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An investigation into mentor teacher-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of preservice teachers' professional identity

Mahsa Izadinia
Edith Cowan University

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Mahsa Izadinia

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Mahsa Izadinia

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Abstract

Research suggests that preservice teachers' professional identity is dynamic and many factors contribute to the formation of teacher identity including prior experiences, learning communities and context. One of the parties preservice teachers have closest interactions with are mentor teachers and they might leave an impact on preservice teachers' professional identity. However, less research seems to be done in this area. The proposed research study tried to address this gap by investigating the relationship between these two parties and its impact on the development of preservice teachers' professional identity. The data collection occurred during a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary (GDE-S) course in one of the universities in Western Australia. The participants in this qualitative case study were seven preservice teachers taking part in the GDE-S and their mentor teachers during their professional practice unit (practicum). The preservice teachers attended three rounds of semi-structured interviews: at the outset of the first placement, at the end of the first placement, and at the end of the second placement. The mentor teachers comprising 16, also attended semi-structured interviews before and after each placement. In addition, the researcher conducted two classroom observations and two observations of debriefing sessions in each placement on each preservice teacher. The preservice teachers were also invited to keep a reflective journal, with a total of 24 gathered over the course of the program. The findings of this study revealed that when the mentoring relationship was positive and the preservice teachers' expectations of their mentors were met, they felt more confident as a teacher and developed a teacher voice. However, the confidence declined in some preservice teachers and they felt they did not improve when they experienced a partially negative mentoring relationship. This study provides implications for preservice teacher education and offers guidelines for improving mentor teacher-preservice teacher relationship with a view to enhancing preservice teachers' professional identity and increasing teacher retention.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation, which is the biggest achievement of my life to my parents. I cannot thank them enough for all they have done for me, their endless patience, wholehearted support and unconditional love. Mom, you have been a constant source of inspiration and taught me to be strong and patient. Dad, you have been always by my side and supported me by all means. I would just like to say a heartfelt thank you to both of you for being there for me and helping me be the person I am. None of my success would be possible without you.

این پایان‌نامه دکترا را که بزرگترین موفقیت من در زندگی است تقدیم می‌کنم به پدر و مادرم. زبانم قاصر از این است که به خاطر تمام خوبیهایتان از شما تشکر کنم، به خاطر صبر بی پایان، حمایت بی‌دریغ، و عشق بی قید و شرطتان. مادر عزیزم شما همیشه الهام بخش من بودید و به من یاد دادید که قوی و صبور باشم. پدر مهربانم شما همیشه در کنارم بودید و پیوسته مرا حمایت کردید. از هر دوی شما سپاسگزارم که در تمام مراحل زندگیم در کنارم بودید و کمک کردید که به این مرحله برسم. بدون کمک شما بی شک هیچ یک از موفقیت‌های من امکان پذیر نبود.

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List of publications

1: Student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash? *Professional Development in Education*, (2015) *23(4),* 341-353.

2: Preservice teachers' professional identity development and the role of mentor teachers. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, (2016) 5 (2).

3: A closer look at the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* (2015) *52*, 1-10.

4: Use of metaphors in mentoring relationships. Under Review

5: Talking the talk and walking the walk: Preservice teachers' evaluation of their mentors. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* (2015) *3(4),* 341-353.

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Chapter One

General Introduction

1. Background

My passion for learning about teacher identity and how it shapes started to develop in 2010 following a reflection on my student/teacher self which was later formed into a research paper (Izadinia, 2012). Moving from my home country to New Zealand and working with two female supervisors provided the chance to compare the supervisory relationships I had with my supervisors in the two contexts.

Coming from a traditional and hierarchical education context where there was a massive wall between students and teachers blocking any friendly communication, I used to be mainly treated as a postgraduate student rather than a teacher and a colleague by my supervisors in my country despite my background in teaching. However, I started to feel more confident in myself and developed my teacher/researcher voice when my supervisors in New Zealand regarded me as a colleague. I began to flourish and identify my own strengths as my personal views were validated and my skills recognized by my foreign supervisors who did not even speak my language and yet could see me as a whole person.

I came to understand the significance of developing a teacher identity (i.e., knowing who I was as a teacher) and its impact on my professional life as a teacher. Teacher identity as a construct, which was around for decades, fascinated me and I started to read more about this concept. I realized that teacher identity was an answer to the question "who am I at this moment"? (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004) and I realised that preservice teacher education programs were regarded as the first and the most important stage in the development of teacher identity. In other words, I found that the dynamic nature of teacher identity starts to re/shape in preservice teachers during teacher education and different factors involved in the learning community influence the construction of preservice teachers' teacher identity.

Given the important contribution of my New Zealand supervisors to the development of my own sense of teacher identity, I was particularly interested to know about the role of teacher educators in shaping preservice teachers' teacher identity.

1.1. Statement of the problem

A significant amount of practicum experience is created by mentor teachers who work alongside preservice teachers in the classrooms and offer professional knowledge and support. Pitton (2006) defines mentoring as "an intentional pairing of an inexperienced person with an experienced partner to guide and nurture his or her development" (p. 1). Although mentor teachers help preservice teachers grow professionally, the presence of a mentor alone is not enough (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009). Mentor teachers need to be skilled and knowledgeable in mentoring, good communicators and reflective (McCann, 2013), have willingness, commitment, and enthusiasm, able to collaborate with adults, and enjoy teaching as a job (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, & Pressley, 2008).

When mentor teachers are equipped with the above-mentioned essential characteristics and are professionally prepared for their job, they are more likely to bring about positive outcomes such as mentees' increased confidence, satisfaction, career growth, and greater personal and professional development (Baranik, Roling, & Eby, 2010; Buyukgoze-Kavas, Taylor, Neimeyer, & Güneri, 2010; Magnuson, Black, & Lahman, 2006). There are studies on mentoring which show the impact of effective mentoring on preservice teachers (Boswell, Wilson, Stark, & Onwuegbuzie, 2015; Garza, Duchaine, & Reynosa, 2014; Grima-Farrell, 2015; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004). Also there are studies on destructive mentoring relationships. For instance, some researchers have reported the existence of hierarchical, imitative, inflexible, and requiring mentoring relationships (Abed & Abd-El-Khalick, 2015; Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Chaliès, Ria, Bertone, Trohel, & Durand, 2004; Yuan, 2016).

However, based on a systematic literature review that I conducted, I found that less attention has been paid to research on the impact of mentoring on preservice teachers' teacher identity (Izadinia, 2013). I argued that given that preservice teachers spend considerable time working with mentor teachers, the kind of relationship they maintain with their mentors might shape their professional identity positively or negatively. For instance, mentor teachers can inhibit and repress preservice teachers' teacher identity (Pittard, 2003) or instil senses of power, agency, and confidence in them (Liu & Fisher, 2006) through the way they interact with them. My own experience of the supervisory relationship I had with my supervisors was convincing evidence. Although the nature of

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the relationship was not exactly the same, I was still a young and inexperienced teacher trying to build an identity and needing my hands to be held throughout the process. However, as I was not receiving enough credit and recognized as a colleague by my supervisors in my country, I felt inadequate and not sure about my abilities. Yet, my feelings about myself changed as I enjoyed a more supportive relationship with my New Zealand supervisors. Thus, I could see and feel the considerable impact mentor teachers and teacher educators could leave on their mentees' identity.

However, although, many of the factors contributing to the process of identity construction in preservice teachers had been widely studied, the relationship between teacher educators and preservice teachers, which could play a key role in preservice teachers' professional identity, appeared to be under-researched.

1.2. Significance of the study

Although the literature abounds with studies on different aspects of mentoring (e.g., roles of mentors; features of optimal mentoring relationships; preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions of their roles, etc.), little attention was paid to preservice teachers' mentoring relationships and the effects of such experiences on their teacher professional identity. As the quality of mentoring and the presence of a mentor affect retention (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Ingersoll, 2003; Odell & Ferraro, 1992), there is a considerable need to closely scrutinize mentoring relationships to maximize their effectiveness and create a more positive experience for preservice teachers.

By investigating preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship and the ways in which it contributed to the process of preservice teachers' identity formation, I was able to highlight the influential roles of mentor teachers in preservice teacher education so that more attention is paid to the professional development of mentor teachers. The outcome of my research also suggested practical guidelines for how to improve preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship so that it positively affects preservice teachers' professional identity. Moreover, by highlighting the key roles of mentor teachers, this research also helps stakeholders in establishing more effective selection and eligibility

criteria for recruiting mentor teachers. This research also heightens mentor teachers' awareness of their crucial role in developing preservice teachers' teacher identity through their everyday interactions.

1.3. Research questions

The key question raised in this research was:

- How does the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers influence preservice teachers' professional identities during a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary (GDE-S) program?

There were also sub-questions, which were addressed in different phases of the study, which were formed into five research papers later. Table 1 below lists these questions and the name of the paper in which the questions were addressed.

Table 1.1 List of research questions

Sub questions	Papers
Before the first practicum: 1. What are the key components of a good mentoring relationship from the perspective of preservice teachers? 2. What are the key components of a good mentoring relationship from the perspective of mentor teachers? 3. What metaphors do preservice teachers and mentor teachers use to describe the mentoring relationship?	Student Teachers' and Mentor Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of a Mentoring Relationship: Do They Match or Clash?

At the end of the first practicum: 1. What changes occurred in preservice teachers' professional identity after a four-week block practicum? 2. What factors did the participants identify as important in facilitating changes in their identity? 3. To what extent did the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during the first four-week block practicum contribute to development of preservice teachers' professional identity?	Preservice teachers' professional identity development and the role of mentor teachers.
At the end of the second Practicum: 1. How did preservice teachers characterize the mentoring relationship in the first and second practicum? 2. What changes occurred in the preservice teachers' professional identity following the second placement? 3. To what extent did mentor teachers in the two placements play a role in shaping the preservice teachers' teacher identity?	A Closer Look at the Role of Mentor Teachers in Shaping Preservice Teachers' Professional Identity
At the end of the second practicum: 1. What metaphors were used by mentor teachers and preservice teachers to describe the mentoring relationship? 2. What changes occurred in metaphors developed by the participants from the beginning to the end of the mentoring program? 3. What implications do the use of metaphors have for preservice teacher education?	Use of Metaphors in the Mentoring Relationships

	Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk: Preservice Teachers' Evaluation of Their Mentors
At the end of the second Practicum: 1. How did the mentor teachers define their roles and responsibilities toward their preservice teachers at the outset of the practicum? 2. How did the preservice teachers evaluate their mentors' practices after the practicum? 3. To what extent did mentor teachers' espoused theories match their theories-in-use?	

1.4. Structure of the thesis

This thesis presents the findings of my year-long research on the interactions between mentor teachers and preservice teachers and how such interactions informed preservice teachers' identity formation. I managed to write five research papers based on the findings four of which are already published in top-tier journals in Education such as *Teaching and Teacher Education*. The last paper is currently under review. There is also a literature review on preservice teachers' teacher identity, which I published in 2013. However, because this paper was written prior to my enrolment in the PhD research program at Edith Cowan University, I could not add this paper as another publication to the Findings. I have included the paper in Appendix as it provides a comprehensive overview on preservice teacher identity and could help readers and examiners have a better understanding of the relevant research. In Chapter Two, however, I have presented a summary of this review to present a general background to studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity, which is the main focus in this research.

Chapter Three includes the theoretical framework and the overall methodology used in this research. It is worth noting that there is a methodology section in each research paper published based on the findings of the research. However, in this thesis, the papers are presented according to different phases of the study, and for instance, the first paper only reports on the data gathered prior to the program. Thus, it does not cover the overall methodology of the research, which could have been confusing to the examiners.

In order to address this shortcoming, a detailed explanation about the research methodology is presented in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four, Findings, contains five research papers, which are written and published, based on the outcomes of this research. The first paper entitled "Preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash?" is published by *Professional Development in Education*. This paper reports on the findings of the interviews conducted with the eight preservice teachers participating in the research and their nine mentor teachers prior to the first placement. The participants were asked to define the components of an effective mentoring relationship and use metaphors to describe an ideal mentoring. The answers the participants provided were compared and contrasted to examine similarities and differences between their perceptions towards mentoring relationship. It was assumed that such study would make a proper introduction to the participants; the expectations they had of the other party and their mental images of such program before they actually went through a real mentoring experience. The viewpoints of the two parties (i.e., mentor teachers and the preservice teachers) were compared and contrasted and it was found that there was no major dispute between the two groups regarding their views towards good mentoring. Both groups referred to similar key components of the practicum, which provided a better understanding of their perceptions toward practicum.

The second paper "Preservice teachers' professional identity development and the role of mentor teachers", published by *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, explores the changes in professional identity of the preservice teachers after finishing the first placement. The questions addressed in this research were: (1) What changes occurred in preservice teachers' professional identity after a four-week block practicum? (2) What factors did the participants identify as important in facilitating changes in their identity? And, (3) To what extent did the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during the first four-week block practicum contribute to development of preservice teachers' professional identity? The findings of this phase of the study suggested that the preservice teachers experienced very positive mentoring relationships and received extensive feedback from their mentor teachers, which contributed to their professional development. It was also found that all preservice teachers gained more confidence and started to develop a teacher voice as they finished

the first four-week block practicum. This paper briefly discussed the role of mentor teachers in the development of preservice teachers' identity.

The third paper "A closer look at the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' professional identity", published by *Teaching and Teacher Education*, is a detailed report on the two placements the preservice teachers had. It compares the dynamics of the two mentoring relationships the preservice teachers had with their first and second mentors and explores the extent to which each mentoring relationship impacted the preservice teachers' teacher identity. The questions addressed in this study were: (1) How did preservice teachers describe the mentoring relationship in the first and second practicum? (2) What changes occurred in the preservice teachers' professional identity following the second placement? And, (3) To what extent did mentor teachers in the two placements play a role in shaping the preservice teachers' teacher identity? It was found that four participants experienced very positive mentoring relationships in their two placements and subsequently felt more confident as a teacher and ready to teach. However, for three preservice teachers the second placement was a partially negative experience by which they felt less successful and less confident. This paper specifically examined the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' teacher identity and offered implications for teacher education.

"Use of metaphors in mentoring relationships" is the fourth paper which examines preservice teachers' and their mentor teachers' metaphorical images of the mentoring relationship and changes in those metaphors as they went through their practicum. The research questions in this study were: (1) What metaphors were used by mentor teachers and preservice teachers to describe the mentoring relationship? (2) What changes occurred in metaphors developed by the participants from the beginning to the end of the mentoring program? (3) What implications do the use of metaphors have for preservice teacher education? The findings indicated that the metaphors constructed by both groups significantly overlapped and focused on interpersonal relationship and providing guidance and support. Changes were observed in the participants' metaphors at different stages depending on their relationship with the other party. The initial metaphors used by the preservice teachers at the beginning of the first placement were briefly discussed in the first paper (Preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash).

However, in this paper, metaphors constructed after each placement were compared and changes in the metaphors were documented. Use of metaphors by the participants provided the chance to further examine their feelings and ideas towards the mentoring they experienced.

The final paper is "Talking the talk and walking the walk: Preservice teachers' evaluation of their mentors". This paper, which published by *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, examines the actual mentoring practices of the mentor teachers in the two placements. The purpose of this paper was to look more closely at the perceived roles of mentor teachers prior to each placement and compare them with their actual mentoring practices received by the preservice teachers. The comparison provided the chance to identify gaps between mentor teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974). The research questions in this paper were: (1) How did the mentor teachers define their roles and responsibilities toward their preservice teachers at the outset of the practicum? (2) How did the preservice teachers evaluate their mentors' practices after the practicum? (3) To what extent did mentor teachers' espoused theories match their theories-in-use? It was found that, for instance, providing support and feedback were among the key perceived roles of mentors as identified by them prior to the placements. The data gathered from the preservice teachers at the end of each placement showed that 14 mentor teachers out of a total of 16 in the two placements did put into practice their espoused theories and they tried to take on the roles they initially assumed they had. However, the mentoring practices of two mentor teachers were found to be slightly different from the way they had perceived their roles to be which suggested implications for practice.

Chapter Five, which is the final section of this thesis, integrates the significant findings of all five research papers and presents an overall conclusion for the research. It also discusses the implications of the research and provides new directions for future research.

1.5. Key notes

There are a number of key issues that are explained in this section to help the examiners better understand the structure of the thesis:

1. APA 6th edition has been used throughout the thesis.

2. As mentioned above, all five research papers contain a Methods section. There is also a Methodology section in Chapter Three, which presents a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework, context, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis techniques. Thus, the information in the Methods sections in the papers and Chapter Three almost overlap. Although I could have removed the Methods section from the papers to avoid unnecessary repetitions, I decided to keep the original content (i.e., Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Findings and Discussion) and present them in the format of research papers.

3. In the research papers, I have used double quotations marks to refer to quotes from the participants. Thus, all words and phrases with a double quotation mark in the data are direct quotes from the participants.

4. Two key terms, which are used in this thesis, are 'preservice teachers' and 'student teachers'. Please note these terms have been used interchangeably.

5. I warrant that I have obtained, where necessary, permission from the copyright owners to use any third party copyright material reproduced in the thesis (e.g., questionnaires, artwork, unpublished letters), or to use any of my own published work (e.g., journal articles) in which the copyright is held by another party (e.g., publisher, co-author).

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Mentor teachers: Mentor teachers who are also referred to as cooperating teachers and associate teachers, are those who work with preservice teachers during their practicum at schools. Beck and Kosnik (2000) defined mentor teachers as those who supervise preservice teachers in their practicum setting.

Preservice teachers: Preservice teachers are those who attend preservice teacher education programs and receive training on how to teach in primary or secondary

schools. They also have a professional practice unit (practicum) consisting of two placements.

Teacher professional identity: There are many types of identity including music, queer, religion, race, sex and gender and ethnic identities. I am particularly interested in teachers' professional identity in this research which Kelchtermans (1993) defines in terms of self-image, self-esteem and job motivation. In this research, teachers' professional identity and teacher identity have been used interchangeably.

Preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship: Any form of interactions developed and maintained between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers during the practicum is defined as preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship.

In the next chapter, Chapter Two, the literature on preservice teacher identity will be reviewed.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This chapter is a literature review on teacher identity. The chapter starts with definitions and components of teacher identity. Then, the studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity are systematically reviewed and discussed. Please refer to Appendix A for the literature review published in 2013 on preservice teachers' teacher identity. More recent studies are added to this section to present a more comprehensive review of the literature. As the present research is on mentor teacher-preservice teacher interactions, the studies on the relationship between these two parties are presented as well.

2.1. Teacher Identity: Definition and Components

Teacher identity has been defined differently in the literature. For instance, Maclean and White (2007) described teacher identity as a complex process which includes "people's legitimate participation in a profession; their occupation of a professional 'role' and ability to control the practices, language, tools and resources associated with that role…" (p. 47). Korthagen (2004) believed teacher professional identity can be discovered by finding their answer to questions like "Who am I?", "what kind of teacher do I want to be?", and "how do I see my role as a teacher?" Gee (2000) also defined teacher identity as "being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context" (p. 99).

Teacher identity formation is a dynamic and complex process (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Maclean & White, 2007; Williams & Ritter, 2010), and takes place as a result of complex inter-connected socio-cultural variables such as biographical factors, the knowledge and learning environment provided in teacher education, and experiences in teaching practices (Lamote & Engels, 2010). Teacher identity plays a significant role in decisions teachers make about their teaching practices, the content they teach, the kind of relationship they maintain with their students (Beijaard et al., 2004), "where they place their effort, and whether and how they seek out professional development opportunities" (Hammerness et al., 2005, pp. 383-384). Recent literature shows a growing attention to teacher identity because it can

be considered as a lens through which aspects of teaching such as confronting of tensions and contradictions in teachers' careers can be examined (Olsen, 2008). Teacher identity is also viewed as an "organising element" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 175) in their professional lives and "a resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and to the world at large" (MacLure, 1993, p. 311).

