STs as depicted by the different roles which they seem to play. One of the key concerns of the STs and CTs in this study is the apparent assumption of the DTE that the preparation which teachers receive for primary school teaching is enough for their job as mentors of adults. The perception that CTs need to be specifically trained to mentor was further elaborated on by the CTs and the STs who provided specific areas of focus for training. Figure 5 is a synthesis of those areas which were identified for CT training.

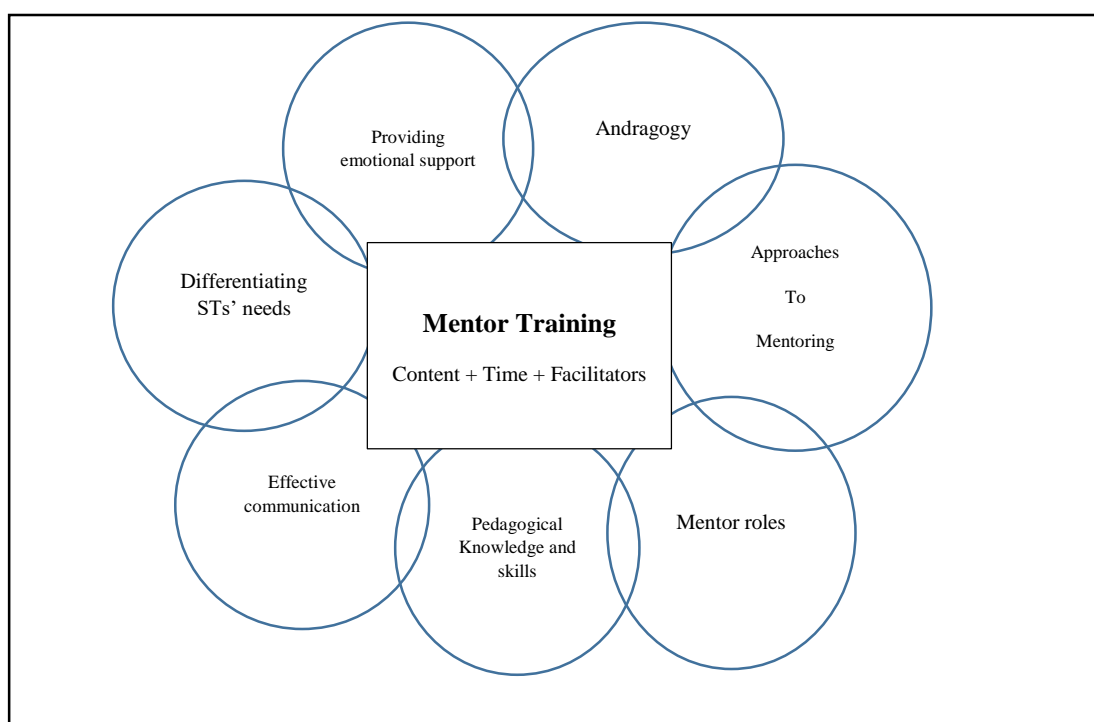


Figure 5.

Framework for Mentor Training

The framework suggests that three key elements, content, time and facilitators, must combine strategically for the training to be effective. The content refers to the areas to be covered in

the mentor training. These areas appear in the linked outer circles. Time in relation to this training covers both the period during the school year as well as the duration of the training. It was clear from the CTs perspective that adequate time has to be assigned to the training of CTs to allow for effectiveness. Finally, the training of the CTs should be facilitated by individuals who possess the appropriate knowledge and skills and who embrace the need for CTs to be specifically trained to mentor. No sequence is presented for the elements of the training in order to suggest that the preparation of the CTs could begin with any one of the areas depending on their needs, but there must be a strategic connection to the other critical areas.