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) called for identifying how changes in identity were characterized and what would happen in shifting from one identity to another. In response to this call, I specifically looked for main changes in preservice teachers' identity as they go through their teacher education program. I observed that researchers had mainly reported changes in preservice teachers' cognitive knowledge, sense of agency, self-awareness, teacher voice, confidence and their relationship with colleagues, pupils and parents while there was no explicit mention of changes in their teacher identity per se (Izadinia, 2013). I identified these variables, as the interrelated components of teacher identity and argued that we can expect changes in each of these variables when we talk about changes in preservice teachers' teacher identity. These components are in constant interaction with contextual factors, such as educational contexts, prior experiences and learning communities. Thus, preservice teachers' teacher identity can be defined as preservice teachers' "perceptions of their cognitive knowledge, sense of agency, self-awareness, voice, confidence and relationship with colleagues, pupils and parents, as shaped by their educational contexts, prior experiences and learning communities" (Izadinia, 2013, p. 708). Figure 2.1 (Izadinia, 2013, p. 708) shows the components of preservice teacher identity and the contextual factors.
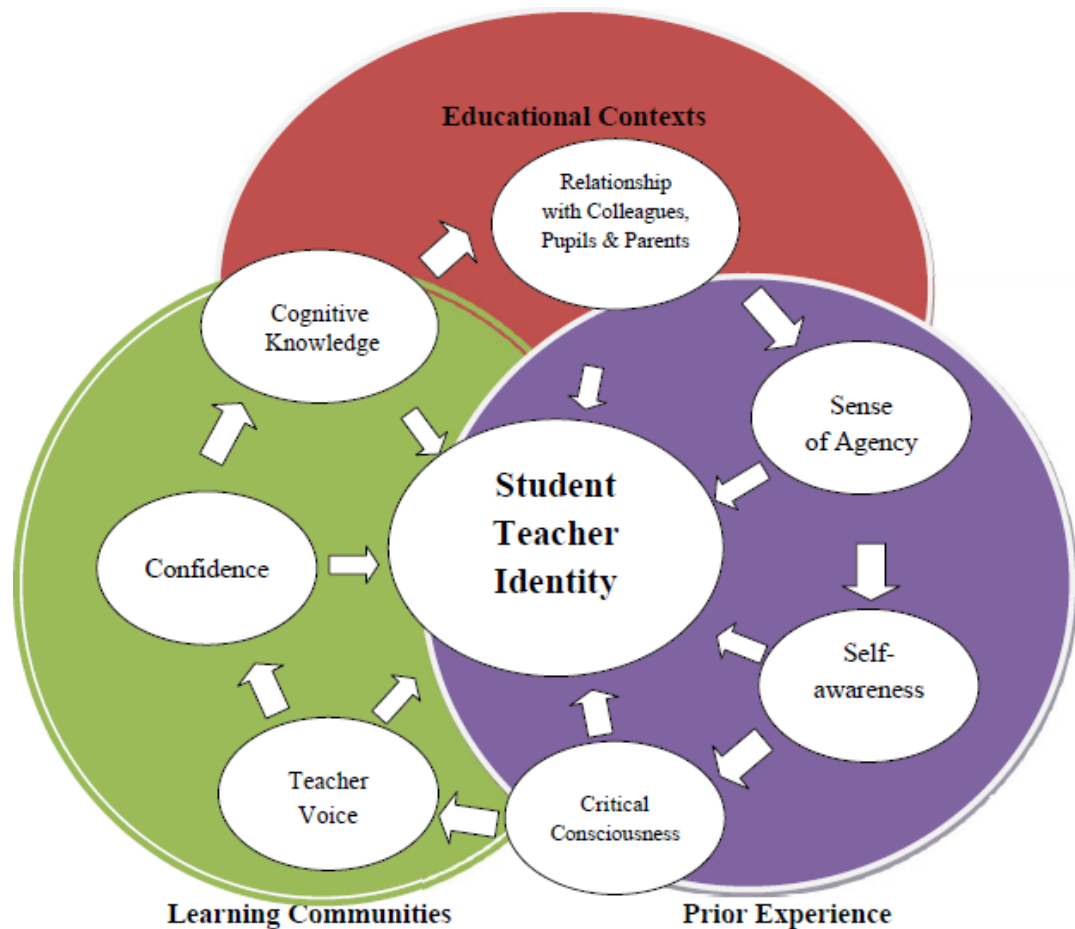
Figure 2.1 Components of Preservice Teachers' teacher identity (Izadinia, 2013, p. 708)

2.1.1. Studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity

There has been extensive research on preservice teachers to explore their identity formation process during teacher education as teacher education is considered to be the first and perhaps the most important stage in the development of professional identity (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). In the literature review that I conducted (Izadinia, 2013), I categorised studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity into four groups based on their main foci; studies on the contribution of (1) reflective activities (2) learning communities (3) (prior) experiences and (4) context. This review has been updated and recent research has been added to the analysis. (Please see Appendix D for the original paper on this literature review).

2.1.1.1. Reflective activities

Researchers in this group drew upon different reflective activities such as reflection cycles/forums (Fletcher, 2012; Maclean & White, 2007; Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010; Webb, 2005); reflective writings/journals (Cattley, 2007; Poulou, 2007; Walkington, 2005); auto-ethnographies and narratives (Estola, 2003; Vavrus, 2009; Wrench & Garrett, 2012); portfolios (Antonek, McCormick, & Donato, 1997; Chitpin & Simon, 2009) and drawings and metaphors (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Weber & Mitchell, 1996) to examine the process of identity development in preservice teachers.

These researchers contended that having preservice teachers reflect upon their own values, beliefs, feelings, and teaching practices and experiences help shape their professional identities. For instance, in Maclean and White's (2007) research in Australia, the contribution of preservice teachers' joint reflection to their identity formation is explored. This study shows how identities of four female preservice teachers were shaped through an action reflection cycle in which they reflected on their own filmed teaching experiences and shared edited video of their teaching with other members of this group who were two teacher educators (the researchers) and five teachers (one male and four female). This study reported changes in preservice teachers' pedagogical practices and the construction of their identities shown in their language discourse. For instance, they used professional teacher language (e.g., we started off with, we talked about, we were basically recapping) or presented individuality and agency (e.g., they changed a plan when it does not work out).

This study is the only one in this group, which explored the changes in participants' teaching practices while other studies seemed to ignore the profound connection between identity and practice (Wenger, 1998). In other words, in most of these studies the researchers have analysed preservice teachers' reflective journals wherein the participants had referred to the changes they detected in their own identities, but rarely were students' teaching practices observed to explore the changes happening as the result of their involvement in such reflective activities. Although, as mentioned, Maclean and White's (2007) study is the only one that investigated the participants'

practices, however, what is still missing in their research seems to be the exploration of students' prior practices to enable the comparison between their practices before and after the program. This issue is considered in a study by Fletcher (2012) in which he explored prior experiences of two female preservice teachers and suggested by critically analysing the experiences they gained through teacher education the participants could take small steps in shaping a teacher identity and forgetting their prior negative experiences.

Cattley (2007), through using reflective activities, investigated the potential role of reflective writing in the development of professional identities. She examined the effects of reflective writing on identities of eight female preservice teachers who were required to reflect on their answers to and observations of different elements of teaching environments like daily classroom practices, staffroom activities and parent liaison. Based on students' reflective journals, Cattley reported changes in students' identities like changes in their relationships with others particularly other staff and parents, awareness of the wider social and political world, and awareness of the need to support their colleagues. However, unlike Maclean and White's (2007) study, Cattley (2007) did not observe students' actual teaching practices in order to see, for instance, how reflective activities, have changed their awareness of social and political world and how such awareness is translated into their pedagogical practices.

Vavrus (2009), Webb (2005) and Estola (2003) similarly conducted studies in the USA, Australia, and Finland respectively and investigated the contribution of reflective activities in preservice teachers identity construction. They referred to positive outcomes such as self-knowledge gained from self-reflections, changes in students' cognitive and emotional selves, heightened sense of agency, increase of confidence as a teacher and self-dependency. Therefore, based on the results of these studies, it can be concluded that engagement in reflective practices does influence students' identity construction during Teacher Education through helping them gain self-knowledge, sense of agency and self-efficacy. However such changes would be better observed if preservice teachers' prior beliefs, attitudes and identities were examined before their engagement in such practices to compare their practices before the project and after it. Moreover, although students' reflective journals show their perceived changes in their identities, the actual changes might be better observed in their real teaching practices

where they have the chance to put into practice their ideas and beliefs regarding teaching.

2.1.1.2. Learning communities

The studies in this group (Assaf, 2005; Farnsworth, 2010; Franzak, 2002; Koc, 2011; Leeman, Rabin, & Roman–Mendoza, 2011; Seidl & Conley, 2009; Trent, 2010, 2011) generally rely on Wenger's (1998) and Gee (1999) conceptualisations of identity as actualized through discourses and communities of practice such as collaborative enquiry and action research projects, and community-based learning groups. These studies show positive outcomes of preservice teachers' involvement in different types of learning communities. For instance, referring to the lack of studies on the contribution of conducting research to the construction of teacher identities, Trent (2010) presented results of research conducted in Hong Kong and drew on action research as a pedagogical tool. What is important and effective in this study is the link the researcher has created between theory and practice by focusing not only on the theories of research but engaging the participants in actual research studies. Positive results reported in this study are "tempering of their commitment to the type of changes to teaching and learning" (p. 160) and "challenging the strength of their alignment with contemporary educational discourse" (p. 164). Investigating students' ideas and attitudes before and after the program in this study was an effective strategy for identifying the changes in participants. Other researchers may consider this strategy for understanding the extent of changes in participants.

2.1.1.3. (Prior) experiences

Researchers suggest that values, beliefs and prior learning and experiences that preservice teachers bring with them into teacher education play a considerable part in shaping their classroom practices and identity and, thus, teacher education should recognize preservice teachers' prior experiences and learning. Seven studies emphasised the significance of prior learning and experiences on preservice teachers' professional identity construction (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Andersson & Hellberg, 2009; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Cook, 2009; Daly, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Trent, 2012).

For instance, Olsen (2008) investigated the impact of preservice teachers' reasons for entering the program on their identity and professional development. Referring to gender and perceived personal compatibility with the job of teaching as two major reasons for entry, Olsen (2008) maintained that "a teacher's reasons for entry bridge prior events and experiences with the kind of teacher one is becoming" (p. 36). Therefore, he encourages teacher educators to become familiar with their preservice teachers' reasons for entry and make teacher identity visible to novice teachers so "they can learn to identify and adjust what (and how) they learn from their pasts" (p. 37). Akyeampong and Stephens (2002) supported a similar suggestion in exploring the background characteristics, experiences, beliefs and expectations of a group of preservice teachers. They argued that preservice teachers' images and understanding of teaching and teachers "need to be made more explicit and given voice in the training process, so as to promote deeper reflection on professional knowledge and pedagogical classroom practice, which can then lead to a personalised understanding of teaching" (p. 273).

2.1.1.4. Context

The literature on preservice teachers' identity shows examples of the impact of context on the way preservice teachers' professional identities are shaped (Findlay, 2006; Flores & Day, 2006; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Legard Larson & Kalmbach Phillips, 2005; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Schepens, Aelterman, & Vlerick, 2009; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004). According to activity theory used in one of these studies as the theoretical framework (Smagorinsky et al., 2004), human development, in this case construction of teacher identity happens in social settings and as a function of social practices involved in those contexts (Smagorinsky, 1995; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). However, if the overall practices involved in one setting do not reinforce those from the other context, the result will be conflict and tension between the two worlds as revealed in two different studies conducted in the US by Smagorinsky et al. (2004) and Larson and Phillips (2005). These two case studies conducted with two female preservice teachers traced the changes in their identities as they moved from one context to another and they showed how the preservice teachers experienced tensions between the two contexts. For instance, Smagorinsky et al. (2004)

reported conflicts between the constructivist nature of a university program and a traditional school context where the preservice teacher was involved in. They asserted that the mimetic approach (i.e., learning how to teach by imitating teachers' methods) and the strict guidance of the mentor teacher provided little room for growth and did not enable the preservice teacher to use the constructive tools she had learned and thus she "found herself in a pitfall, hemmed in with no place to go, with only the goal to get out" (p. 22).

Similarly, in Larson and Phillip's (2005) study the authoritative nature of a scripted reading program collided with the comprehensive reading instruction of the university and thus resulted in dramatic shifts of the preservice teacher's thinking and her identity shown: for example, in the metaphors she used expressions like 'sucked in', and use of words such as 'overwhelmed', and 'ploughed over'.

Adopting a different approach (i.e., survey), Schepens et al. (2009) among other things, also explored the influence of contextual variables on professional identity variables. They concluded that the contribution of these variables is not as high as the contribution of other variables such as preservice teachers' motivation, their preparation for teaching profession and cooperating teachers' support which seemed to contradict the findings of the above two studies. Yet, the findings of another case study conducted on five newly qualified teachers in the UK (Findlay, 2006) verified the results of Smagorinsky et al.'s (2004) research by affirming the significance of context and arguing that the transition from semi-protected environment of teacher training programs to school environments where preservice teachers received no critical feedback or praise had a negative impact on their teacher identity. In a recent study by Seban (2015), the impact of practicum in a multigrade schools was examined on the identity formation of preservice teachers. Seban found that the practicum influenced the participants' perception of identity construction, contributed to their development and raised the awareness needed to develop and shape an identity. Seban, used Gee's framework (i.e. Nature Identity (N-identity), Institutional Identity (I-identify), Discursive perspective (D-identity), Affinity Identity (A-identity)) to argue that the institutional identity had the most significant impact on the student teachers' identity development. In other words, student teachers' observation of different tasks and their involvement in a new environment (i.e. the

context of practicum) was an important influential factor in student teachers' identity changes.

2.1.2. Recent studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity

Recent studies show new approaches towards exploring preservice teachers' teacher identity (Marieke Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013). Marieke Pillen et al. (2013) for instance, investigated the tensions 24 preservice teachers experienced regarding their teacher identity and identified 59 tensions falling into three themes: (1) the change in role from student to teacher; (2) conflicts between desired and actual support given to students; and (3) conflicting conceptions of learning to teach. In a similar study, Trent (2013) explored challenges preservice teachers had in constructing a teacher identity including negotiating competency and gaining legitimate access to practice. Leijen, Kullasepp, and Anspal (2014) examined the effectiveness of pedagogies used in Estonian to support the development of preservice and novice teachers' professional identity and categorised them into three: pedagogies that facilitated the professional aspect of teacher identity, pedagogies that addressed the personal aspect of teacher identity, and pedagogies that supported the interaction of the professional and personal aspects of teacher identity. Flores (2014) investigated the effects of a given pedagogy aiming at highlighting "the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the process as well as the pivotal role of preservice teacher education as a context for identity development" (p. 353).

As the above studies suggest, preservice teachers' teacher identity has continued to attract researchers' attention. A focus on tensions and challenges preservice teachers experience and the impact of such tensions on their identity have entered the discussions. Also the development of new pedagogies to address identity issues in teacher education has emerged as a new approach to research on identity, which indicates a continued interest on research on teacher identity.

2.2. Studies on preservice teachers-mentor teacher relationship

Considered as the most highly valued component of teacher education programs (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Parkison, 2007; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005), the practicum consists of a period of observation, teaching, reflection and critique (Merriam, 2001). It provides opportunities for preservice teachers to develop professionally in their role as teachers, explore teaching as a career choice, and bridge the gap between theory and practice (Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005; Merriam, 2001; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2008). However, the practicum is fraught with tensions, challenges, and contradictions that might impact preservice teachers' decision to continue or leave the profession (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013; Kelly, 2013). Depending on the sort of experiences gained and the emotions felt during this period, preservice teachers start to form a clearer professional mental image of the teacher they are and will be. The more positive their mental images are, the more likely they are to stay in the profession.

Given that this research focused on the relationship between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers, I also looked at the literature on the interconnection between these two parties in general without considering the concept of teacher identity. I found that research on preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship mainly concentrated on factors contributing to preservice teachers' teaching practices during practicum. Some researchers, for instance, explored the contribution of factors like collaborative action research (Levin & Rock, 2003; Smagorinsky & Jordahl, 1991); paired-placement of preservice teachers (Nokes, Bullough, Egan, Birrell, & Hansen, 2008) and guided-teaching relationship (Borko & Mayfield, 1995) to the development of preservice teachers' teaching practices and their relationship with mentor teachers. For instance, Levin and Rock (2003) found that involvement in collaborative action research provided opportunities for preservice teachers and associate teachers to work together, understand their partners' pedagogical beliefs, communicate more effectively and build relationship.

Similarly, Smagorinsky and Jordahl (1991) reported positive results of their collaborative research project such as learning habits of self-reflection, establishing a proper rapport, collaboration between cooperating teacher and preservice teacher, and gaining experience in research design. Nokes et al. (2008) maintained that their new

model of pair-placed preservice teacher in comparison to single-placed preservice teacher produced positive outcomes like learning to work together despite differences and dialogue and reflection in teaching practices. However, Borko and Mayfield (1995), as the last example, did not find any significant changes in preservice teachers' teaching practices as a result of their guided-teaching method. They also observed that no in-depth analysis of issues of teaching and learning was conducted in conversation between preservice teachers and associate teachers and thus questioned the role associate teachers play in the process of learning to teach.

Researchers have argued that teacher educators, including mentors, exert influence on preservice teachers and are key contributors to teacher education (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Caires & Almeida, 2007; Chaliès, Ria, Bertone, Trohel, & Durand, 2004; Johnson, 2003; Schussler, 2006). In the literature, it was found that studies which investigated the nature of preservice teacher-teacher educator relationship during practicum mainly reported the existence of a hierarchical, imitative, superficial, inflexible, and requiring relationship between them (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Chaliès et al., 2004; Faire, 1994; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Lesley, Hamman, Olivarez, Button, & Griffith, 2009). For instance, Beck and Kosnik, (2000) found that despite mentor teachers' intention to be supportive, positive and helpful, they were rather tough and requiring by asking students to follow the curriculum closely which resulted in students being under pressure in the practicum. These finding were verified by Ferrier-Kerr's study (2009) who reported the existence of hierarchical relationships during practicum between preservice teachers and mentor teachers exemplified by mentor teachers telling students what to do and how to teach. However, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004) reported a positive relationship between a mentor and a protégé, which contributed to her early success as a result of the mentor's support and his acceptance of the protégé's racist experiences.

More literature is reviewed in the papers included in this thesis. Therefore, for a detailed overview of the recent literature on preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship, please to Chapter Four.

2.3. Summary

As the literature shows, teacher identity formation is a complex process and preservice teachers' professional identity is shaped under the influence of different factors, for example, through their engagement in specific activities introduced as part of teacher education such as joint reflection and collaboration, action research and portfolios. Preservice teachers' professional identity is also influenced by factors like (prior) experiences and contexts. Each of these variables appear to have positive or negative impacts on preservice teachers' identity such as an increase in their self-knowledge, self-efficacy, sense of agency, and self-dependency or a decline in their self-confidence and feeling overwhelmed.

Apart from studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity, some researchers explored the relationship between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers and found that in most cases there was hierarchical, imitative and inflexible relationship between them (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Chaliès et al., 2004; Faire, 1994). Given that teacher educators including mentor teachers are the most influential parties involved in practicum (e.g., Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Schussler, 2006; Johnson, 2003) the relationship they maintain with their mentees might influence their professional identity positively or negatively. However, as the literature shows little attention has been paid to the influence of such relationship on the construction of preservice teachers' professional identity. Chapter Three presents the methodology used in this research to address the above-mentioned gap.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3. Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology adopted in this research. It starts with the theoretical framework used in the research and the rationale behind using it. Then an overview on the context of the study, the participants, data collection and the data analysis procedures is presented. This chapter ends with a report on the ethics approval of the research.