6.3 Significance of the Study

By evaluating the mentoring experiences of both STs and CTs in this case study using Social Constructivism and *Mentoring Up* theory as interpretive lenses, I was able to contribute to fill a void in the extant literature. Firstly, this study makes a critical addition to the body of empirical studies in the local context and within the OECS. Given the current thrust at both the local and regional levels to improve teacher quality and student achievement, this study is very relevant since it provides an understanding of how teacher quality which ultimately impacts student achievement can be strengthened from the point of training. Furthermore, this study is, as far as I am aware, the first study that has been conducted on the subject in this territory and within the OECS. The information that is provided here is critical to providing a better contextualised understanding of how the mentoring aspect of the initial training of teachers could be reformulated to ensure that ‘an even playing field’ (ST_FG3) is provided for all STs. It also provides insights which could be used to address shortcomings in how teacher education institutions relate to CTs and STs during practicum. The study has already generated much interest from the MoE and the DTE. I shared preliminary findings of the research at the MoE’s inaugural research symposium and the DTE has not only expressed interest in enlisting my assistance to address the findings of the study but they have been taking steps to strengthen the preparation of CTs for their role.

Although, the initial training of teachers and the mentoring experiences of STs have generated much empirical enquiry in some regions of the world, the perspectives of both CTs and STs have not sufficiently been included in the same studies (Zeichner, 2021). Since this research represents the voices of both STs and CTs presenting themes which cut across the experiences of these key groups of stakeholders, it contributes to a gap that had been

highlighted in previous studies of practicum experiences during initial teacher training (Franks & Krause, 2020; Hudson & Millwater, 2008; Izadinia, 2016; Koc, 2016)

Furthermore, this study advances the insights that were previously available from teaching practicum research which included the perspectives of both CTs and STs by providing a different context and research design.

By applying the *Mentoring Up* theory which was originally based on the mentoring of nurses to the mentoring of STs during their initial training, this enquiry provides valuable insights into the applicability of the theory to the relationship that is forged between CTs and STs. By informing the application of the *Mentoring Up* theory to the teacher training context, I expect my study to contribute to the argument for inter-disciplinary approaches in research. I also expect it to be a reference for the use of theory in qualitative research, thus widening the range of interpretation for similar studies. Another noteworthy value of this research is that individuals who are interested in mentoring during TP in the initial training of STs in other Eastern Caribbean territories can use this study as a springboard for designing their own research. Very significantly, my completing this study within the Antigua and Barbuda education context signifies an extension to the frontiers of the educational research community. Thus, this study has practical and empirical significance.

Particular attention was paid to the paradigmatic values of trustworthiness, authenticity and emic richness as described by Guba and Lincoln (2008). Furthermore, by adopting a qualitative approach, foregrounding the experiences of both CTs and STs, rich, contextual insights were derived on which context appropriate initiatives could be based. Nevertheless, the paradigmatic distinctiveness that is a strength of this study is also a source of limitations.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The greatest challenge for the qualitative researcher is to demonstrate rigour in the conduct of the research and yet acknowledge the inevitable limitations of the study (Cohen et al., 2011; Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, it is essential that I outline the limitations of this study, highlighting reasons why, in spite of the limitations, it was a useful engagement.

Qualitative enquiry relies on the subjective views of the participants which combine to provide deep insights into the reality of the context but the emic perspective may also give rise to charges of unreliability of the research because it lacks factual, objective data (Atkins

& Wallace, 2012). However, this charge is addressed by attention to data triangulation which has been utilised to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings in this research (Denzin, 2009; Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). Focus groups and individual interviews, in addition to the inclusion of the Head of the DTE as well as both CTs and STs enhanced the trustworthiness of the findings. The case study approach poses a challenge for the generalizability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2011; Gray, 2014) but the benefits to be derived from this deep contextual study outweigh this limitation. Furthermore, the findings are likely to be transferrable to situations which mirror the context of this study.

Other limitations of this study arise from the sampling method that was used, the unexpected omission of the direct observation because of Covid-19 restrictions and the use of virtual rather than face-to-face interviews. Although all the STs and CTs who participated in a practicum exercise over the period of the study were eligible to participate, only those persons who responded to the research advertisement within a three-week period were included in the study. It is possible that different perspectives could have been obtained from the persons who did not respond to the advertisement but I am satisfied that I was able to obtain rich and varied data from the research participants.

I had planned to observe two pairs of mentors and mentees as part of the research design but the 2020 TP was aborted due to Covid-19 restrictions. Observation would have added another dimension to the ideographic account presented in this study thereby increasing rigour, but I was careful to engage in multiple levels of analysis of the data that was collected from the data sources used in the study. Furthermore, although, observation was omitted from the design, there was still triangulation of data because, as mentioned above, I engaged in document analysis and I obtained data from the STs, the CTS, and the Head of the DTE via different methods of data collection.

I took care to limit any deficiencies in the design of this qualitative case study so that the audience could have faith in the findings. It is true that there are individuals who only value numerical data and their epistemological commitment to the objectivist tradition would find the emphasis on the subjective views of the participants objectionable. However, the qualitative lens helped me to obtain the contextual insights that were necessary in achieving a deep understanding of mentoring during practicum, and how that aspect of the teacher training programme can be enhanced.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has revealed aspects of the experiences of the CTs and STs which would benefit from systematic enquiry. It has also highlighted possibilities for complementary research. The significance of the three drives of CT motivation that I have identified in this study – namely the custodial, altruistic and generative drives – to specific aspects of the support that is provided to STs is a relevant subject for research in this context. Some of the CTs disclosed that their STs benefitted from school-wide support during the practicum period which suggests that viable communities of practice may exist at some schools in the territory. School-wide support for STs who are on TP may be unique to this context so it is worth investigating as an example of an effective practice in the initial training of teachers. This research discovered that there is a strong perception among CTs that the roles they are required to fulfil when mentoring pre-service STs differ from the roles that are performed when mentoring in-service STs. This is another possible area for research which could ultimately impact on CT training.

Notwithstanding the areas for CT training that have been identified in this study, an investigation that identifies the specific needs of prospective CTs within the context in the quest to gaining a more in-depth understanding of the needs of the CTs is relevant. Another relevant subject of research may be the extent to which STs would benefit from multiple mentors for various aspects of their development rather than one. Yet another area for research is the role of peers in the development of STs since some of the STs credited their peers rather than their CTs for their success on practicum. Finally, an action research centred on training for the CTs could be designed based on the areas for training that have been identified in this study.

6.6 Reflexivity

With the aid of five guiding questions, I set out to gain a deeper understanding of the mentoring experiences of CTs and STs during the practicum that forms part of the initial training of primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda. Now that I have completed this study, I have a greater understanding of the iterative nature of the research process and the value of that iteration for gaining deeper and richer insights into the research topic. I have also come to appreciate the value of sound doctoral supervision. The feedback which I have received on this journey from my supervisors has provided me with opportunities to engage in deep reflection, interrogate my thinking and develop a greater sensitivity to how I was

constructing knowledge. With the guidance I received, I was able to confront my own idiosyncrasies, and paradigmatic assumptions to engage in a scholarly study. I have endeavoured to judiciously represent the context by providing an engaging account of the nuances which validate the qualitative approach to research enquiry.

This experience has motivated me to engage in further research. I am also motivated to encourage my colleagues to pursue doctoral studies and engage in collaborative enquiry to enhance education in the territory.

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Appendices

Appendix A: University of Liverpool Ethics Approval

Dear Desryn Collins		
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.		
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)	
Review type:	Expedited	
PI:	Dr. Victoria O'Donnell	
School:	University of Liverpool, Online Programmes Department of Higher Education	
Title:	Expectations and experiences: An examination of mentoring in the Associate Degree in education TP for primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda	
First Reviewer:	Dr. Mariya Yukhymenko	
Second Reviewer:	Dr. Rachel Maunder	
Other members of the Committee	Drs. Lucilla Crosta, Kalman Winston, Kathleen Kelm, Yota Dimitriadi	
Date of Approval:	May 13, 2020	

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:			
Conditions			
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.	