3.1. Theoretical framework

This qualitative case study was framed within social constructivism. Social constructivism is assumed to provide a crucial direction for teacher education (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). As Shor (1992) believes, in constructivism, knowledge about self, school, everyday experience and society is built through reflection and meaning making. In other words, through inquiry and not through blind acceptance of the pre-existing knowledge, constructivism opens boundaries by providing a democratic and critical learning experience for students (Shor, 1992). Social constructivism as a type of constructivism, foregrounds the centrality of collaboration and social interactions (Powell & Kalina, 2009). As opposed to cognitive constructivism in which ideas are constructed through a personal process. According to social constructivism, ideas are constructed from experience and through interactions with the teacher and other students (Kalina, 2009). Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning happens in a social process in which learners gain new skills and knowledge through interactions with other people. Such interactions give social and emotional support to learners and enable them to take risks and acquire ownership of their learning (Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

The work on identity, from a social constructivist perspective, is a meaning making and a self-understanding process. If all knowledge is socially constructed as a meaning making process, then, identity is the process of meaning making about one's self (Hung, Lim, & Jamaludin, 2011). Therefore, as Hung et al. (2011) conclude:

• Identity cannot be studied in individual isolation, but rather in a social-community context;

• Identity needs to be traced in the context of its evolving trajectory as a social construct;

• This trace is in the form of actions and through dialogue; and

• We observe agency through actions and decisions … (p. 163).

From a social constructivist perspective, knowledge is co-constructed, and development takes place in an essentially social process. Likewise, the process of professional identity construction, which is believed to be a learning-to-teach process (Smagorinsky et al., 2004) occurs in interactions student teachers have with significant others such as their mentor teachers (Johnson, 2003). More precisely, "who I am is relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions" (Johnson, 2003, p. 788). Given that this research was an investigation of preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship where the unit of analysis was the interactions between these two parties, it was assumed that a social constructivist approach would adequately guide the study to examine how preservice teachers' professional identity might change or be affected by such relationship.

The three main tenets of social constructivism could be easily applied to a mentoring relationship (Graves, 2010). In other words, the three tenets of (1) knowledge is constructed by learners; (2) learning involves social interaction and (3) learning is situated (Beck & Kosnik, 2006) can be interpreted as: preservice teachers go through the learning-to-teach process and gradually construct their teacher identity in their daily interactions with significant others, such as their mentor teachers in the context of the practicum. In other words, preservice teachers start to develop a professional view towards teaching and construct a teacher-self during their practicum experience as they engage in the learning to teach process. What exerts influence on their undersetting and views are the social and professional interactions within their learning community such as their day-to-day communications with a significant other like their mentors. By zooming in on such interactions and their unique characteristics as the unit of analysis, this study explored the overall impact of the mentoring relationships on preservice

teachers' understanding of who they are as teachers and what they are capable of. Figure 3.1 below is a diagrammatic representation of a social constructivist perspective on identity construction informed by mentor teacher-preservice teacher relationship.
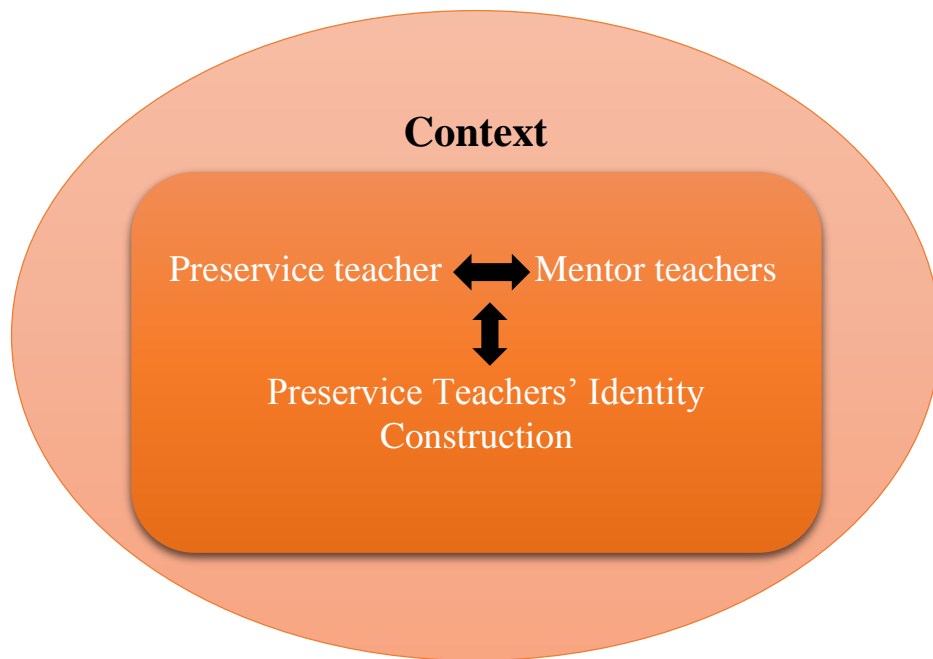
Figure 3.1 A Social Constructivist Perspective on ST Identity Construction

As Figure 3.1 suggests the interactions between preservice teachers and mentor teachers inform the identity construction of preservice teachers. The two-way arrow between the two parties suggests that the dynamics of their interactions can influence both. In other words, they both learn from each other and their involvement in the learning community of practicum influences their experiences, thinking and learning patterns. In addition, as identity construction is a dynamic process and is never stable, the experiences preservice teachers gain and the views they develop are subject to constant change. Although the mentor-mentee relationship is specific to practicum experience, the experiences gained through such interactions continue to impact the dynamic nature of preservice teachers' identity as they start their teaching career.

3.2. An Overview on the Context of the Study: Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary (GDE-S), Western Australia

The research was conducted in GDE-S in the School of Education at a university in Western Australia. The programs offered by the School of Education are informed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which is

responsible for the development of a national curriculum, assessment, and a data collection and reporting program that supports learning for all Australian students. A wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, State and Territory education authorities, professional education associations and many others collaborate in doing ACARA's work.

Along with ACARA, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) also provides national leadership for Commonwealth, state and territory governments and promotes excellence in teaching and school leadership. There are seven interconnected, interdependent and overlapping Standards, which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. These standards are grouped into three domains of teaching including Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

The GDE-S, the context of the research, is a course designed to prepare students for the Secondary Education profession and the graduates are eligible to teach in secondary schools. This course is a one-year program, which has 120 credit points and was accredited by the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia. It includes four compulsory units namely, Classroom Management and Instruction (10 points), Beginning Teaching: Theory and Practice (10 points), Teaching in Diverse Australian Schools (10 points), and Becoming an Exemplary Teacher (10 points). There are also areas of specialization, which preservice teachers can choose from (40 points) and three professional practice components (40 points) across the course. During the time of this study, this course was offered via two modes of delivery: on-campus and residency. The focus of this study was on on-campus students. This mode included lectures and tutorials, and coordinated program of Professional Practice.

Therefore, as Figure 3.2 below shows, professional identity of preservice teachers who took part in GDE-S were under the influence of different factors of their learning community. As explained above, ACARA and AITSL impacted preservice teachers' identity with their proposed curricula and rules. Apart from that, preservice teachers came from different disciplines, bringing with them prior experiences and backgrounds that had already begun to shape their teacher identity. Equally significant was the role of university lecturers. The role of school contexts and mentor teachers who had constant and direct interactions with preservice teachers was also significant. Acknowledging the

overriding importance of all these factors on the process of identity construction of the participants, the present research focused on the impact of the last factor (i.e., mentor teachers' role) on preservice teachers' professional identity construction. Although participants' prior experiences were highly significant, they were not taken into account in this research and only the participants' experiences gained through their practicum were considered.
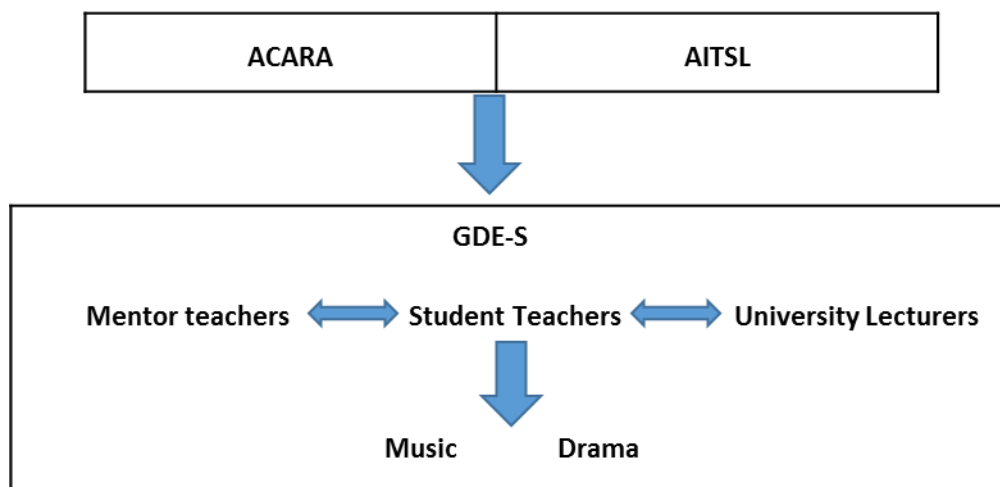
Figure 3.2 The Learning Community of GDE-S in School of Education

3.3. Research approach

A case study approach was adopted in this study for a number of reasons. First of all, a case study approach lends itself to understanding the complexity of the process of change (Liu & Fisher, 2006). Besides, this approach seems to be an appropriate method for studies, which investigate individual situations like exploring the relationship between professional learning and developments in professional identity or the emergence of identity in an individual (Stake, 1995; 2005). Also, case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena (Merriam, 1988) like the process of identity construction. However, as single case designs may be unpredictable and they require in-depth investigation of the case to minimize the chances of misrepresentations (Yin, 2003), a multiple case design was used. Multiple case designs, as Yin (2011) argues, offer convincing evidence of a

phenomenon and are preferable to single-case studies. Moreover, multiple case designs can help deal with challenges resulting from the cases which are unique in unpredictable ways (Duff, 2008).

Generally due to the open-ended and interpretivist nature of qualitative methods, data collection tools such as interview and observation are used (Mertens, 2005). Therefore, that was one reason to use these data collection tools. Moreover, in the literature on teacher identity, it was found that many studies used interview frameworks for studying teacher identity (Trent, 2010; Olsen, 2008; Findlay, 2006; Williams, 2010 to name a few). Yet, there were studies, which drew upon participants' reflective journals (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Cattley, 2007; Larson & Phillips, 2005) or observations of their teaching practices (Larson & Phillips, 2005; Smagorinsky et al., 2004; Vavrus, 2009). Thus, I drew upon the three main data collection tools (i.e., interviews, observations, and reflective journals) to better triangulate the data.

3.4. Participants

Two groups of participants volunteered to take part in the research. The first group comprised seven preservice teachers (five females and two males) from the disciplines of music (Simon, Eden, Sara, Linda, Liz, [pseudonyms]) and drama (Chelsey, Anna, [pseudonyms]) and in an age range of early 20s to early 30s. Initially there were eight participants in this group. However, in the second semester one preservice teacher from the drama discipline (Alex, pseudonyms) withdrew from the research**.** I chose four preservice teachers from Music and four from Drama disciplines because of convenience sampling. Also, the number of participants (i.e. eight) was considered by my supervisors as an adequate number. The reason why the data was collected from GDE-S was that there were three practicums (a one-week, and a four week professional practice units in the first semester as well as a final seven week practice block in the second semester). Therefore, the distribution of professional practice units across the one-year programme accommodated a more systematic and constant observation of the participants. The participants were recruited during orientation day, and also in the first week of the program. All participants were enrolled in GDE-S by March 2014.

The second group was the mentor teachers of the preservice teachers in the first and second practicum. All mentor teachers comprising 16, nine in the first practicum (six

males and three females), and seven (six females and one male) in the second, were approached for the research purposes before the start of each practicum. The mentor teachers had three to 34 years of teaching experience and a mentoring experience ranging from five to 25 years. However, four mentors were new to the mentoring role and they had not mentored preservice teachers before. In the first practicum, one preservice teacher had two mentors, and others had one mentor while they had the chance to observe other teachers and occasionally teach their classes. Therefore, nine instead of eight mentors were observed and interviewed in the first practicum. However, in the second practicum, the seven preservice teachers were assigned only one main mentor teacher who were observed and interviewed as well.

The placements of the preservice teachers to schools were made through the university's practicum office. After the mentor teachers were assigned, I contacted them individually through email or the phone call and invited them to participate in the study before each practicum started. All participants volunteered to take part in the research study knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the data, they would be assigned pseudonyms, and they would be able to withdraw from the research at any time.

3.5. Data collection

Data collection occurred over the course of the one-year GDE-S program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each preservice teacher at three different stages: in early March 2014, after the end of the first placement in July, and at the end of the second placement in early December. I used Kelchtermans's (1993) conceptualization of teacher identity to design preservice teachers' interview questions in the three rounds. The interview framework captured three different dimensions of teacher identity as suggested by Kelchtermans (1993), namely *self-image* (e.g., how do you describe yourself as a teacher?), *self-efficacy* (e.g., how do you evaluate your teaching ability, skills and knowledge, weaknesses and strengths) and *task perception* (e.g., what are your main responsibilities as a teacher toward yourself and your students?). I conducted semi-structured interviews to be open to new ideas and themes generated during the interviews.

The first interview dealt with questions such as: What is your purpose of teaching? Do you have a vision of the kind of teacher you would like to be? What are your main responsibilities toward your students? The questions in the second and third interviews were mainly about the mentoring experiences and any perceived changes in participants' teacher identity, such as: Could you describe the relationship you shared with your mentor teacher? Do you think your mentor gave you the courage and confidence you needed in your role? Can you compare the relationship you shared with your mentors in the first and second practicum? Which one did you prefer and why? (See Appendix B for the data collection tools including interview questions). Table X below presents information about the interview length in each round:

Table 3.1: length of interviews

Rounds of Interviews	Length of Interviews
First round	10 to 35 Minutes
Second round	10 to 40 Minutes
Third round	10 to 55 Minutes

The interviews were all audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Later, all participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. It is worth noting that, due to time limitations the preservice teachers had, they were not asked to check and approve the transcripts and the final report the researcher had produced based on the findings. However, other triangulation strategies were used to enhance credibility of the data which parallels internal validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Such strategies included collecting the data from different sources (preservice teachers and mentor teachers), time (at the beginning and end of each placement) and methods (interviews, observations, reflective journals).

The participants were also invited to keep a reflective journal as they went through their course. Except for one participant, who did not agree to write a journal due to time limitations, the other participants produced at least three journal entries: one during the first semester, one during the first practicum, and one at the end of the first practicum. In the second placement only four of the preservice teachers continued to write, adding

one more entry to their journal. Thus, a total of 24 reflective journals were gathered over the course of the program. In the journal entries, the participants were asked to reflect on issues such as their experiences of teaching within their schools, their ideas about their mentoring relationships, their perceptions of their progress, and whether or not they observed any changes in their teacher identity. The participants were also given the leeway to write about any issues of interest and significance to them.

I also conducted four classroom observations on each preservice teacher. During each placement preservice teachers were responsible for some sole teaching. During this time, mentors handed over the whole responsibility to preservice teachers. Thus, they had the opportunity to teach in their own way which would reflect their professional identity. I asked the mentors to inform me of the time of this solo teaching so I could observe the participants. I focused on some dimensions of teaching conduct such as student-teacher interaction (e.g., establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect) assessment procedures (e.g., collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess learning) and classroom management (e.g., using materials, resources and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students) to document changes in participants' teaching practices. As stated in the literature, teachers' professional identity has a close connection with their teaching practices (Wenger, 1998). In other words, the way teachers think of their teacher self, impacts the way they teach and interact with their students. Given that identity formation is a dynamic process, it was expected that the changes in participants' identity as a result of their interactions with their mentors would influence their teaching conduct. Therefore, through observations, changes in participants' identity as reflected in their teaching practices was noticed. Moreover, these observations were used as prompts for interviews.

I also used an observation checklist to pinpoint the dynamics of the interactions between the preservice teachers and their mentors. Items such as "way of giving feedback", "collaboration", "giving confidence", and "open communication" were among the items of the checklist. I recorded the frequencies of the actions as well as examples of behaviour during the observations. I conducted two classroom observations on each participant's teaching practices in each practicum. Since the unit of analysis was the interactions between mentors and mentees, and given that there was not much

interaction between them during mentee' solo teaching, I also attended debriefing sessions following each solo teaching. Using the checklist and notes helped me to pinpoint specific patterns of interactions between the participants. For instance, ease of communication and the way verbal and written feedback was offered indicated the extent to which rapport, respect, and support was provided and established. The debriefing sessions lasted three to 30 minutes, depending on the depth of feedback and the length of conversations between mentors and mentees.

The mentor teachers were also interviewed at their respective school before and after the placements. Questions asked from mentor teachers in the first interview included: Why did you agree to become a mentor teacher? To what extent do you think your relationship with your mentee might change their image of who they are as a teacher? Questions in the second interview at the end of each practicum included: Could you comment on the mentoring relationship you had with your mentee? Were there any tensions or conflicts between you during the practicum? To what extent do you think your mentee has developed a teacher identity? Out of nine mentors in the first practicum only seven took part, however, the seven mentors in the second practicum attended the final interview. The mentors' interviews lasted 10 to 45 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.6. Trustworthiness of findings

Some procedures were used to guarantee trustworthiness of the data in this study. Credibility of the data that parallels internal validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) was enhanced through using member checks and triangulation. Member checks which is the most important procedure in establishing credibility (Mertens, 2005) was conducted, for instance, at the end of interviews by asking the participants to check if the notes accurately reflected their positions (Mertens, 2005). Once the interviews were transcribed, I asked the participants to check the transcripts for accuracy. Triangulation which "involves checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources" (Mertens, 2005 p. 255) was achieved through using Denzin's multiple triangulation strategies (1989) including data collection from different sources (preservice teachers and mentor

teachers), time (at the beginning and end of each placement) and methods (interviews, observations, reflective journals).

Moreover, use of a multiple case design strengthened transferability of the data (Yin, 1994), which equals external validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In addition to credibility and transferability of the data, 'confirmability', which is a qualitative research alternative to objectivity in quantitative research, and authenticity (fairness) was taken into account. By providing a chain of evidence (Yin, 1994) or confirmability audit (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) such as asking the supervisors to review field notes and interview transcripts, memo writing, and keeping research journals, I attested to the fact that the data can be traced to original sources (Mertens, 2005).

3.7. Data analysis

Thematic analysis, which is regarded as a fundamental method used in qualitative research and is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79), was used to interpret the data. To analyse the interview data and reflective journals, I took the following steps as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) for undertaking thematic analysis: transcribing verbal data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. More specifically, after transcribing the interviews, the interpretation of the data was attained in an iterative manner as the reflective journals and interview transcripts were read multiple times to find codes which reflected the main concepts. Recurring issues were consolidated into new codes. For instance, codes such as "open communication", "encouragement and support" and " a close bond", which were related to positive aspects of mentoring, were named "components of the mentoring relationships". These codes highlighted the patterns of interactions (i.e. the unit of analysis) between mentors and mentees and also the mentors' mentoring styles during the practicum that eventually resulted in changes in preservice teachers' identity development.

Further analysis was conducted on the data using Merriam's guidelines (1998). Each participant's data, (i.e., their transcribed interviews, reflective journals, observation checklists and researcher's notes) were read over and over again and analysed

independently (within-case analysis) to build a profile of each participant's prior experiences, unique mentoring experiences, and challenges during the one-year course. Questions asked in analysing each set of data included: What mentoring experiences were significant to this person? How did this person's experience influence their identity? How did this person feel when they remembered their mentors and the mentoring experience? Did they feel motivated, inspired, happy or the opposite?

Based on the initial within-case analysis some codes were developed and then the codes were compared across cases (cross-case analysis). The two stages of analysis were carried out with a focus on how the participants' teacher identities were influenced and developed as a result of their mentoring experiences. Constant comparison techniques provided the chance to compare different cases with each other to determine their similarities and differences (Merriam, 1998). However, as Patton (2002) suggested "the analyst's first and foremost responsibility consists of doing justice to each individual case. All else depends on that" (p. 449). Thus, an attempt was made to delve deeply into each participant's experiences and provide more detailed within-case analysis in this paper. In the last stage, data were grouped together and the most recurring codes were regarded as themes, with the most telling or representative extracts selected for reporting.