<p>This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc.</p> <p>Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required</p> <p>(a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).</p>			

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards, Lucilla Crosta Chair, EdD. VPREC

Appendix B: Ministry of Education Approval for Conduct of Research

**Government of
Antigua & Barbuda**
Ministry of Education, Science & Technology
Government Complex, Queen Elizabeth Highway
St. John's, Antigua
Tel: 462-0192/462-0193/462-0198/462-0199
Overseas: 268-462-4959/1051
Fax: 268-462-4970

December 3, 2019

Mrs Desryn Collins
W180 Woods Centre
St John's
Antigua


Dear Mrs Collins,

Permission to conduct EdD research

In response to your letter seeking permission to engage in an intrinsic case study entitled: *Expectations and experiences: An examination of mentoring in the Associate Degree in Education teaching practicum for primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda*, I am pleased to grant you permission on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and to wish you all the best as you engage in your study.

I have taken note of the participants who will take part in the study and the documents that will be analysed and permission to access these is also granted. The Ministry of Education looks forward to receiving the research report upon completion of the study.

Yours sincerely,



Clare Browne (Mr.)
Director of Education



Appendix C: Participant consent form- Head of DTE**Participant consent form****Head, Department of Teacher Education****Version number & date:** Version1/ 10 April, 2020**Title of the research project:** Expectations and Experiences: An examination of mentoring in the Associate Degree in Primary Education Teaching Practicum in Antigua and Barbuda**Name of researcher:** Desryn Collins**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 10 April, 2020 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that taking part in the study involves an audio recorded interview and I consent to your use of these recordings for the conduct of the research.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular question or questions.
4. I understand that in order to maintain confidentiality, I must be alone in a private space during the interview.
5. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained but, because there is only one Teacher Education institution in the research site, that it will be possible to identify me in the research report.
6. I understand that others may disagree with my contributions to the research but I am willing to participate nonetheless.

7. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript of the information I provide and that I can modify or withdraw any statement that was made within one week of receiving the transcript.
8. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool for the purpose of supporting or validating the project's observations for a minimum period of 5 years.
9. I understand that the signed consent form and audio recordings will be retained in a locked cabinet, and that electronic files will be kept on a secure drive which can only be accessed by the researcher until the completion of the study.
10. I understand that a transcript of my interview will be retained for 5 years.
11. I understand that I must not take part if I am uncomfortable about the research and I can withdraw at any time should I feel the need.
12. The information you have submitted will be published as a thesis; please indicate by initialing this box if you would like to receive a copy.
13. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Participant name	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

Researcher:

Desryn Collins

Telephone: Home: 461-3795/ Cell: 722-6712

Desryn.collins@online.liverpool.ac.uk**Research Supervisor:**

Dr Victoria O'Donnell

University of Liverpool, UK

victoria.odonnell@laureate.net

Appendix D: Participant consent form – CTs and STs

Participant consent form

Version number & date: Version1/ 10 April, 2020

Title of the research project: Expectations and Experiences: An examination of mentoring in the Associate Degree in Primary Education Teaching Practicum in Antigua and Barbuda

Name of researcher: Desryn Collins

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 10 April, 2020 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that taking part in the study involves **(Please circle the one that applies to you for the current data collection activity)**
 - a. an audio recorded focus group discussion
 - b. an audio recorded interview
 - c. field notes from an observation and I consent to your use of these recordings and notes for the conduct of the research.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular question or questions.

4. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained but because this is a case study at the only institution that offers Teacher Education in the territory, it may be possible to identify my cohort in the research report.

5. I understand that in order to maintain confidentiality, I must be the only person in the room when I am being interviewed and/or participating in the focus group discussion.

6. I understand that in order to maintain confidentiality, I must not disclose the identity of the other focus group participants or anything that is said by any other focus group participant to anyone.

7. I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to the anonymisation of the data. I understand that following anonymisation, I will no longer be able to request access to, or withdrawal of the information I provide. I understand that this will be one week after I am provided with a transcription of my data.
8. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool for the purpose of supporting or validating the project's observations for a minimum period of 5 years.
9. I understand that signed consent forms, interview transcripts, observation notes and audio recordings will be retained in a locked cabinet and that electronic files will be kept on a secure drive which can only be accessed by the researcher until the completion of the study.
10. I understand that an anonymised transcript of my interview, observation notes and transcripts of the focus group discussions will be retained for 5 years.
11. I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I work, will not be shared beyond the study team.
12. I understand that other focus group participants may breach the confidentiality clause and my contributions may be disclosed.
13. I understand that I must not take part if I am uncomfortable about the research and I can withdraw at any time should I feel the need.
14. The information you have submitted will be published as a thesis; please indicate by initialing the box if you would like to receive a copy.
15. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant name

Date

Signature

Researcher:

Desryn Collins

Telephone: Home: 461-3795/ Cell: 722-6712

Desryn.collins@online.liverpool.ac.uk

Research Supervisor:

Dr Victoria O'Donnell

University of Liverpool, UK

victoria.odonnell@laureate.net

Appendix E: Interview schedule for Head, DTE

Preliminary matters (introductions, purpose of the research, verbal consent from the participant, permission to record, outline of expected netiquette)

1. Please introduce yourself and share your current role in the Teacher Education Programme.
2. How long have you held that position?
3. Please explain how the Associate Degree in Primary Education is designed.
4. What is the purpose of the teaching practicum which student teachers complete?
5. Is mentoring part of what cooperating teachers are expected to do?
6. What does mentoring entail?
7. What criteria is used to select cooperating teachers/mentors?
8. How are mentors prepared to fulfil their role?
9. Please describe how you perceive mentors engage in the mentoring process?
10. How would you describe the effectiveness of the mentoring which the cooperating teachers provide?
11. Is there an instrument or instruments which guide the interaction of mentors and mentees?
12. If there is an instrument, explain what it covers.
13. Is there any provision for student teachers to provide feedback to DTE on the mentoring which they receive?
14. If the answer is yes, how is the feedback provided and how often is it given?
15. Is there any provision for cooperating teachers to provide feedback to DTE on the mentoring which they provide?
16. If the answer to 15 is yes, how is this feedback provided and how often is it given?
17. If feedback is provided, how is the feedback provided used in the mentoring process?
18. Describe how the interactions between student teachers and the cooperating teachers are monitored.
19. What elements constitute a student teacher's readiness to teach?
20. Describe the impact which mentoring has on the student teacher's readiness to teach.
21. What factors affect the effectiveness of the mentoring which student teachers receive?

Appendix F: Schedule for CT Focus Group

Preliminary matters (introductions, purpose of the research, verbal consent from each participant, permission to record, outline of expected netiquette)

1. What is the purpose of the TP which student teachers complete?
2. What is your role in the TP?
3. Have you fulfilled this role before?
4. Did you receive training for this role?
5. If the answer to 4 is yes, how long did the training last and what did it entail?
6. If the answer was no, how do you feel about not being trained for your role?
7. Describe how you engage in mentoring on a daily basis.
8. In your opinion, are you able to engage in the mentoring process effectively?
9. Please explain your response to question 8.
10. How did your expectations for mentoring connect with what you experienced as a mentor?
11. Is there an instrument which guides the interaction of mentors and mentees?
12. If there is an instrument, explain what it covers.
13. What are you most satisfied with in fulfilling your role?
14. What are you dissatisfied with?
15. Is there any provision for you to provide feedback to DTE on how you engaged in the process?
16. If the answer to 15 is yes, how is this feedback provided (orally or in writing) and how often is it given and to whom?
17. If the answer to 15 is no, do you think feedback is important and how should it be provided? How frequently should feedback be provided?
18. How are your interactions with the student teacher monitored?
19. Describe how the mentoring you provide impact the development of the mentee.