Observation checklists and researcher's notes helped in crosschecking the data as well. More specifically, the participants' comments on the availability of their mentors or the depth of their feedback were compared to the notes taken in the debriefing sessions for verification. For instance, the researcher took note of the length of sessions and noticed some sessions were as short as three minutes and some mentors were not present during the two solo teaching of the preservice teachers that the researcher observed. Such data provided further evidence for the mentors' patterns of interaction with their mentees.

3.8. Ethics approval

This research has ethics approval from Edith Cowan University, the Western Australia Department of Education, as well as the Catholic Education Office of Western

Australia. It is worth noting that all the papers originated from my PhD research and included in this thesis have copyrights.

3.9. Researcher's bias

During the research, I did not impose any framework on preservice teachers' practicum. Moreover, I did not ask the participants for any documents related to their teaching folder. I also adhered to the four guidelines suggested by Christians (2005) for conducting research, namely giving informed consent, avoiding deception, protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality of the data, and ensuring accuracy of the data. To this end, I provided all participants with a form of consent, which contained information about the nature and consequences of the research, the purposes of the research project, the duration of the study and their rights as participants. The participants were guaranteed anonymity in any report of findings, and the data remained confidential during and after the research. For instance, when a participant confided in me, I did not disclose their secrets.

I strived to ensure that the research process and its findings would not have any negative impact on preservice teachers' learning. Interview questions, which were related to teacher identity, heightened the participants' awareness of their professional identity, which was considered as a positive impact of the study. The research project did not jeopardize preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship during or after the programme.

I was mindful of the mutual benefits the research study. Whilst I enjoyed the considerable benefits of obtaining my PhD, I made sure that each participant developed a better understanding of their teacher identity, and received extra professional feedback on their actual teacher identity.

Chapter Four

Findings

4. Introduction

This chapter consists of five papers, which are written based on the findings of this research. The first paper in this section is "Preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash?" which reports on the findings of the interviews conducted with the eight preservice teachers participating in the research and their nine mentor teachers prior to the first placement. This phase of the research provides a proper introduction to the participants; the expectations they had of their mentor and their mental images of such program before they actually went through a real mentoring experience. The viewpoints of the mentor teachers and the preservice teachers were compared and contrasted and interesting results were found.

The second paper is "Preservice teachers' professional identity development and the role of mentor teachers", which explores the changes in professional identity of the preservice teachers after finishing the first placement. The findings of this phase of the study suggested that the preservice teachers experienced very positive mentoring relationships and received extensive feedback from their mentor teachers, which contributed to their professional development.

The third paper "A closer look at the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' professional identity", is a detailed report on the two placements the preservice teachers had. It is about the dynamics of the two mentoring relationships the preservice teachers had with their first and second mentors and explores the extent to which each mentoring relationship impacted the preservice teachers' teacher identity. In this paper the significant role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' teacher identity is explained.

"Use of metaphors in mentoring relationships" is the fourth paper which examines preservice teachers' and their mentor teachers' metaphorical images of the mentoring relationship and changes in those metaphors as they went through their practicum. Use of metaphors by the participants provided the chance to further examine their feelings and ideas towards the mentoring they experienced.

The final paper is "Talking the talk and walking the walk: Preservice teachers' evaluation of their mentors" and examines the actual mentoring practices of the mentor teachers in the two placements. The purpose of this paper was to look more closely at the perceived roles of mentor teachers prior to each placement and compare them with their actual mentoring practices received by the preservice teachers. The comparison provided the chance to identify gaps between mentor teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use.

4.1. Student Teachers' and Mentor Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of a Mentoring Relationship: Do They Match or Clash. *Professional Development in Education*. 2015.

Purpose: This paper was based on the first round of interviews with preservice teachers and their mentor teachers before they started the first placement. The purpose of this study was to examine the participants' ideas and perceptions of the mentoring relationship before they started the practicum.

Abstract

This study examines similarities and differences between mentor teachers' and student teachers' perceptions of the components of a positive mentoring relationship and its impact on the identity formation of student teachers. In addition to the interview data, the participants were asked to use metaphors to describe the mentoring relationship. The findings indicated that there was no serious dispute between their ideas. Furthermore, both parties considered encouragement and support, open line of communication and feedback as the most significant elements. They also used metaphorical images such as guiding, parenting, and training verifying the importance of support and nurturing in the mentoring relationship. However, a difference was identified in participants' attitudes of the impact of the mentoring relationship on student teachers' identity formation. Based on the findings it is suggested that mentor teachers consider the significance of the mentoring relationship on development of student teachers' identity. Keywords: Mentoring relationship, teacher identity, metaphors.

Introduction

Student teaching experiences are considered as the most influential components of a teacher education program (Glenn, 2006; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Tang, 2003). These experiences shape student teachers' development as novice teachers. At the heart

of the teaching experience is the relationship between mentor teachers and student teachers (Caruso, 2000), which is highly capable of transforming the teachers involved (Johnson, 2003). Researchers argued that mentor teachers were key contributors to preservice teacher education and played a crucial role in professional development of student teachers (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1996; Clarke, 2001; Glenn, 2006; Leshem, 2012) by offering student teachers professional knowledge, technical support, and help for student teachers to develop their own teaching style (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Pajak, 2001; Sanford & Hopper, 2000).

There has been growing interest in research on mentoring in preservice teacher education as it is believed that the overall success of the professional practice unit, practicum, heavily depends on the positive relationship between mentors and preservice teachers (Graves, 2010). Research in this area has mainly focused on identifying the roles of mentor teachers and the significance of their roles (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Barnett & O'Mahony, 2005; Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Bray & Nettleton, 2007; Graves, 2010; Rowley, 1999; Tauer, 1998), features of optimal mentoring relationships (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Glenn, 2006; Jacobi, 1991), student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions of their roles (Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O'Brien, 1995; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Draves, 2008; Zanting, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2001), and tensions and conflicts in student teacher-mentor teacher relationship (Martin, Snow, & Torrez, 2011; Patrick, 2013).

Some researchers have contended that mentors and student teachers were better able to develop a successful mentoring relationship when they had shared values, goals and understanding of each other's roles. In order to create an understanding of such roles researchers have examined mentor teachers' and student teachers' perceptions and expectations of the practicum and the mentoring relationship. Whereas some researchers specifically have focused on mentor teachers' perceptions (Draves, 2008) and some on student teachers'(Caires & Almeida, 2007; Zanting et al., 2001), others have included the voices of both parties (Abell et al., 1995; Bates, Drits, & Ramirez, 2011; Leshem, 2012; Levin & Rock, 2003; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). For instance, Abell et al. (1995) interviewed 29 mentors and student teachers to identify how they interpreted and adapted their roles. They found that respect and trust

in the mentoring relationship were recognized as essential by both groups and student teachers needed support more than anything else in their internship.

Although there are various studies on the mentoring relationships from the perspective of both parties, more research is needed to explore the ideas, values, expectations and understanding of mentors and mentees. Research suggests that conflicting role expectations, or lack of clarity of such roles, might result in unsuccessful mentoring relationships (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Rajuan et al., 2007). Further research in this area is needed to verify or contradict previous findings, in order to build a more thorough understanding of positive mentoring relationships based on the ideas of the main parties. Mentor teachers need to know about their student teachers' perceptions and expectations in order to be more aware of their own responsibilities in creating a positive experience for them and to be better prepared to resolve any possible conflicts and tensions that might arise during the practicum. Student teachers, on the other hand, also should know how their mentor teachers define a professional mentoring relationship and what expectations they have. The aim of this study is to identify the similarities and differences between the perceptions of a sample of student teachers and mentor teachers regarding the main components of a good mentoring relationship.

The present study is relatively new in that it draws on metaphors used by participants to describe their understanding of the mentoring relationship. There are many research studies which have examined metaphors used by preservice teachers or mentor teachers to explore their perceptions, beliefs and experiences of teaching, working with children etc. (Greves, 2005; McGrath, 2006; Shaw & Mahlios, 2008; Sumsion, 2003). However, mentor teachers and student teachers have rarely used metaphors for describing the mentoring relationship. This study also aims to provide deeper insights into the participants' thoughts and feelings about the mentoring relationship by exploring the metaphors they used. Furthermore, it is argued that preservice teacher education programs are the first and the most important stage in development of student teachers' teacher identity (Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). Teacher identity plays a crucial role in decisions teachers make about their teaching practices, the content they teach, and the kind of relationships they have with their students (Beijaard et al., 2004). Teacher identity is partly shaped in the interaction student teachers have with significant others such as their mentor teachers (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Pittard, 2003). An awareness

of the significance of such relationship in shaping student teachers' identity is needed by mentor teachers so they will exercise extra caution in the way they interact with student teachers (Izadinia, 2013). In addition, this study investigates the participants' understanding of the significance of the mentoring relationships on identity formation of student teachers to promote further discussion on the issue.

The study

The present research, which is part of a broader study on identity formation of a number of student teachers, was conducted in one of Western Australia's largest teacher education programs. The eight preservice teachers participating in this research comprised five females and three males from the disciplines of Music (five) and Drama (three) and in an age range of early 20s to early 30s. The participants were all enrolled in a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education, Secondary course. Preservice teachers were recruited in the orientation day and also in the first week of the program. The second group was nine mentor teachers, six males and three females, and their teaching experience ranged from three to 34 years. One preservice teacher had two main mentors, and other students had one mentor while they had the chance to observe other teachers and occasionally teach their classes. Therefore, the numbers of mentors who took part in the study and were observed were nine instead of eight. Four of the mentor teachers were new to the mentoring role and the rest had mentored student teachers over their teaching experience ranging from five to 25 years. The placements of the student teachers to schools were made through the university's practicum office. The mentor teachers were invited by the researcher to participate in the study following the placement process and close to the end of the first semester and before the start of the first four-week block practicum. All participants volunteered to take part in the research study knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the data, they would be assigned pseudonyms, and they would be able to pull out of the research at any time.

All eight student teachers agreed to a semi-structured one-on-one interview held on the campus where they studied, as did the mentor teachers at their respective school. Due to time limitations, one mentor teacher could not attend the interview and thus the

interview questions were emailed to her and she provided her answers in the written format. An attempt was made to conduct the interviews with all participants before the practicum so their answers could adequately reflect their expectations prior to interactions with the other party. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and later the interviewees were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Questions asked of the participants included: What do you think the mentor's role should be? What are the main components of a good mentoring relationship? To what extent do you think the relationship between mentors and student teachers will affect student teachers' vision of the teacher they want to be? As part of the interview, all participants were asked to think of a metaphor to describe the mentoring relationship they expected to have with the other party. To help the participants phrase their sentences, they were asked to complete the question: Can you use a metaphor to describe the mentoring relationship? (You could say my relationship with my mentor will be like …).

In order to analyse the interview data, the following steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) for doing thematic analysis, was taken: transcribing verbal data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. More specifically, after transcribing the data, some codes were developed based on similarities and differences of the perceptions and ideas of the two groups. For instance, codes such as "perceptions of the mentoring relationships" and "the impact of the mentoring relationships on student teachers' identity" were developed and sample quotes by mentors and student teachers were fed into each code. Recurring issues were consolidated into new codes and key quotations were selected to represent the identified themes. What follows are the main themes emerging from the interview data which were in line with the research questions raised in this study.

Findings and discussion

The following section includes student teachers' and mentor teachers' perspectives on three main subtopics raised in this research, namely the components of a good mentoring relationship, the metaphors they used to describe this relationship, and their perceived impact of mentoring on student teachers' identity formation. The perspectives

of both parties are juxtaposed in each theme to allow easy comparison of the viewpoints.

Components of a good mentoring relationship

Data from this study suggests that the most significant factors in a mentoring relationship from both student teachers' and mentor teachers' point of view are encouragement and support, open relationship, and feedback. These themes repeatedly emerged from the interview data and were referred to by almost all participants in different ways and wordings. Factors such as: trust and mutual respect in the mentoring relationship, mentor teachers' knowledge and experience, their availability and being inspiring role models, not intimidating, as well as being great communicators were also discussed by both parties. However, in order to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the participants' perspectives, only factors with high commonality among responses are discussed. Factors that were only referred to by a few participants were eliminated from the discussion.

Encouragement and support.

Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) argued that student teachers were in need of constant support during the practicum. Gold (1996) divided the nature of this support into two: instructional related support and psychological support. Instructional support refers to the knowledge, strategies and skills given to student teachers and psychological support refers to enhancing their self-esteem, confidence and feelings of effectiveness (Gold, 1996). Emotional and academic support have been identified as the main components of mentoring relationships in some studies (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). The data in this study also suggest that student teachers need mentor teachers who support them both emotionally and academically and give them constant encouragement to build confidence. Some student teachers attached more importance to the emotional than the academic support of their mentor. For instance, Sara commented:

> It will be nice to feel like they're on my team, and not trying to – 'Oh, another student teacher' just, like, get rid of you as soon as possible … I would like him to be supportive and I'd like him to encourage me without spoon-feeding me.

Similarly, Linda expressed appreciation for her university lecturer's professional conduct, and hoped to have a supportive mentor teacher just like him:

> He [the university lecturer] has been exactly what I wanted; he's been really supportive. I went in before I started because I have kids and I don't have family here to support me … so it has been really hard and he [the lecturer] was just so helpful.

Alex, another student teacher, also expressed his desire to receive constant encouragement from his mentors by saying: "I think deep down they will all be fingers crossed 'you do really well'… There will be criticism, but there'll also be a lot of good words and confidence given to you".

Apart from being supported emotionally, the student teachers viewed academic support as a significant component and pointed out that mentor teachers should provide them with strategies, show them the right way of doing things, impart pedagogical content knowledge, and help them the best way they can. Chelsey, for instance, proposed: "mentors should be people that you could call afterwards and say, 'I have encountered this problem and I don't know how to fix it'". Later Chelsey mentioned the importance of being in an environment where the mentor teacher is non-judgmental and willing to sit down with her and discuss what went wrong and how she could do things better.

Whereas academic and emotional support were repeatedly considered as significant factors, the data show the need for emotional support was even stronger, as suggested by researchers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Booth, 1993; Caires & Almeida, 2007; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Rajuan et al., 2007). Beck and Kosnik (2002), for example, argued that friendliness or emotional support was a key component of a practicum from their preservice teachers' point of view. Rajuan et al. (2007) found that student teachers needed a collaborative and supportive relationship with their mentor teachers to develop the confidence to take risks and experiment in the classroom. These findings were supported by the interview data in this study, which indicated the student teachers simply lacked the confidence they needed in early stages of their practicum. This lack of confidence mainly originated from the student teachers' perceived inability to function as competent teachers. They frequently expressed their concern for growing in their

subject, not knowing how to control the pupils, having naive ideas, being intimidated by direct interaction with pupils, not knowing how to implement what they had learnt, not knowing how much leniency they could employ and how to manage their classes. However, the overwhelming fears and uncertainties that the student teachers expressed could be considerably eased and turned to a growing confidence if the emotional support and encouragement of mentor teachers were provided as desired by the student teachers in this study.

However, some student teachers also pointed out that they expected a reasonable amount of support so they could find their own ways of doing things. Sara, as indicated above, for example, maintained that although she hoped to receive support, she did not want her mentor teacher to spoon-feed her. Liz also stated that if she was constantly is badgered by the people in the charge of the school, she would feel terrible. She explained:

> They need to allow you to meet those (expectations) in your own way
> so if my idea of classroom management is totally different from my
> mentor's idea of classroom management, or … if I teach that concept
> effectively that should be the only thing that counts … like, if I taught
> it by dancing around and making an absolute arse of myself in front of
> the class, and that worked, the point is that it worked.

The freedom student teachers desired to have to feel in charge of their class has been observed by other researchers, as well (Beck & Kosnik, 2000, 2002; Jackson, 2001; Patrick, 2013). Beck and Kosnik (2000) argued that student teachers should have "a degree of freedom to innovate and press the limits of what is possible in contemporary schools" (p. 218). The student teachers in this study also implied that although they needed constant support, and were ready to take their mentor teachers' judgments very seriously, they needed to be provided with the chance to learn by teaching and having their own views.

What did the mentor teachers think? Support was also repeatedly emerged as a theme in mentor teachers' data although it had a slightly different connotation for some mentor teachers. Some mentors, like the student teachers, argued that providing strategies,

imparting knowledge and showing emotional support were a must in practicum experience. For example, Ron maintained that:

> If there are moments where things go wrong, there'll be an element of she'll be reprimanded. That doesn't mean that I yell, but we just talk it through, we say, 'Okay, look, this didn't work, okay, you could have dealt with it this way'… I'm there to facilitate her through this experience.

Agnes claimed that she should provide emotional support by reassuring her student teacher when things went wrong so she (the student teacher) knows it happens to everyone. Greg, another mentor teacher, similarly stated that mentors need to provide a safe environment where "if they do fail, someone will pick up the bits and give them strategies not to make that mistake". It was also stated by mentor teachers that the support given to student teachers should be reasonable and they should not shelter them through the process and guide rather than direct them.

For other mentor teachers, support was an important aspect, as well yet for them it meant providing a realistic picture of what it was like to work in a school and be a teacher. Most of the mentor teachers in this study argued that they could most benefit their student teachers when they showed student teachers the full life of school, and exposed them to different classroom environments so the preservice teachers could make an informed decision to enter the profession or not. For instance, Rose emphasised that she should give her student teacher an overall picture of the job:

> So a realistic approach, so if you think you're going to go home and have no work, you are kidding yourself. If you think that you can just turn up and then leave five minutes after the siren has gone, you are kidding yourself. Everything that goes with the job, whether that's like rehearsals, concerts, meetings, parent phone calls, e-mails, reporting, like, trying to give them, like, the whole overall picture and a little taste of everything.

Scott, another mentor teacher, pointed out that introducing student teachers to the full life of school was the best help he could give to student teachers:

So letting them see what it is like, and sometimes even, if it happens that there is a parent meeting or something at the time, asking them if they want to sit in … I mean, it is a wonderful job but it is the romanticised ideal of coming in at nine every morning, leaving at three every afternoon is so far from the truth. So it is sort of letting them see that well, yes, you do have to be here at seven, you won't leave 'til 4:30 or five o'clock, and when you go home you do have lesson preparations, you do have marking, but when they come in then being able to sort of take them through that ...

As the above vignettes reveal, helping student teachers experience what the school life is like was an important role for most of the mentor teachers. Yet for the student teachers, although receiving support and encouragement was highly significant, they did not rate highly the need to know about school realities. Maynard and Furlong (1993) suggested five developmental stages that student teachers go through in the process of learning to teach: early idealism, survival, recognizing difficulties, hitting the plateau, and moving on. Student teachers who are at the early idealism stage might not need to have a full grasp of the realities of school life because self-concerns (i.e., how adequate I am) is more critical at that stage of their development (Fuller, 1969). Because student teachers have a degree of self-doubt at the early stages of their teaching which is fairly typical (Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, 1992), what is of more help to them is the emotional and academic support that the student teachers also called for in this study.

Open communication

Maintaining an open communication with mentor teachers has been identified as crucial by student teachers in some studies (Nevins Stanulis & Russell, 2000; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992) and researchers have emphasised that it was one of the main ingredients to a successful mentoring relationship (Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez, & Ballou, 2002). Liliane and Colette (2009) found that when mentor teachers exhibited openness to student teachers' ideas and encouraged them to reflect on their practice the student teachers developed their confidence to express their own ideas. In this study, student teachers highly valued having an open communication with their mentors, thus being able to approach their mentors easily, discuss their issues freely, and have a chance to be listened to. Anna, for instance, noted that the mentoring relationship

should involve an open relationship so she could ask any questions and have her mentor listen. Similarly, Liz commented that the mentoring relationship needed to be reasonably close and the mentor and student teacher need to feel comfortable and be open to each other so they could discuss and debate ideas. She further maintained:

> You would hope that whatever teacher you get as a mentor when you are out there is, like, understanding and approachable and is someone you can talk to and bounce ideas off and debate a little bit without being too preachy or too stuck in their ways to see where you are coming from.

Chelsey also stressed the importance of being in an environment where she felt she was not judged by her mentor teacher. She explained that when there was an open and friendly communication based on collaboration she had the chance to share her ideas freely:

> I think if you had someone who was very critical or ridiculed you, I think that would be really hard because then perhaps I would not want to go and talk to them because I would feel like, well, they are just going to make fun of me, or they are just going to put me down or make me feel even worse than I already do … I think if we come to our mentor teachers and say 'I think I have really screwed this up…I do not think I did the right thing with this class,' I think having an environment where they can say, 'Yes, that probably was not the right thing to do, but it is happened now, let's work on how you could do it better next time'.

As the above vignettes suggests, being in an environment where student teachers do not feel safe to open up, are intimidated by the judgments of their mentors, and constrained by power relationships creates silence and a level of self-censoring on their part (Patrick, 2013). Such silence due to communication problems seem to be common during practicums (Albers & Goodman, 1999). Researchers argue that as significant as the practicum is for learning, it is inherently laden with unequal power relations (Martinovic & Dlamini, 2009). Such inequality results in preservice teachers' silence and lack of learning. In other words, when there is lack of communication due to the

power relationships, thinking and learning which requires dialogue does not happen (Fung, 2005). As discussed above, most of the student teachers in this study referred to having open communication and friendly relationships with mentors as essential in finding themselves as a teacher.

Mentor teachers similarly, argued that open communication based on trust and respect was fundamental to a mentoring relationship. Luke, for instance, stressed that there should be a very open, honest and transparent relationship between the mentor and the mentee to enable their mentees to be autonomous and find their own identity within the classroom. Ron also argued that maintaining an open line of communication with his student teacher is very important because the preservice teacher, needs to feel comfortable and the mentor teacher, should also feel comfortable. He explained that when they, the mentor and the mentee, both feel comfortable, they can exchange knowledge, but if they feel stressed they cannot communicate.

Feedback

Although communication is an important factor in a positive mentoring relationship, tensions might arise in interactions between student teachers and mentor teachers (Bradbury & Koballa Jr, 2008). For instance, when feedback given to student teachers was not helpful both parties might feel frustrated and tensions run high (Hobson, 2002; Maynard, 2000). That is why feedback has been regarded as fundamental to a successful mentoring relationship by both parties (Bates et al., 2011; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; P. S. Christensen, 1988; Leshem, 2012; Smith, 2005; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). For instance, in studies by Beck and Kosnik (2002), and P. S. Christensen (1988), it was found that the student teachers had high regard for feedback and viewed it as an essential aspect of the practicum experience. However, in some studies feedback was not regarded as significant in terms of its pertinence, constructive character and clarity by student teachers and mentors (Caires & Almeida, 2007). The interview data for this study showed that almost all student teachers valued feedback highly and noted there should be a significant amount of feedback given to them during the practicum. The student teachers repeatedly hinted that they appreciated feedback because their mentors had a good understanding of the position, and that they also needed practical advice and professional tips. Some student teachers spoke about the importance of receiving continuous feedback throughout the practicum. For example, Eden pointed out that it

was crucial to "have a go, get feedback, have a go, get feedback, and just keep going like that". He further noted:

> I think research tends to lead to the conclusion that feedback is very important and that kind of continuous feedback as you go through the course sort of guiding you as you go along, some opportunities to be assessed and then I particularly like the idea of small early assessment, … so that you actually get a chance to actually progress rather than feeling like you do not know how you are going and then suddenly being given a score that sums up your progress.

Some student teachers also stressed the honesty required for constructive feedback. Alex, for example, remarked that he expected his mentors to be honest with him and frankly share their assessment of his teaching with him. Glenn (2006) emphasised that "constructive feedback must be honest feedback" (p. 91) because progress will not occur if mentor teachers do not criticize student teachers out of fear of jeopardizing the relationship.

Feedback was a recurring theme in the mentor teachers' data and they all mentioned the importance of feedback in the mentoring relationship. All mentors talked about open and honest feedback, valid feedback, constant feedback, verbal and written feedback and positive and negative feedback given in an appropriate way. Some of them, for instance, emphasised the significance of continuous feedback given in small portions rather than a big debrief at the end of the day. Referring to the advantages of constant feedback and reflecting on it, Luke, for example, argued that "student teachers should be given strategies to move forward with the feedback and then to constantly reflect on that and it becomes a cyclic process where the student teacher and the mentor reflect on the student teacher's performance". Some mentor teachers also argued that it is crucial to give feedback in an appropriate and tolerable way so student teachers can take it on board: for example, Matt remarked that feedback should be given in a way that "the person feels affirmed rather than put down". Researchers have similarly argued that feedback should be given in an appropriate spirit and manner to be most effective (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

Mentoring relationship metaphors

Metaphor refers to an analogic device beneath the surface of a person's awareness, which functions as a means for framing and defining experiences (Mahlios, Massengill-Shaw, & Barry, 2010; Neisser, 2003; Yamamoto, Hardcastle, Muehl, & Muehl, 1990). Use of metaphor helps to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another with something more familiar (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Zhao & Huang, 2008). Metaphors also play a key role in understanding and reflecting on the nature of teaching and learning (Leavy, McSorley, & Boté, 2007) and are widely used in preservice teacher education (Leavy et al., 2007; McGrath, 2006; Shaw & Mahlios, 2008; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011) as they are a source of insights into teachers' thoughts and feelings (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). However, use of metaphor to depict student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions of the mentoring relationships is rarely researched. In this study, it was assumed that having the participants use metaphors to describe the mentoring relationship would reveal how they view the relationship and enable the researcher to identify differences and similarities between their perceptions.

Based on the metaphors used it was found that the student teachers viewed the mentoring relationship mainly as a guiding process whereby they were provided with support and guidance. The metaphorical images they used included "parenting", "gardening", "advising", and "coaching". For instance, Liz noted that the relationship was: "like a guide, like, someone sort of with a torch or lantern or something leading you through to where you need to be, showing you the road and the paths that you need to take". Linda, similarly, described the role as akin to a parent figure: "You seek support and you seek that feeling comfortable because it is a new environment so, like a parent or a relative that you feel that comfortable that you can discuss all your questions." Using a slightly different metaphor, Alex remarked that the relationship between his mentor and him was like dirt and flower: "She will be the dirt and I will be the flower. And I have got to grow out of the dirt and she will provide a bit of water every now if I do some things that are right".

As suggested in the above examples, the element of support and guidance was present in all the metaphors the student teachers used, conveying their underlying attitude of being in need of knowledge, support, and encouragement. These metaphors correspond with the student teachers' prior argument and concern for receiving constant emotional

and academic support during the mentoring relationship, as explained in the first theme above.

As for metaphors used by the mentors, two mentor teachers used the metaphorical pictures of "the student" and "the cup and the water", implying that the mentoring relationship was about support given to student teachers; however the hierarchy and the power relations were implied as well. In other words, providing support and knowledge was a significant element for these mentors, but they also alluded to the necessity of establishing a power relationship. For instance, Ron argued that the relationship would be like the cup and the water (pointing to the cup):

> So the knowledge is coming in, and when the knowledge is coming in
> and the best practice is coming in, need to ensure that there is a steady
> understanding between both, because if at any moment the cup itself
> is shaking or moves away, then the knowledge won't be going in
> correctly.

This metaphor suggested that knowledge should be transferred to student teachers in a top- down manner and the best learning happened when student teachers fully received the information implying the necessity for creating a power relationship in the mentoring relationship. However, the majority of metaphors used by the mentor teachers represented a notion of mentoring as a support system whereby student teachers needed huge support from their mentors but at the same time student teachers were regarded more as colleagues. For instance, Lex described the relationship as coaching:

> It is like bringing a new player onto some kind of sporting team…
> they would be fully integrated and there would be certain expectations
> of performance and things like that and that my role is to both, as a
> senior player on that sporting team, to both play alongside her and to
> act as her mentor in that capacity as well.

Scott and Alan also used the metaphors "trainer" and "mentor", by which they implied they monitored the progress of someone and gave encouragement and support along the way. Matt, similarly described it as a master and apprentice relationship and remarked "an apprentice relationship like they are having a little go at doing things and you are

suggesting how things can improve and giving them positive feedback on the things that are good and suggestions for improvement".

Thus most of the metaphors downplayed control or power and asserted the idea of working alongside student teachers suggesting a more egalitarian relationship with student teachers. Arguably, most of the participants supported a social constructivist approach in which leaning is viewed as a social process and knowledge as a product of social interactions (Samaras & Gismondi, 1998). The metaphorical images, such as guiding, training, and parenting signified the importance of their social interactions during the process of learning to teach.

The impact of the mentoring relationship on student teachers' identity

Teacher identity, defined as the conceptualization teachers have of themselves (Murphey, 1998; Singh & Richards, 2006), plays a fundamental role in different aspects of classroom teaching including the decisions teachers make about their teaching practices and the kind of relationships they develop with their students (Beijaard et al., 2004). It has been argued that teacher preparation programs are an important stage of development of teacher identity in student teachers (Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). Given that the social relationships are influential in the process of becoming a teacher (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Pittard, 2003; Williams & Ritter, 2010) and mentor teachers have direct interactions with student teachers, the kind of relationship they have with student teachers might leave significant impact on student teachers' identity (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Pittard, 2003). Thus, an understanding of the importance of a positive mentoring relationship to student teachers' identity formation is needed to instil a stronger sense of teacher identity in student teachers.

All participants of this research were asked to express their ideas about the significance of the mentoring relationships on student teachers' identity. The data showed that all student teachers attached high importance to the impact of mentoring on their identity development and a few of them believed that it had has a lasting effect on them. Some of them argued that the relationship with their university lecturers since the beginning of the program had already affected their picture of who they wanted to be as a teacher.

Among them was Anna who remarked "I think already it has kind of impacted, just watching them and their passion for teaching, it makes me a little bit more excited about teaching and how it is a good career and is very rewarding". Some other student teachers, emphasising the huge impact of the mentoring relationships on their identity, expressed how the ideas and attitudes of their mentors might change their own ideas as they go through the practicums. For instance, Chelsey asserted:

> If you were surrounded by negative people who said kids are worse these days and they are all violent and they cannot be fixed, I think definitely I would start thinking, 'gosh, maybe there is not a lot that I can do'… I do feel a bit depressed when I see people who are really bad teachers.

Similarly, Linda referred to the significant impact of working with a negative mentor on her passion for teaching:

> If you have a positive mentor, you are going to come in and look at it more positively. If you are coming in and your mentor is drained and does not want to be there of course I have my view on the things but that would give you maybe a negative side of the things. So if you are not strong in your passion in teaching I think it can have a negative impact on you.

Out of 10 mentor teachers, only three stated that the mentoring relationships significantly impacted student teachers' identity and the rest were either hesitant about such an influence or believed the mentoring relationships had no influence on student teachers' identity development. Among the first group was Ada, who considered her way of giving feedback was influential in her student teacher's sense of confidence. She pointed out that "the way I praise or criticize my student teacher, depending on my relationship with them, can either strengthen or weaken their confidence". Ron also linked the development of a teacher identity with an increase in his student teacher's confidence, and remarked "she will be shaped by myself, and by her other mentor teachers, so her identity, if she is supported and she is encouraged through this process, should increase in confidence and she should feel better about herself". However, as mentioned above, most of the mentor teachers did not recognize mentor teacher-student

teacher relationship as a contributing factor to student teachers' identity development. Some of them argued that there are more important factors, such as the experience of being there and teaching itself, which play a more substantial role. Scott, for example, claimed: "I think the biggest impact is actually doing it … getting out and sitting in front of a class and either having it go brilliantly or having it hammered". Some mentors argued that every teacher would find their own path and teaching styles and mentors could only provide alternative perspectives and means; therefore they did not think a short mentoring relationship could change much about the future perspectives of student teachers. Greg was among the mentors who believed the mentoring relationship was not a factor in the identity development of student teachers. He argued: "if you keep it [the relationship] professional, it does not matter" [has no effect on student teachers' identity].

On the whole, it was found that student teachers considered the impact of the mentoring relationships on their identity development as highly significant whereas only three mentor teachers held this view. Although little attention has been paid to research on the impact of the relationship between student teachers and teacher educators including mentor teachers on the formation of student teacher identity (Izadinia, 2013), some researchers have emphasised the significance of such relationship (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Johnson, 2003; Schussler, 2006). Graham (1993), for instance, argued that student teaching experience was fraught with uncertainty, conflict and questions of power and authority all of which might impact on who student teachers are as teachers. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the relationship mentor teachers have with their student teachers might influence student teachers' professional identities positively or negatively. However, as the data indicated most of the mentor teachers were sceptical of the significance of this relationship.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data provided interesting findings and verified previous research about the components of a positive mentoring relationship. It was found that emotional and academic support, and both parties regarded an open line of communication and feedback as the key elements of a positive mentoring relationship. There was little

difference between the perceptions of the two groups but the mentor teachers' assertions regarded the feedback element as the most significant factor but student teachers showed more concern for having emotional as well as academic support from their mentors. For most of the mentor teachers, providing support meant familiarizing student teachers with the reality of school life so that student teachers could make an informed decision whether to stay in the job or leave it. Yet, for the student teachers, support was viewed as constant encouragement and emotional backing to build their confidence.

There was also considerable overlap in the metaphors the two groups used to reflect their perceptions of the mentoring relationships; however, two mentor teachers conveyed the necessity of establishing a power relation in the mentoring relationships, and the rest of the participants in both groups used metaphors that reflected their vision of an egalitarian relationship aiming at growth and fulfilment. Metaphors such as coaching, training, guiding were in keeping with participants' views on the importance of support. A key difference was shown in the participants' perceptions toward the impact of the mentoring relationships on student teachers' identity. Whereas the mentoring relationship was seen by the student teachers as a decisive factor in shaping their identity, only three mentor teachers regarded it as significant.

The literature suggests that presence of a close emotional connection between mentor and mentee leads to better outcomes, including feelings of self-worth (Blase, 2009; Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Povinelli, 2002). At early stages of practicum, student teachers clearly lack confidence, are intimidated by the challenges they face every single day, and second-guessed their abilities and the decisions they make. In addition to the strong need student teachers have for learning how to teach, they need constant encouragement and emotional support to overcome feelings of self-doubt and create a positive image of the teacher they want to be. Every comment mentor teachers make could leave a deep impression on their attitudes and perceptions about who they are as teachers and who they want to become. It is highly recommended that mentor teachers value the significance of their role in shaping student teachers identity by providing total emotional and academic support and ongoing extensive feedback to help them develop a stronger sense of teacher identity.

4.2. Preservice teachers' professional identity development and the role of mentor teachers. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*. 2016.

Purpose: The first paper examined the initial ideas the participants had about the mentoring relationships prior to the practicum. The second paper was written after the first placement and based on the second rounds of interviews with the participants. This part of the research looked at the experiences of preservice teachers of the first placement, examined changes in the preservice teachers' teacher identity, and investigated the contributing factors to their perceived changes.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine changes in eight preservice teachers' professional identity and the factors contributing to such changes during a four-week block practicum. A qualitative case study design was used and the data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with preservice teachers and their mentors, reflective journals and observation checklists. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. The findings showed high levels of confidence and development of teacher voice by the end of their four-week block practicum. The findings also suggested that positive mentoring relationships contributed to changes in the preservice teachers' teacher identity. Despite focusing on a relatively small number of preservice secondary teachers during the first four-week practicum of a single teacher education program at a Western Australian university, this research highlights the need to maintain constructive mentoring relationships with preservice teachers to provide positive influences on their professional identity. In order to facilitate this, preservice teacher education programs should provide thorough training for mentor teachers. This work highlighted the crucial role of mentor teachers in creating positive impacts on preservice teachers' professional identity, such as development of their confidence and teacher voice. This paper provides useful insights for researchers, mentor teachers, and preservice teacher education policy developers.

Keywords: Teachers identity, preservice teacher-mentor teacher relationship, practicum, preservice teacher education programs.

Introduction

The development of a teacher identity, defined as the conceptualization, conscious or not, that teachers have of themselves (Singh & Richards, 2006), is a central process in becoming a teacher (Alsup, 2005; Friesen & Besley, 2013). The significance of teacher identity lies in the fact that it influences teachers' effectiveness (Sammons et al., 2007), decision making (Beijaard et al., 2004) and their educational philosophy (Mockler, 2011). As such, researchers have examined extensively the impact of different factors that contribute to the construction of teacher identity in preservice teacher education. They found that, for instance, use of variables such as reflective writing, collaborative reflection and action research (Maclean & White, 2007; Vavrus, 2009) as well as factors such as context (Findlay, 2006; Legard Larson & Kalmbach Phillips, 2005), and motivation (Schepens et al., 2009) significantly impacted preservice teachers' identity formation. The growing importance attached to the concept of preservice teacher identity, and the increasing number of studies in this area suggest that preservice teacher education is an important stage and an ideal starting point for the development of teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Among the factors contributing to the development of teacher identity in the context of preservice teacher education, is preservice teachers' interactions with significant others such as teacher educators. Teacher educators, including mentor teachers, have the potential to help preservice teachers considerably in the process of socialization into the profession (Glenn, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991) by creating social spaces and practices that empower preservice teachers, give them a sense of agency, and foster their active participation (Cattley, 2007; Edwards, 2005; Engle & Faux, 2006) in their learning process. Whereas collaboration with an expert is essential for professional growth

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(Vélez-Rendón, 2010), sometimes tensions arise during such collaboration resulting in negative feelings on the part of preservice teachers (Pillen et al., 2013; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). There are a number of studies on the relationships between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers during practicum that do not deal specifically with teacher identity issues, yet report on the tensions experienced by preservice teachers. Some of these studies have documented the existence of a hierarchical, imitative, superficial, inflexible, and requiring relationship (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Chaliès et al., 2004; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Lesley et al., 2009), while others have described positive relationships between the two parties (Boswell et al., 2015; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004).

Although many of the factors that contribute to the process of identity construction in preservice teachers have been widely researched, less research has been undertaken on the impact of a positive or a troubled relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers on identity formation of prospective teachers. It is said that the relationship between these two parties and the quality of mentoring are important factors in teacher change and professional growth (Devos, 2010), yet there is limited research on the extent to which this relationship can play a role in the development of a professional teacher identity in preservice teachers (Devos, 2010; Izadinia, 2013, 2015b; McIntyre & Hobson, 2015). The aim of this study was, firstly, to examine the changes in preservice teachers' professional identity after a four-week block practicum and, secondly, to investigate the role of mentor teachers in creating changes in their professional identity. By examining the contributions of mentor teachers, this study highlights the crucial role of mentors and the significance of improving a mentor-mentee relationship so that it could positively affect prospective teachers' professional

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identity. Moreover, the findings of this study help preservice teacher education programs in establishing more effective selection and eligibility criteria for recruiting mentors who are passionate about their teaching job and mentoring role. The questions addressed in this study were:

1. What changes occurred in preservice teachers' professional identity after a four-week block practicum?

2. What factors did the participants identify as important in facilitating changes in their identity?

3. To what extent did the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during the first four-week block practicum contribute to the development of preservice teachers' professional identity?

The present research is part of a larger study on identity development of the participants. Whereas the main study examined the impact of the mentoring relationships on identity formation of the preservice teachers during their one-year program, this study only focused on the first four-week practicum (please refer to Izadinia, 2015a, 2015b for more information about other phases of the study).

For this research, Izadinia's (2013) definition of preservice teachers' teacher identity was used as the basis for interpreting the development of preservice teachers' identity. She defined preservice teachers' teacher identity as their "perceptions of their cognitive knowledge, sense of agency, self-awareness, voice, confidence and relationship with colleagues, pupils and parents, as shaped by their educational contexts, prior experiences and learning communities" (p. 708). In her literature review on preservice teachers' teacher identity, Izadinia (2013) explained that the recognition of variables such as teacher voice and confidence as components of teacher identity contributes to a

better understanding of the elusive construct of teacher identity and its developmental process. Therefore, in order to examine teacher identity development in the present study, the author examined changes in components of teacher identity and encouraged the participants to elaborate on the above-mentioned aspects when reflecting on the development of their teacher identity.

The term "teacher educators" in this study is used as an umbrella term for those who guide, teach and support preservice teachers (Koster et al., 2005), including university lecturers and mentor teachers. The term "mentor teachers", also referred to as "cooperating teachers" and "associate teachers", is used for the teacher of the class who works with preservice teachers during the practicum. The terms "preservice teachers" and "mentees" are used interchangeably in this paper.