20. What elements constitute a teacher's 'readiness to teach'?
21. Describe the impact of your mentoring on the student teacher's readiness to teach.
22. Describe the impact which teacher preparedness has on the achievement of their students.
23. What factors affect the effectiveness of the mentoring which you provided?

Appendix G: Schedule for ST Focus Group

Preliminary matters (introductions, purpose of the research, verbal consent from each participant, permission to record, outline of expected netiquette)

1. What is the purpose of the TP which student teachers complete?
2. What makes you eligible for the TP?
3. Describe what TP entails.
4. What is the role of your cooperating teacher?
5. Describe the training which you are aware your cooperating teacher received prior to TP.
6. Did you know your cooperating teacher prior to TP?
7. Describe the interactions you have with your cooperating teacher in and out of the classroom.
8. Describe what you think your cooperating teacher is expected to do on a daily basis.
9. Describe how your cooperating teacher engaged in mentoring you.
10. Is there an instrument which guides your interaction with your cooperating teacher?
11. If there is an instrument, explain what it covers.
12. What are you most satisfied with in the student teacher-cooperating teacher arrangement?
13. Is there anything you were dissatisfied with? If yes, please explain.
14. Is there any provision for you to provide feedback to DTE on how your cooperating teacher engaged in the process?
15. If the answer to 14 is yes, how is this feedback provided (orally or in writing) and how often is it given and to whom?
16. If the answer to 14 is no, do you think feedback is important and how should it be provided? How frequently should feedback be provided?
17. Is there someone who monitored how you interacted with the cooperating teacher?

18. Describe the impact which your interactions with your cooperating teacher has had on your development as a teacher.
19. What factors affect the effectiveness of the mentoring which you received?
20. Are you ready to teach?/ Did you feel ready to teach at the end of the practicum?

Appendix H: Schedule for CT Individual Interview

Some of these questions mirror what was asked in the focus groups. This is a deliberate attempt to elicit deeper responses from individuals and to allow individual participants to disclose information that they might have withheld in the focus groups.

Preliminary matters (introductions, purpose of the research, verbal consent from each participant, permission to record, outline of expected netiquette)

1. What is your view on the significance of the practicum exercise?
2. Describe your role in the initial training which teachers receive.
3. Describe how you came to fill that role and how you feel about it
4. Describe what your experience has been like working with your student teacher (mentee).
5. What specific benefits have you derived from your interaction with your mentee?
6. How would you describe the relationship you had with your mentee?
7. In your opinion, was your mentee ready to teach at the end of practicum?
8. Explain the factors which have led you to your answer to 7.
9. What are some ways that the mentoring you provide could be enhanced?
10. Is there anything the DTE could do differently in the way they engage cooperating teachers to participate in the training of student teachers? Please explain.

Appendix I: Schedule for STs Individual Interview

Some of these questions mirror what was asked in the focus groups. This is a deliberate attempt to elicit deeper responses from individuals and to allow individual participants to disclose information that they might have withheld in the focus groups.

Preliminary matters (introductions, purpose of the research, verbal consent from each participant, permission to record, outline of expected netiquette)

1. Describe the role of TP in the initial training which student teachers receive.
2. Describe what your experience has been like working with your cooperating teacher (mentor).
3. What specific benefits have you derived from your interaction with your mentor?
4. Are you fully prepared for classroom teaching?
5. Please explain your answer to 4.
6. Describe what you valued about your mentoring experience.
7. Describe what you would have liked to be different in your mentoring experience.