The mentor teacher-preservice teacher relationship is defined as any form of interaction developed and maintained between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers during the practicum.

Theoretical Framework

Professional identity develops as preservice teachers engage in daily interactions with significant others such as their mentor teachers during their practicum experience (Johnson, 2003). This view, which is based on social constructivism, reflects the idea that learning happens in a social process in which learners gain new skills and knowledge through interactions with other people such as teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). It was assumed that a social constructivist approach would adequately guide the researcher to examine how preservice teachers' professional identity would change or be affected by their interactions with mentor teachers, because its three main tenets

could be easily applied to a mentoring relationship (Graves, 2010). In other words, the three tenets of (1) knowledge is constructed by learners, (2) learning involves social interaction, and (3) learning is situated (Beck & Kosnik, 2006) can be interpreted as: preservice teachers go through the learning-to-teach process and gradually construct their teacher identity in their daily interactions with significant others, such as their mentor teachers in the context of the practicum.

Method
Participants

The present research was conducted in one of the largest teacher education programs in Western Australian. The first group of participants in this phase of the study comprised eight secondary preservice teachers (five females and three males) from the disciplines of music (five) and drama (three) and in an age range of early 20s to early 30s. They were all enrolled in a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education, Secondary course. The participants were recruited during orientation day, and also in the first week of the program. The second group of participants comprised nine mentor teachers (six males and three females) with teaching experience from three to 34 years. Four of the mentor teachers were new to the mentoring role and the rest had mentored preservice teachers over their teaching experience ranging from five to 25 years. One preservice teacher had two mentors, and other students had one mentor while they had the chance to observe other teachers and occasionally teach their classes. Therefore, in the first interview, nine instead of eight mentors participated. All participants volunteered to take part in the research study knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the data, that they would be assigned pseudonyms, and that they would be able to withdraw from the research at any time.

Data Collection

The eight preservice teachers attended a semi-structured one-on-one interview held on the campus in early March 2014, shortly after the first semester started. The interviews were conducted before the units started so that the participants' ideas were not influenced by their involvement in the learning community. The aim of this interview was to understand the preservice teachers' ideas and perceptions of their teacher self before they started the program. A second interview was held with the preservice teachers in July 2014 after the end of the first four-week practicum, to ascertain the changes that occurred in their teacher identity and how the mentoring relationships contributed to such changes (see Appendix A for interview questions). The mentor teachers were also interviewed at their respective schools before and after the practicum. The aim of these interviews was to examine mentors' perceptions of their mentee's teacher identity development. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The preservice teachers were also invited to keep a reflective journal and reflect on their experiences and development process as they went through their course. All but one of the participants produced two journal entries: one during the first semester and one at the end of the practicum. The participants were asked to reflect on issues such as their experiences of teaching within their schools, their first impression of their mentor teacher, their perceptions of their progress, and whether or not they saw any changes in their teacher identity. The participants were also given the leeway to write about any issues of interest and significance to them.

In addition to interviews and reflective journals, an observation checklist was used to determine the dynamics of the interactions between the preservice teachers and their mentors. Items such as "way of giving feedback", "collaboration", "giving confidence", and "open communication" were among the items on the checklist. The frequency of the actions as well as examples of behavior were recorded by the researcher during the observations. Two classroom observations were conducted on each participant's teaching. Since the unit of analysis was the interactions between mentors and mentees, the researcher also attended debriefing sessions following each solo teaching. The checklist and notes helped the researcher to pinpoint specific patterns of interaction between the participants. For instance, ease of communication and the way verbal and written feedback was offered indicated the extent to which rapport, respect, and support was provided and established.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, which is regarded as a fundamental method used in qualitative research and is a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79), was used to interpret the data. To analyze the interview data and reflective journals, the researcher took the following steps as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006): transcribing verbal data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. More specifically, after transcribing the interviews, the interpretation of the data was attained in an iterative manner as the reflective journals and interview transcripts were read multiple times to find codes that reflected the main concepts. Recurring issues were consolidated into new codes. For instance, codes such

as "open communication", "encouragement and support" and "close bond", which were related to positive aspects of mentoring, were named "mentoring relationships". Next, key quotations were selected to represent the identified themes. The observation checklist was also used to provide further evidence for themes previously identified in the data.

Although the richness of the data helped to identify factors that can impact future research and practice, there are a number of limitations to this study. First, as mentioned earlier, the findings of this paper emerged from the data gathered in the first four-week practicum. Therefore, the duration of the research might suggest small and temporary changes in the participants. Second, there are a number of factors at play that inform preservice teachers' identity formation in a learning community like the practicum. While the significance of all these factors, including the role of other members of the community and the school context, is acknowledged, the present research only considered the impact of the mentoring relationships on the preservice teachers' identity formation. Therefore, some changes in preservice teacher identity might have occurred due to other external factors that were not examined in this research.

Findings

In this section, firstly, I will focus on the perceived changes in participants' teacher identity and also the mentors' perceptions of their mentees' professional development. In the next section, I will present the findings related to the factors contributing to perceived identity changes in participants.

The eight preservice teachers participating in this research began their course filled with self-motivation and a deep passion for their subject and teaching. Feeling positive about

teaching, they all had an ultimate goal to share their passion and knowledge with their students, make a change in their lives, and help them find their talents and strengths. As motivated and excited as they were, they also had fears, doubts, and expectations of the program. For example, they worried that they were too lenient, idealistic, lacked confidence, did not have a sense of control and felt more like a student than a teacher. However, they anticipated that some changes, such as growing in their subject, building confidence, and finding a more realistic view would occur as they went through the course and the practicum (see Izadinia, 2015b for more about the participants). The analysis of the data suggested that some participants experienced subtle changes in their confidence, voice and vision. The next section will report the changes in some aspects of the preservice teachers' identity.

Changes in aspects of teacher identity

All preservice teachers reported a boost in their confidence. Some participants explained that they gradually overcame their fears and gained more confidence throughout the practicum. For instance, Simon pointed out:

> I was just as nervous as all hell, kind of doing it, it was really, really
> scary, I had never kind of done that thing before, and the first
> feedback he [the mentor] gave me was really positive, it was like
> 'Look, I think you did a great job, I really liked what you did here,
> here and here', and then just gave me some really simple suggestions
> to improve, and that kind of kept on going throughout the whole prac.
> So even when I thought I maybe did a bad lesson, there was a lot of

encouragement, and at the same time a lot of, like, really simple suggestions to help me improve.

Sara, Anna, Chelsey, and Eden also felt more confident; Chelsey mentioned that when her mentor looked at her lesson plan and did not feel anything needed changing, she would feel really confident. She also referred to her university supervisor's comment, which also indicated a boost in her confidence: "I have found it [confidence], I think. That was my feedback from the supervisor actually that I had a confident presence". Eden also described how feedback that was gradually shrinking in size and suggesting progression made him feel confident:

So the first one [feedback] was a page of things I needed to improve … The next one was like a quarter of a page of things that I needed to improve, and half of page of things that were working well, and then by the end of it, it was just all things that had worked well.

He concluded that the result of watching that progression on paper so clearly was that "I could not be anything but more confident". Liz, who had worked with and observed other teachers besides her mentor, compared their different mentoring styles and argued the freedom her mentor gave her to teach increased her confidence and helped her improve:

There were some teachers in [name of the school] who rather than just letting you take the class, would constantly jump in and say things ... Matt [her mentor] was not like that. It did not really matter what I did, Matt was quite happy to sit back and let me take care of it and let me handle it … so he'd address any issues afterwards … he would not cut in the middle of the class and sort of like knock me off my little

pedestal, because not only does that make me look like a tit in front of

the students, it does not do much for your confidence either … He

definitely gave me my own space to develop.

Teacher voice

A teacher's voice is considered "as the measure of the extent to which a person can

articulate a personal practical identity image of himself/herself as a teacher"

(Sutherland, *et al*., 2010, p. 456). Other researchers have defined teacher voice as the

authority that allows a teacher to talk about their practices and how voice should be

constructed and implemented (Darling-Hammond *et al*., 1995; Kirk and MacDonald,

2001). In this research, the development of a teacher voice was one of the most

recurring themes in the interview data and reflective journals and it was interpreted by

the preservice teachers as a sense of authority. The participants frequently mentioned

that they had started to develop their "own style", their "own flair", their "teaching

personality", and their "teaching methods", and were better able to explain themselves,

take more ownership, and make more decisions. Among the participants was Anna who

wrote in her journal before the practicum that "I find it hard to differentiate myself from

the students as I feel I could dress up in the uniform and be one myself". Her reflection

indicated that her teacher identity was not established before the practicum because she

lacked the authority she needed to function as a teacher. Anna (23 years old), did not

know how to control the class and lacked a teacher voice. In the first interview Anna

said that if she could not have a sense of control she would leave teaching. However, in

the second interview held at the end of the practicum she declared she had found her

teacher voice and she felt "more like a teacher": "I had a bit of trouble with that [having

a voice] at the start of prac. I was much more quiet in the classroom, but even my mentor said that I have developed it [a voice] a lot".

Similarly, Liz claimed that after doing the practicum she could see herself in an authoritative role and not only could she "keep everything together in the classroom" but also felt she could be "someone that students can come to who they can trust and talk to". In other words, Liz could envisage herself as a teacher who could help her students in every way. Simon, who had observed and worked with two mentor teachers in the first practicum, compared his mentors' mentoring styles in his journal and expressed how much he enjoyed working with one and disagreed with the approach of the other. He explained that with the freedom he was given in one mentor's classes, he was able to initiate ideas and teaching methods. He further noted that he was treated like a colleague by his mentor, which made him "feel like a working teacher" and helped him "blend ideas together and present good lessons".

Vision

Another frequently recognized theme was a change in participants' vision. Five out of eight preservice teachers argued that the kind of teacher they wanted to be, or their image of a teacher and their responsibilities, had altered. The "enthusiastic", "energetic" and "bubbly" character of Anna's mentor teacher inspired her to want to gain that connection with her class: "The way I envisioned myself as a teacher has changed in the sense that I want to be more of a consistent, enthusiastic teacher every time I walk into the classroom". Anna explained that the way her mentor "could switch from happy and enthusiastic person to 'this is my serious mode, are you going to mess with me?'" made Anna want to be a teacher like her mentor. Similarly, Sara remarked that her approach to consequences and punishment had become more rigid and she no longer thought, for

instance, yard duty was a bad thing. She did not want to give punishment out when she started off.

A few preservice teachers revisited their ideas about the teaching career. Alex realized that teaching is "a very tough job" and "some teachers looked like they were just completely snowed under and bored". In addition, Alex thought the way media (Alex's major) was taught within schools was "at times very boring". He explained that although he enjoyed teaching "but the majority of [his teaching] was like 'Really?'" Alex finished the practicum thinking, "I do not know if I could be a full-time teacher forever" and "I just do not know whether I can do this, because I would just go crazy". In the second interview held at the end of the first practicum, Alex repeatedly mentioned that the practicum was very challenging for him.

Chelsey's practicum occurred in a low socioeconomic school. She observed teachers who were worn down by the everyday challenges of teaching, and often witnessed all the hard work that the teachers were putting in was not being translated into results. These experiences made Chelsey think at times "'Oh gosh! I do not want to be that jaded'". Chelsey found it "quite dispiriting to keep teaching [students] things where they [the students] were completely disinterested and unmotivated". Chelsey confirmed that her identity had changed in some ways and she had realized that "for some kids, school is very difficult" and she needed to be more pragmatic and realistic. She had realized that "people have big lives and your class is just a small part of that life", and declared that she would not want to teach anymore if she got to the stage where she was not enjoying it. Reconsidering his decision to be a full-time music teacher, Simon expressed in his reflective journal that although the practicum reaffirmed his decision to

be a music teacher, he was starting to realize that being a *full-time* classroom teacher may not be for him:

> I witnessed my mentor teacher and other music teachers have to deal with a lot more than just 'teaching'. Dealing with crazy parents, balancing budgets, relief, lesson planning and administration matters seemed to take up a lot of time.

Simon further explained that he could help his students best if he stuck with his current one-on-one piano tutoring, fitted his teaching with individual students' needs and taught whatever he thought the student was interested in.

Mentors' perceptions of preservice teachers' teacher identity development

In the last interview, taken at the end of the practicum, mentors were asked to comment on the degree to which they believed their mentee had developed a teacher identity. Almost all mentor teachers were adamant that changes had occurred in their mentee's teacher identity. These mentors asserted changes in their mentees' voice, teaching techniques, their relationship with pupils, and authority. One mentor pointed out that his mentee had become very comfortable with his class, and had tried different techniques and injected his own humor, which to him was "a show of someone who is actually feeling quite comfortable". Another mentor commented: "I think she [the mentee] did make a good transition from someone who'd done nothing of it [not having any experience in teaching] to being reasonably comfortable and learning what is necessary". Two other mentors referred to the development of their mentee's voice. One of them remarked:

It has been really clear to me in observing her that she is being much more direct now. So her directions and her explanations are much more concise … Her expectations of discipline and student interaction are much more clear now, so she is starting to define herself based on her experiences, what kind of teacher she is going to end up being.

And the other one mentioned: "when she [the mentee] first came in and she was just so lovely and so nice and quiet and petite, and now I think she's just got so much more commands out of the students".

As the above quotations showed, all six mentors believed their mentees had developed a sense of teacher identity to some extent.

Factors contributing to preservice teachers' identity formation

Feedback

Mentor teachers' feedback was found to play a key role in the development of teacher identity in the preservice teachers. All preservice teachers emphasized the importance of feedback and some even asserted that without receiving feedback they would not be able to identify their weaknesses and overcome them. Anna maintained, "Obviously I might not even notice that I was not actually as loud as I could be or authoritative as I could be without his feedback". Likewise, Eden explained that if the feedback was not there, there would not be any opportunity to improve:

As soon as I got feedback from a lesson … I tried it out in the very next lesson … that was incredibly difficult, that course, but it gave me a kind of feel for how important that cycle of teach, feedback, reflect, act on feedback, how important that was, and it did work.

Sara and Chelsey also emphasized the role of feedback and attributed it to their professional identity development. Sara pointed out that her mentor was very generous with her feedback and she (Sara) would reflect and work on her mentor's feedback. Chelsey also regarded discussions with her mentor and trying to work out what fitted well with her personality as important factors in finding her preferred teacher role. Liz cited a similar reason for finding her teacher identity. She stated that her mentor's detailed feedback and other teachers' feedback, even when they were conflicting, definitely helped her. Alex also referred to his talks with his mentor and his mentor's comments on his teaching as helping him find his teacher voice:

> I have developed my own way of teaching, own way of presenting, so I would say what's helped it is me speaking to my mentors … because they were saying to me, 'You are doing well, this is what you could improve and this is what you are doing well'.

Other evidence to support the importance of mentors' feedback in preservice teachers' identity development was present in the observation checklist and notes taken by the researcher from debriefing sessions. These sessions, usually held in classrooms or staff rooms, were quite informal and friendly with conversations going both ways. In almost all cases the mentors started with positive comments about the mentee's teaching with comments such as, "You did very well", "the activity went really well", "you did exactly the right thing", "I liked the way you …", "You were pretty good at …", "I am impressed with your knowledge of …". After giving a list of positive comments, the mentors would typically provide some suggestions for improvement such as, "It is a good thing to …", "Perhaps you have done it and I have not noticed, but …", "You could use strategies like …". There was also considerable encouragement given to the

preservice teachers by their mentors: "You have definitely improved on …", "Your feedback is getting better", "The technique was awesome, thumbs up", and "That was perfect! You did it!".

Mentoring relationship

Although the preservice teachers were given the chance to identify factors contributing to their identity development, they were also specifically asked to comment on their mentoring relationship and the extent to which their expectations of the mentoring relationship were met by the end of the practicum.

In the interviews and the reflective journals written at the end of the practicum, preservice teachers frequently asserted that they felt "very lucky" and were thankful for their mentor's support and encouragement during the practicum. Alex wrote in his journal after the end of practicum that his mentor has been of "outstanding support" to him and he (the mentor) had been just what he needed. Alex referred to an incident where he felt tired and overwhelmed by teaching a difficult class and added how he regained his confidence after a talk with his mentor: "Luke (the mentor) restored my confidence in what I was doing and explained that 'on some occasions teaching can be a thankless task ... but you must stick to your guns'". Similarly, Liz noted in her journal that her mentor helped her overcome any doubts she had of teaching classical content, of which she had limited knowledge:

> He [the mentor] truly helped me develop. He was very supportive
> throughout the entire process … he said to me once when I expressed
> my concern with teaching classical content … 'I can't be expected to
> know all the content straight out of the gate. It takes years for teachers
> to learn everything they need to be teaching'.

Simon also expressed a deep satisfaction with his mentor who made him feel "included and welcome". He wrote in his journal that his experience was "extremely positive" and his strong relationship with his mentor "contributed immensely" to his success during the practicum. In his interview Simon claimed he had quite a lot personal experiences with his mentor which contributed to their relationship:

> And another time he was driving a couple of students to [name of a school], and he invited me along and we had a chat on the way there and on the way back and he bought me chips and coke … asking me what I wanted to do / and where I saw myself in 20 years, and just really taking an interest.

The preservice teachers referred to many incidents that mentor teachers' support and encouragement during the practicum had left them with feelings of appreciation and satisfaction. Comments such as, "We had a very good rapport", "We had a lot of fun", "I felt supported", "We got along very well on a lot of levels", "I had an incredibly positive relationship", "I could work well with him", suggested the existence of a positive mentoring relationship for all preservice teachers.

The literature on teacher identity suggests that identity is subject to change (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004) and is affected by different factors within a learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Relatedly, the findings of this research revealed that preservice teachers experienced changes in their teacher identity as they went through their first placement. Their confidence and teacher voice grew and their vision of the teacher they wanted to be altered. As discussed in the introduction, these variables are regarded as components of teacher identity and thus, the perceived changes in participants' confidence, teacher voice and vision are

indicative of development of their teacher identity. For instance, changes in participants' vision suggested a clearer understanding of their role and the type of teacher they wanted to be. The energetic character of Anna's mentor, for example, made her want to be an enthusiastic teacher. This observation highlights the significance of having mentors who are highly motivated and passionate about their job as they communicate hope and optimism (Rowley, 1999), and who influence preservice teachers' views about teaching (Graves, 2010).

However, three participants did not experience promising changes in their vision, although this still indicated formation of a teacher identity. Chelsey started to think she did not want to be as "jaded" as other teachers and she would leave teaching if she was not enjoying it anymore. Simon came to the realization that he could not be a full-time teacher and it was only through teaching one-on-one that he could attend to his students' needs and wants. As these examples show, preservice teachers' work, practices and identity are subject to transformation and reconstitution (Devos, 2010). In other words, the novel experiences associated with practicum inform the dynamic nature of preservice teachers' teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) and bring about changes, however undesirable, in their perceptions and understanding of their role as teachers. Moreover, as Beijaard et al. (2004) believe, professional identity formation is an answer to the question "Who am I at this stage?" and "Who do I want to become"? When preservice teachers begin to think about the kind of teacher they want to be and obtain a more thorough understanding of their role and what it entails, they actually take essential steps towards creating a teacher identity. However, mentor teachers can facilitate this process and help preservice teachers overcome their doubts by setting an inspiring example like Anna's mentor and convey enthusiasm and passion for the job.

The second aim of this study was to investigate those factors that contributed to the perceived changes in participants. The participants were asked to reflect on their mentoring experience and identify the key elements. It was found that the negotiation of feedback was one of the most significant factors. Feedback is regarded as fundamental to successful mentoring relationships (Bates et al., 2011; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Leshem, 2012). For instance, in a study by Beck and Kosnik (2002) it was found that student teachers had high regards for feedback and viewed it as an essential aspect of the practicum experience. Other studies focused on the importance of honest feedback, constructive feedback, ongoing feedback, and critical and positive feedback (Glenn, 2006; Knox & McGovern, 1988). The preservice teachers participating in this study were found to be very satisfied with the amount and quality of feedback they received from their mentors, talked about "detailed feedback" and "generous feedback" they received, and regarded it as influential in developing a teacher identity. The data from observation checklists and notes taken from debriefing sessions also confirmed mentor teachers' high level of genuine commitment to providing detailed feedback.

The second contributing factor was maintaining a positive mentoring relationship with mentor teachers. All participants mentioned that they received outstanding support and encouragement from their mentors, established a good rapport with them, and got along very well. The participants were fully engaged in practices associated with effective mentoring relationships (Izadinia, 2015b; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Jacobi, 1991) such as encouragement and support and developing personal and professional relationships. Research shows the existence of a collegial relationship enhances learning (Fullan, 1995) and helps mentees in their learning-to-teach process (Smagorinsky et al., 2004). Other studies also reflect preservice teachers' desire for working with mentors who care for them personally as well as professionally (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Glenn, 2006).

Similarly, the findings of this study suggested the preservice teachers enjoyed the close personal relationship with their mentors and felt included and welcomed as a result.

Moreover, it was found that the support and advice the participants received from their mentors instilled a sense of confidence and engendered their enthusiasm for the job. For instance, feeling unmotivated to teach, Alex regained his confidence in teaching after having a discussion with his mentor about the challenges of the teaching job, which reminded him to remain strong and motivated. Similarly, a study by Rajuan et al. (2007) found that student teachers needed a collaborative and supportive relationship with their mentor teachers to develop the confidence to take risks and experiment in the classroom. However, as Collet (2012) describes in her Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model, the support mentor teachers provide gradually decreases in quantity and quality as preservice teachers increase in competence and confidence. This is verified by the findings of this study where the feedback Eden received from his mentor shrank in size. Yet, this decrease in the level of support suggested his progression and helped him build more confidence.

Interactions are crucial to identity development, as "we invest ourselves in what we do and at the same time we invest ourselves in our relations with others" (Wenger, 1998 p. 192). The overall findings of this study suggested that mentoring relationships played a significant role in shaping preservice teachers' teacher identity. The detailed feedback mentor teachers provided, as well as their positive interactions characterized by ongoing support and encouragement, helped preservice teachers build higher levels of confidence, develop a stronger teacher voice and demonstrate a deeper understanding of their role as a teacher.

Conclusions

This study examined the identity development of eight secondary preservice teachers in a four-week block practicum and the extent to which mentor teachers played a role in creating such changes. The findings indicated that mentor teachers positively influenced preservice teachers' perceptions and understanding of themselves as teachers and created positive changes in their teacher identity.

Practicum is the most stressful part of the preparation for teaching and preservice teachers are in need of practical and emotional support (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000). This study also showed that the preservice teachers had fears and doubts before they started their first placement. However, they gained confidence, overcame their initial fears and felt more like a teacher as they forged supportive mentoring relationships.

Although changes in preservice teachers' perceptions of themselves as a teacher might be small and short-term, they potentially impact their decision to stay or leave the profession. The Australian Council for Educational Research analysis shows that 25 percent of preservice teachers leave the university in the first year of their degree and 25 percent of those who completed their degree in 2014 did not want to become a teacher (Weldon, 2015). As the findings of this study also revealed, three participants experienced changes in their vision of the kind of teacher they wanted to be. It is not surprising that demands of the job and developing a more realistic view of the role might influence preservice teachers' decision to be a teacher. Thus, the more positive experiences preservice teachers have in the practicum, the more likely they are to stay in the profession. This again highlights the significance of mentor teachers' role; mentor teachers can create positive experiences for preservice teachers and give them a positive

outlook on their job by empowering them with personal and professional skills, knowledge and resilience to work with students (Grima-Farrell, 2015).

This study has a number of implications. First, given the powerful impact mentor teachers can leave on preservice teachers' teacher identity, they should be encouraged to resolve to deliberately provide academic and emotional support and encouragement during the practicum. Martinez (2004) discussed teacher attrition in Australia and analyzed 1999 data from Queensland. She noted that many teachers cited lack of support as their main reason to leave, although the types of support were not identified. As preservice teachers begin their teaching experience they are filled with fears and self-doubts. A supportive network, which promotes open lines of communication, encourages preservice teachers to discuss their concerns, thoughts and needs with their mentors and address their challenges with their mentors' help. Moreover, the role of effective feedback cannot be overemphasized. Mentor teachers should offer ongoing and constructive feedback in their supportive and non-judgemental network, to help preservice teachers evaluate and modify their teaching performance.

Second, preservice teacher education needs to provide thorough mentor training programs to equip mentors for their crucial roles. Despite research on mentoring, researchers believe little attention has been paid to developing and implementing mentor preparation programs and mentors often do not receive formal training (Beutel and Spooner-Lane, 2009; Gershenfeld, 2014; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Russell & Russell, 2011). As a result, the mentoring that preservice teachers encounter is often considered "hit or miss" (Russell & Russell, 2011), which might be a factor contributing to teacher attrition. Teacher education programs in every context are recommended to design comprehensive mentoring programs and discuss key issues such as who should be a mentor, significance of mentoring, keys to effective mentoring, establishing

responsibilities and expectations in the mentoring relationships, importance of individuals' learning differences, and helping in their transition of learning to workplace (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Garvey & Alred, 2000).

Third, preservice teacher education programs need to exercise more caution about recruiting mentor teachers. As mentors are highly likely to be regarded as an ultimate example of a teacher by preservice teachers, their professional conduct and enthusiasm for their job are of utmost importance. Preservice teacher education programs should work with mentor teachers who are passionate about their teaching job and mentoring roles, and are not suffering from teacher burn-out.

4.3. A Closer Look at the Role of Mentor Teachers in Shaping Preservice Teachers' Professional Identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 2015

Purpose: The second paper written after the first placement, examined initial changes in the preservice teachers' teacher identity. The present paper, the third paper, was written after the second placement and compared the preservice teachers' experiences of the two placements and their mentoring relationships. This paper focusing on the one-year teacher education program, reported the main findings of the study and was the most important part of the PhD project as it portrayed the significant roles of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' identity.

Abstract

This paper focuses on the extent to which mentoring relationships played a role in creating changes in the professional identity of seven preservice teachers. Semi-structured interviews, observations and reflective journals were used to document the changes experienced by participants as they went through their two placements during

their one-year teacher education course. The data indicated that when the mentoring relationships were positive and expectations were met, preservice teachers felt more confident as a teacher. However, for some participants, who experienced a partially negative mentoring relationship, their confidence declined and they felt they did not improve. Implications for practice are discussed.

Keywords: teacher professional identity, mentoring relationship, preservice teachers, teacher education.

Introduction

Statistics show a 50% attrition rate for beginning teachers within their first five years of teaching in developed countries (Ingersoll, 2003; Jonson, 2002; Ramsey, 2000). In Australia, Ewing and Manuel (2005) observed that up to one third of teachers left the profession in their first three to five years of service. While factors such as workload, school situation, and salary have affected the teachers' decisions to leave (Smithers & Robinson, 2003), early positive experiences in teacher education have been considered strong motivational forces in continuing to teach (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). For instance: feeling valued, the perception of success, and a sense of worth correlate with retention (Blase, 2009; Dyson, Albon, & Hutchinson, 2007).

According to He (2009), the mentoring experience is a key factor in the success of beginning teachers. It is also believed that the presence of a mentor increases the retention of beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Lortie, 1975; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). The literature abounds with studies on the teaching practice unit (practicum) and within that the role of mentor teachers (i.e., those who supervise preservice teachers in their practicum setting, Beck and Kosnik (2000)) in early professional development of preservice teachers (Chaliès et al., 2004; Glenn, 2006; Leshem, 2012; Martin et al., 2011). The extensive research on mentoring suggests that as one factor impacting retention, mentoring has deserved a great deal of attention of researchers at international level. Pascarelli (1998); Pascarelli (1998) for example, writes about the different roles

of mentor teachers changing from showing empathy and giving advice to empowering the mentees and highlighting their personal strengths. Other researchers discuss the components of good mentoring programs, such as communication, authenticity, encouraging gestures, honesty, trust, constructive feedback, and emotional and academic support (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Izadinia, 2015; Zanting et al., 2001).

As there is broad agreement on the important role of mentor teachers in preservice teacher education (Beck & Kosnik, 2000), it is of utmost significance to research the dynamics of "this sometimes fraught relationship" (Patrick, 2013, p. 209) and its contribution to the professional lives of preservice teachers. Recently, more research has focused on the interaction between mentors and preservice teachers (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Bradbury & Koballa Jr, 2008; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009), yet little is still known about the role of the mentoring relationships in the development of professional identity in preservice teachers.

Teacher identity

Teacher identity as a determining factor in teacher motivation, satisfaction, and commitment to work (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006), also contributes to teacher retention and lack thereof leads to teacher stress and burnout (Hellman, 2007; Scheib, 2007). The dynamic and constantly evolving nature of teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004) shapes in an examination of the self in interaction with others in a professional context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). For instance, research shows that involvement of preservice teachers in learning communities and activities such as reflective writing and collaborative reflection, informs preservice teachers' professional identity (Cattley, 2007; Estola, 2003; Vavrus, 2009; Webb, 2005). The growing number of studies on factors contributing to the formation of teacher identity in preservice teachers suggests that the development of a teacher identity is a central process in becoming a teacher (Alsup, 2005; Friesen & Besley, 2013). Moreover, having a strong sense of identity, as discussed above, contributes to teacher retention as it helps beginning teachers to gain a sense of control and remain resilient (Bieler, 2013).

Johnson (2003), argues that the relationship between a mentor teacher and a preservice teacher can transform the teachers involved. In other words, mentor teachers can inform

the development of teacher identity in preservice teachers by instilling in them a sense of confidence, power and agency (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Ticknor, 2014; Williams, 2010) or, conversely, inhibiting the development of their voice (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Patrick, 2013; Pittard, 2003). There are only a handful of studies on the impact of mentoring on identity formation of preservice teachers. For instance, in the USA, Bieler (2013) used a holistic mentoring approach with four student teachers to explore all the factors that contributed to their professional identity development. She described how three holistic mentoring moves- creating an opening for the new teachers' voices, listening for and inquiring into holistic possibilities, and cultivating holistic, agentive teaching, and learning practices- helped her students to forge and voice their identities.

MT Pillen et al. (2013) explored the tensions in the professional identity of beginning teachers in the Netherlands and found that the support and activities provided by teacher educators and mentor teachers reduced or altered their tensions. In another case study conducted in the UK, Liu and Fisher (2006), reported positive changes in three foreign language preservice teachers' conceptions of their identity and classroom performance. They observed that preservice teachers perceived that they made improvement in their teaching practice throughout the year and they felt more like a "real" teacher due to factors such as accumulation of experience and support from their mentors. This study, among other things, showed the impact of a positive relationship between teacher educators and student teachers on teacher change and professional growth. In previous research in Australia (Under Review), Izadinia examined the impact of the mentoring relationships on eight preservice teachers' teacher identity during a four-week block practicum and it was found that positive mentoring relationships and mentors' feedback significantly contributed to changes in aspects of professional identity such as the participants' teacher voice, confidence and vision.

The present research aims to further investigate the changes in the above-mentioned participants' teacher identity as they moved through their subsequent seven-week block practicum and experienced a different mentoring relationship. By comparing the dynamics of the mentoring relationships and the changes in participants' teacher identity in the two placements, I sought to identify the significance of the mentor teachers' roles in the professional lives of the preservice teachers. It was assumed that mentor teachers would have a better understanding of their crucial role and better define

their roles to match their preservice teachers' need when they learned about a sample of preservice teachers' experiences of their practicum. The key question raised in this study is: How does the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers influence the development of preservice teachers' professional identities during a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary program? The sub questions addressed in this study are:

1. How did preservice teachers characterize the mentoring relationships in the first and second practicum?
2. What changes occurred in the preservice teachers' professional identity following the second placement?
3. To what extent did mentor teachers in the two placements play a role in shaping the preservice teachers' teacher identity?

Theoretical framework

Professional identity construction as a learning-to-teach process (Smagorinsky et al., 2004) occurs as preservice teachers interact with significant others such as their teacher educators (Johnson, 2003). Such a view is based on social constructivism, which assumes learning happens in a social process in which learners gain new skills and knowledge through interactions with other people such as teachers (Vygotsky, 1978). It was assumed that a social constructivist approach would adequately guide the study to examine how preservice teachers' professional identity would be affected by their interactions with mentor teachers because its three main tenets could be easily applied to a mentoring relationship (Graves, 2010). In other words, the three tenets of (1) knowledge is constructed by learners; (2) learning involves social interaction and (3) learning is situated (Beck & Kosnik, 2006), can be interpreted as: preservice teachers go through the learning-to-teach process and they gradually construct their teacher identity in their daily interactions with significant others, such as their mentor teachers in the context of the practicum.

Method

Context of the study

The study was conducted in the Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary (GDE-S) Course, in the School of Education at a university in Western Australia. The programs offered by the School of Education are informed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which is responsible for the development of a national curriculum, assessment, and a data collection and reporting program that supports learning for all Australian students. Along with ACARA, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) also provides national leadership for Commonwealth, state and territory governments and promotes excellence in teaching and school leadership.

The GDE-S, the context of the study, is designed to prepare students for the Secondary Education profession and the graduates are eligible to teach in secondary schools. This course is a one-year program, which has 120 credit points, is accredited by the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia, and is offered via two modes of delivery: on-campus and residency. The focus of this study was on on-campus students.

The professional identity of preservice teachers who took part in GDE-S were under the influence of different factors in their learning community. As explained above, ACARA and AITSL impacted preservice teachers' identity with their proposed curriculums and rules. Apart from that, preservice teachers came from different disciplines, bringing with them prior experiences and backgrounds that had already begun to shape their teacher identity. Equally significant was the role of university lecturers and school contexts during practicum and within that mentor teachers who had constant and direct interactions with preservice teachers. Acknowledging the overriding importance of all these factors on the process of identity construction of the participants, the present research focused on the impact of the last factor (i.e., mentor teachers' role) on preservice teachers' professional identity construction.

Participants

The preservice teachers who volunteered to take part in this research comprised five females and two males from the two disciplines of music (five) and drama (two) and in an age range of early 20s to early 30s. Initially there were eight participants. However,

in the second semester one participant from the discipline of drama withdrew from the research. All participants were enrolled in the GDE-S by March 2014; they were recruited for the research either during orientation day or in the first week of the program. All participants volunteered to take part in the research study knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the data, they would be assigned pseudonyms, and they would be able to withdraw from the research at any time.

The placements of the preservice teachers to schools were made through the university's practicum office. Each participant was assigned one main mentor teacher in each placement. However, some participants had the chance to observe and work with more than one mentor teachers.

Data sources

Data collection occurred over the course of the one-year GDE-S program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each preservice teacher at three different stages: in early March 2014, after the end of the first placement in July, and at the end of the second placement in early December. The first interview dealt with questions such as: What is your purpose of teaching? Do you have a vision of the kind of teacher you would like to be? What are your main responsibilities toward your students? The questions in the second and third interviews were mainly about the mentoring experiences and any perceived changes in participants' teacher identity, such as: Could you describe the relationship you shared with your mentor teacher? Do you think your mentor gave you the courage and confidence you needed in your role? Can you compare the relationship you shared with your mentors in the first and second practicum? Which one did you prefer and why? The interviews were all audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The participants were also invited to keep a reflective journal as they went through their course. One participant chose not to write a journal due to time limitations, but the other participants produced at least three journal entries: one during the first semester, one during the first placement, and one at the end of the first placement. In the second placement only four of the preservice teachers continued to write, adding one more entry to their journal. Thus, a total of 24 reflective journals were gathered over the

course of the program. The participants were asked to write about issues such as their experiences of teaching within their schools, their ideas about the mentoring relationships, their perceptions of their progress, and whether they detected any changes in their teacher identity. However, they were also given the leeway to write about any other issues of interest and significance to them.

In addition to interviews and reflective journals, an observation checklist was used to pinpoint the dynamics of the interactions between the preservice teachers and their mentors. Items such as "way of giving feedback", "collaboration", "giving confidence", and "open communication" were among the items on the checklist. The frequencies of the actions, as well as examples of behaviour, were recorded by the researcher during the observations. Two classroom observations were conducted on each participant's teaching practices in each placement. Since the unit of analysis was the interactions between mentors and mentees, and given that there was not much interaction between them during mentees' solo teaching, the researcher also attended debriefing sessions following each solo teaching. The checklist and notes helped the researcher to identify specific patterns of interactions between the participants. For example, the ease of communication and the way verbal and written feedback was offered indicated the extent to which rapport, respect, and support was provided and established. The debriefing sessions, lasted three to 30 minutes, depending on the extent of the feedback and the length of conversations between mentors and mentees.

Data analysis

Analysis was conducted in two stages based on guidelines suggested by Merriam (1998). Initially, each participant's data, (i.e., their transcribed interviews, reflective journals, observation checklists and researcher's notes) were read over and over again and analysed independently (within-case analysis) to build a profile of each participant's prior experiences, unique mentoring experiences, and challenges during the one-year course. Questions asked in analysing each set of data included: What mentoring experiences were significant to this person? How did this person's experience influence their identity? How did this person feel when they remembered their mentors and the mentoring experience? Did they feel motivated, inspired, happy or

the opposite? Observation checklists and researcher's notes helped in crosschecking the data. More specifically, the participants' comments on the availability of their mentors or the depth of their feedback were compared to the notes taken in the debriefing sessions for verification. For instance, the researcher took note of the length of sessions and noticed some sessions were as short as three minutes and some mentors were not present during the two solo teaching of the preservice teachers that the researcher observed. Such data provided further evidence for the mentors' patterns of interaction with their mentees.

Based on the initial within-case analysis some codes were developed and then the codes were compared across cases (cross-case analysis). The two stages of analysis were conducted with a focus on how the participants' teacher identities were influenced and developed as a result of their mentoring experiences. Constant comparison techniques provided the chance to compare each case with others to determine similarities and differences (Merriam, 1998). However, as Patton (2002) suggests "the analyst's first and foremost responsibility consists of doing justice to each individual case. All else depends on that" (p. 449). Thus, an attempt was made to delve deeply into each participant's experiences and provide more detailed within-case analysis in this paper. In the last stage, data were grouped together and the most recurring codes were regarded as themes, with the most telling or representative extracts selected for reporting.

Limitations

Although the richness of the data helped to identify factors, which can impact future research and practice, there are a number of limitations to this study. First, there are a number of factors at play to inform preservice teachers' identity formation in a learning community like the practicum. While the significance of all these factors, including the role of other members of the community and the school context is acknowledged, the present research only considered the impact of the mentoring relationships on the preservice teachers' identity formation. Therefore, some changes in preservice teacher identity might have occurred due to other external factors, which were not examined in this research. Second, given that the preservice teachers participating in this research were very busy with their course, the researcher could not ask them to check the conclusion of the study for verification. However, the researcher tried to enhance the

credibility of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) through other triangulation strategies (Denzin, 1989) such as collecting the data from different sources (preservice teachers and mentor teachers), time (at the beginning and end of each placement) and methods (interviews, observations, reflective journals).

Results and discussion

In analysing the data, the researcher was particularly interested in emotions associated with the mentoring experiences of the participants. Emotion is "a dimension of the self and a factor that has a bearing on the expression of identity and the shaping of it" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 180). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) quoting Zembylas (2003), argued that the emotions teachers experience in particular contexts "expand or limit [their] possibilities" in teaching (Zembylas, 2003, p. 122). It was assumed that by focusing on the emotions related to the mentoring experiences, further changes in teacher identity resulting in changes in participants' teaching practices could be tranced (Beijaard et al., 2004).

The primary stages of the analysis grouped the participants into two. One group comprising four preservice teachers were those who had experienced very positive mentoring relationships in both placements. The other group was three participants who had not enjoyed their mentoring relationship in the second placement as much as they did in the first.

Components of good mentoring relationship: were the expectations met?

It was discussed in previous research (Izadinia, 2015), conducted prior to the first placement, that encouragement and support, open communication and feedback were the three main components of a good mentoring relationship for preservice teachers participating in this study. The analysis of interviews at the end of the first placement revealed that all the participants were extremely satisfied with their mentoring relationships, as the mentor teachers had surpassed their expectations. Four participants, Liz, Linda, Chelsey, and Sara, (same pseudonyms are used in all studies), found the second placement to be another positive experience.

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Liz, went into the first placement hoping to have a mentor teacher who "is not intimidating" or "too stuck in their ways". She found her first mentor to be "never overly critical" and felt "quite blessed" because her mentor let her "handle things on [her] way" and "incorporate [her] ideas into doing things". In the last interview at the end of the second placement, Liz expressed again that she "got so much independence" and her second mentor similarly provided the chance for her to "step into that role of authority" in the class:

> About halfway through the second week… he [the second mentor] started more and more often just removing himself from the room into his office. So he was still close enough to hear if anything went drastically wrong but it helped me sort of step into that role of authority a bit more and learn how to deal with being the only figure of authority in the room.

The extracts indicate that having an open and friendly mentor who let Liz "debate and test different ideas" freely and feel like an authority, was initially very significant for her. Some researchers also suggest that open communication is one of the main ingredients to successful mentoring (Beyene et al., 2002) and preservice teachers can develop the confidence to express themselves when mentor teachers show openness to their ideas (Liliane & Colette, 2009). These findings are supported by Liz's experience of feeling like an authority at the end of the second placement as both her mentor teachers let her experiment her ideas and encouraged her to be independent. When talking about her mentors in both placements, Liz frequently used positive adjectives to describe her mentoring experiences: "he [the first mentor] really did a good job; "I feel blessed"; "he was extremely organized"; "he [the second mentor] was amazing"; "I was *really really* lucky with both my pracs". Ticknor (2014) contends "emotion and cognition impact identities in positive and productive ways that allow for professional confidence and thoughtful decision making by novice teachers" (p. 301). As the above quotes suggest, Liz experienced complete satisfaction with her practicum experiences. At the end of her final interview, Liz concluded: "if I ever mentor students myself in a few years' time as a teacher … I am pretty much going to model what I do off what [the second mentor] did with me". Feeling pleased with the mentoring experience and happy

with her progress, Liz, as will be explained below, grew highly confident as a new teacher.

For Linda, the mentoring experience in both placements was also very positive. Emphasising the "support" aspect of the mentoring relationships, Linda remarked before the start of the placements that mentors should try to be supportive because "that is what they are supposed to be". In the second interview, when asked for any significant experience during the first placement, Linda stated she received the same level of support she expected. She explained that after delivering an "absolutely awful" lesson, where "everything got on top of [her]", she had a chat with her mentor teacher:

> … and I said, "It was awful, these two lessons", and she was absolutely bombarding me, "Everybody has it, you know, you just take it on board, get up," and she was just feeding me with positive reinforcement, which helped so much.

In her second placement, Linda had another supportive mentor who was always there for her and available "even on the weekends". Linda mentioned that "[the mentor] never said anything I did was wrong, so when I came and showed her [the lesson plans] she was like, 'Oh, add that, add that,' but never like, 'Oh, that is not good enough,' she trusted me".

Providing academic and emotional support has been recognized as another key component of a mentoring relationship for preservice teachers in a number of studies (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Rajuan et al., 2007). Rajuan et al. (2007), for instance, observed that maintaining a collaborative and supportive relationship with mentees help them develop the confidence to take risks and experiment in the classroom. Equally significant, the role of emotional support has received even more attention in the literature (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Izadinia, 2015; Rajuan et al., 2007). Pitton (2006) argued that beginning teachers feel overwhelmingly stressed simply because they are new; therefore, mentor teachers need to acknowledge the emotions that mentees experience and support them emotionally. In this study, as Linda asserted, feeling emotionally supported by her mentor and knowing that her mentor was there for her "all the time" helped Linda build up her confidence and get

over the discomfort she felt. Similar to Liz, Linda believed her mentor in the second placement "was amazing and everything [Linda] could imagine she [the mentor] did.

Chelsey and Sara had similar experiences in their second placement. They also mentioned positive features of their mentoring experiences, such as "frank feedback", receiving "a lot of time and attention and resources", and "supportive relationship founded on mutual respect and professionalism". Sara, when referring to her first placement, wrote in her journal that she "felt a strong sense of belonging" and she "grew enormously" during her first placement thanks to her mentor teacher. Sara's second mentor was also "absolutely fantastic" and "genuinely cared" about her and her feedback, which was "always excellent and massively detailed", provided "incredible" support and encouragement for her. Use of words such as "fantastic", "excellent", and "incredible" indicates Sara's positive perception of the mentoring experience and overall satisfaction with it.

As mentioned above, for the other three participants, Anna, Simon and Eden, the second placement was not as positive as the first one. Coming out of the first placement, Anna, Simon and Eden felt very satisfied with their mentoring experiences in which they had "strong personal relationship" and "good rapport" with their mentors. Having expressed a need for "support-based" mentoring and "an inspiring role model" who could "impart knowledge", Simon was delighted to find his first mentor was "a fantastic and accomplished musician" who had a "high status in the profession". During the first placement, the mentor showed "a lot of faith" in Simon, "really valued [his] input, ideas and expertise" and "was able to trust" him. Simon wrote in his journal at the end of the first placement that his experience was "extremely positive" and his strong relationship with his mentor "contributed immensely" to his success during the practicum.

Conversely, in the second placement, the mentor teacher "did not shut [Simon] down or anything, but she did not really value the expertise [he] had". Simon who had been given "a lot of freedom" to "develop [his] ideas"… and "construct creative lessons" in the first placement, felt "quite frustrated" and it "damaged [his] confidence" when his second mentor "would often step in to manage behaviour or to direct the class". In addition, Simon pointed out that "a lot of things that [the mentor] was doing were… examples of bad teaching". He explained that his mentor "was very traditional", "very rote learning", "she would yell at a lot of students" and the answers she gave to the

questions "were just completely wrong". Therefore, even though Simon thought his second mentor "was really nice, really friendly, and really supportive", he did not think that he "had it [a mentoring relationship] at all with her and she was not the kind of teacher that [he] want to be in 10 or 20 years". Simon clarified:

> It was just kind of hard to respect someone or see someone as a mentor when I think in a lot of ways, I do not say I could do things better than her, but I understood the things she was doing was really quite wrong and different from what we were kind of told at the uni.

Having the freedom to try out teaching ideas has been recognized as a critical factor to preservice teachers' professional learning (Patrick, 2013) and lack thereof can lead to tensions on their part. As Simon's words "quite frustrated" show, he lived through the tension of having no freedom to manage the class on his own because his mentor constantly stepped in and thereby "damaged" his confidence. In addition, having an inspiring role model was an important feature of a mentor according to Simon. Several researchers have claimed that role modelling is among the essential qualities of a good mentor (Jacobi, 1991; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002). In other words, preservice teachers need mentors who can provide examples of good practice for them to evaluate and emulate (Koerner et al., 2002). If mentor teachers do not have the required skills in mentoring, this can have a negative impact on preservice teachers' professional development (Weasmer & Woods, 2003). Simon felt he did not have a mentoring relationship with his mentor because he could not accept her as a role model for the teacher he wanted to be in the future.

Anna was struggling to find her teacher self from the very beginning. She wrote in her journal before the first placement that "I find it hard to differentiate myself from the students as I feel I could dress up in the uniform and be one myself". For Anna what mattered the most was her mentor's support so she could feel secured to try to develop her teacher voice. Fortunately, Anna's first mentor "was very supportive of everything [she] kind of did", and "was really there for [her]". In the interview conducted at the end of the first placement, Anna mentioned she felt "more like a teacher" and has developed a voice. However, Anna did not think she had a "strong bond" with her second mentor. Describing the relationship as "a little more distant", Anna explained that her second mentor was not as much supportive and helpful: "she was not always present and when

she was present she always had other things on her mind and was doing other tasks, so was a little bit vague". Comparing her first mentor with the second one, Anna explained:

> When I would finish a lesson, she [the second mentor] would quickly disappear because she had gone to …have lunch" and I would be there packing up… but my [first] mentor was always there waiting or watching or helping me pack up.

Anna felt she "did not have a mentor at times because it was just me there, just doing my thing". This absence was noted in the Researcher's observation notes about Anna's teaching. Anna was left on her own for most of the sessions, while the mentor teacher was either not present or deeply involved in her personal tasks. Draves (2008) maintains that the rapport between mentor teachers and preservice teachers determines the overall success of a practicum. As identified by other researchers (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009), it is of utmost importance for preservice teachers to make a personal connection with their mentor teachers. Moreover, the presence of a strong emotional connection results in better outcomes, such as perception of scholastic competence and feelings of self-worth (Blase, 2009). On the contrary, relationships that are not close have little effect (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009). Anna used the word "distant" to describe her second mentoring relationship, which suggests a lack of personal connection between the two parties and a degree of exclusion on Anna's part, which meant she "did not feel welcomed".

Similar to Simon and Anna, Eden experienced a "partially negative" second mentoring relationship in which he felt "frustrated a lot". For Eden receiving continuous feedback from mentor teachers was very important; and what significantly contributed to his improvement in the first placement was "the cycle of teach, feedback, reflect and act on feedback". However, in the second placement, Eden remarked: "I did reflect, just as before, and I did get feedback, but those things were disconnected. She [the second mentor] never was interested in seeing my reflection". Failing to make a connection between experiences Eden gained in the first and second placements, the second mentor encouraged Eden to forget everything he did in the previous school, because she believed "it [the school] is different, we are different, everything is different here". Eden claimed that when the skills he had developed in the first placement were not recognized and valued by his second mentor he "did not use them anymore" and he

"forgot they were there"… [and] "the more [he] did that the less successful [he] was". Thus, he felt his individual strengths were "magically" taken away from him and he "did not exist as a teacher"; "it is almost like, if you take your superpowers away from your superman you are just left as kind of not able to do all the things that you would normally do".

Eden, who had also enjoyed a good rapport with his first mentor, felt him and his second mentor "were like two separate people, with two separate roles", and they did not have "too much in common" … [which] "affected [them] quite a lot". Referring to the profound influence of mentor teachers on the success of mentees and the necessity of mentor training, Eden recommended mentoring should not be left to chance:

> If you realize that one of the main things that is affecting people's success is, do they get along with their mentor, you need to remove that… In any other industry, if you train someone, you have to study that. This should be something people think about. It is just sort of the sink or swim mentoring thing. You send students to them, you say, "How is that student? Are you broken or are you happy?" And then you say, "Happy? Good. Okay, great, that worked out".

It seems reasonable to conclude that Eden's lack of rapport and personal connection with the second mentor teacher negatively influenced his teacher identity and the absence of *negotiability* resulted in an *identity of non-participation and marginality* (Wenger, 1998). Wenger uses the word negotiability to refer to the extent to which individuals can use, claim or modify meanings that are important to them as their own. Wenger argues that if such negotiability is absent the individual's experience "becomes irrelevant because it cannot be asserted and recognized as a form of competence" (p. 203). The skills Eden acquired over the course of the first placement were discarded because they were not valued or recognized by his mentor and, thus, he formed an identity of non-participation. His comment on his identity was chilling: "I felt like I did not exist as a teacher"; "if you do not have an identity, you do not exist".

Helping preservice teachers explore their personal teaching identities (Rajuan et al., 2007) and their own teaching style (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Pajak, 2001) are among the key tasks for mentor teachers. By promoting reflection on prior experiences (Bates

et al., 2011) and new challenges, and helping him build on his strengths and adapt his already developed skills to the new school situation, the mentor teacher could help Eden form his own teacher identity. However, as shown in the above extracts, Eden's mentor exhorted him to forget his past experiences, did not highlight the importance of reflection, and failed to help him utilize his teaching skills. Therefore, instead of forging his own identity, Eden was encouraged to adopt an assigned identity (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002): "it was almost like I was trying to become her [the mentor]".

Changes in teacher identity

Korthagen (2004) claimed that: "fundamental changes in teacher identity do not take place easily: identity change is a difficult and sometimes painful process, and often there seems to be little change at all in how teachers view themselves" (p. 85). Likewise, Borko and Mayfield (1995) asserted that "big" changes did not occur in their student teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning or their basic teaching strategies and styles. Arguably, the present study added support to these findings because no fundamental changes happened in the participants' teacher identity; only small changes were observed. Drawing on Kelchtermans (1993)'s conceptualization of teacher professional identity (i.e., self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, task-perception and future perspective), the resesarcher asked the participants to, for instance, describe themselves as a teacher (self-image), and their main responsibilities as a teacher (task perception) in each round of interviews. The results showed that some participants slightly changed their views about their role as a teacher over the course of the program. For instance, Chelsey said in the first interview that she, "want[s] kids to enjoy learning", "think critically" and "find their talents and strength". Then in the final interview, Chelsey stated:

> I think my responsibilities are two-fold: Creating interesting,
> engaging and relevant content to teach, and building positive
> relationships with my students. I think the two areas are linked.
> Students respond better to teachers who take the time to get to know
> them, and try to meet their needs.

Thus, by the end of the practicum Chelsey favoured a holistic view of education as opposed to the traditional paradigm. Whereas the cognitive aspect is the main focus in

traditional schooling, in holistic education students are viewed as a whole being with emotional and social elements to consider (Miller, 2000; Nava, 2001). For Liz, the learning outcomes came to matter most. She had initially intended to help her students "be the best person they can be" and "lift them up when they need that". At the end of the program, Liz proclaimed she should make sure "they [the students] know the content", because "generally" they should "behave and learn". Simon's perception of his role also changed. He remarked in his first interview that he felt his vision had already changed after a few weeks of being in the program:

> Before beginning this course I thought it was to impart musical knowledge and to make sure students have fun and do it in a safe and creative way but I guess for the past couple of weeks I've been doing a lot of reading and it's like a huge responsibility now… we're really an active part in their developmental upbringing.

In the final interview, Simon referred to "fostering a real love of music" and engaging the students as his main responsibilities. For the rest of the participants no significant changes were observed in their perceptions of their role and responsibilities and the way they perceived themselves as a teacher.

However, there was a noticeable change in participants' level of confidence. Izadinia (2013) identified confidence as a component of preservice teachers' professional identity. It was found in this study that the confidence level changed as the participants moved from their first placement to the second. Whereas all participants reported they felt quite confident at the end of the first placement, those who had a positive mentoring experience in the second placement grew more confident, and those who had a negative experience grew less confident. For instance, Chelsey referred to the significant contribution of her mentor in boosting her confidence, declaring "I am a more confident teacher" and feel more comfortable exercising my authority". Sara and Liz similarly believed they felt "like a teacher" at the end of the second placement. Liz remarked: "I feel less like a student standing up in front of a bunch of other students trying to pretend to be a teacher… I felt that shift between trying to be a teacher and actually being a teacher". Sara stated she did not feel she was necessarily more confident but she knew "how to fake it better". She believed she "developed a good repertoire of non-verbals and that helped a lot with showing power and control".

Yet, for Simon, Anna and Eden, whose second placement was not positive, their confidence definitely declined. They refereed to situations and instances when they felt the second mentoring relationship had specifically damaged their confidence. As explained above, Simon said the way his mentor teacher interfered with his teaching to manage behaviour "shot down [his] confidence and courage" at times. Anna, believing she did not improve as much as the first placement, claimed that not receiving "the sort of response or feedback or support from [her] mentor as the first one…lowered [her] confidence". Eden, feeling confident after the end of the first placement in a way that he "felt like [he] could just turn around and come back and teach there", lamented that he "did not improve" as much as he did with his first mentor. He believed the mentoring experience "undermined the confidence [he] had".

Carrington, Kervin, and Ferry (2011) reinforced that a degree of self-confidence contributes to the progression of teacher professional identity and a supportive field experience during preservice teacher education is highly significant. The results of this study corresponded with this finding. As Anna indicated, not receiving enough support from her mentor made her feel she did not have a mentor, and the immediate impact of such feeling was that her confidence declined and she felt she did not improve as much. For Eden an obvious decrease in self-confidence was detected in his second placement. He went from feeling ready to teach in the same school to feeling he did not exist as a teacher.

Given that identity development involves an understanding of the self (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), the way preservice teachers view themselves is bound to have a bearing on their future performance. In other words, if the mentor teachers fail to instil a sense of confidence in preservice teachers, the latter will think they are inadequate, not ready for the job and unsuited for the profession. It is possible there could be long-lasting consequences impacting their future performance or leading to attrition. The opposite holds true: having a positive self-view about oneself increases feelings of self-esteem and self-worth (Hoelter, 1986) and, as mentioned in the introduction, perception of success and a sense of worth impact future performance and lead to retention (Blase, 2009; Dyson et al., 2007). Liz; for example, developed a sense of authority and felt like a real teacher by the end of the second placement; then she demonstrated a higher teaching ability, as shown in her final evaluation.

Concluding remarks

Wenger (1998) emphasises that interactions are important to identity formation. Holland, Lachicotte, and Skinner (1998) similarly maintained "what we call identities remain dependent upon social relations and material conditions. If these relations and material conditions change, they must be 'answered', and old 'answers' about who one is may be undone" (p. 189). The results of this study show that although mentor teachers did not create drastic changes in preservice teachers' professional identity, they positively or negatively informed it. When the participants experienced two positive mentoring relationships in which their expectations were met, they sensed a higher level of confidence to begin their teaching career. Moreover, positive emotions, a happier disposition, and an overall positive self-image were noticed among the participants in this category. As Alsup (2005) state, developing identity includes consideration of who or what we think we are. Having positive perceptions, such as feeling confident in one's abilities as a teacher and being inspired and motivated to take on the teacher role, can significantly impact the construction of a stronger sense of identity in preservice teachers as observed in this group of participants.

Conversely, the confidence declined in other participants where the mentoring relationships changed for the worse and the expectations were not realized. They felt frustrated, not welcomed, and quite unhappy with their progress. Thus, as early positive experiences in teacher education and the perception of success result in retention (Blase, 2009; Dyson et al., 2007; Ewing & Manuel, 2005), feeling less like a teacher and having a distorted self-image could negatively impact the preservice teachers' future performance or lead to attrition.

Although professional identity begins to form during the practicum, as Cattley (2007) recommends, it is best not to leave the strength of this development to chance. It was discussed above that the process of developing a teacher identity is dynamic; it starts in teacher education and continues to evolve as beginning teachers take on the role of a teacher. Teacher educators, including mentor teachers, cannot expect preservice teachers to develop into full-fledged teachers with a strong sense of teacher identity. As the data showed, only a few participants felt confident as a teacher and, to some extent,

developed a teacher voice after finishing the practicum. Yet, teacher educators have a big responsibility to help preservice teachers in this formative stage of their identification.

It was mentioned that preservice teachers need to acquire a teacher identity because it plays a role in different aspects of a teacher's career including the decisions they make about their teaching practices, the content they teach, and the kind of relationships they have with their students (Beijaard et al., 2004). Given the significance of developing a teacher identity, teacher educators are recommended to ensure that preservice teachers are in the right path of finding who they are as teachers, what goals they are pursuing and what they want to achieve by being a teacher. The more confident preservice teachers feel about being a teacher, the longer they will remain in the profession. In order to maximize the possibility of retention and having a robust sense of teacher identity, mentors should continually strive to instil confidence in preservice teachers and create a sense of self-worth and positive self-image in them. One way to enhance their confidence is to help them find a teacher voice. Although preservice teachers might need to be spoon-fed with all the details and information as they start teaching, they need to be in control and have the liberty to try out their ideas as they progress. Mentor teachers should give them different roles to play and responsibilities to undertake and constantly encourage them to generate ideas so they dare to have a voice and contribute ideas.

As the present study indicates, all preservice teachers had clear expectations about the mentoring relationships prior to the program. For some, having the freedom to test their teaching ideas freely in the classroom was very significant; for others, being consistently supported mattered the most. In other words, preservice teachers have different expectations of the program and need different sorts of help depending on their personalities, background experiences, and future needs. Ideally, mentor teachers, at the outset of the program, should try to ascertain their mentees' wants, needs and expectations. As also observed in this study, preservice teachers lack real power in the classroom (Patrick, 2013) and they may shy away from expressing their ideas and feelings when experiencing any tensions or conflicts, thereby negatively impacting their learning and perceptions of themselves as teachers (Axford, 2005). Thus, mentor teachers should also provide a supportive context through maintaining a non-

hierarchical relationship, in which preservice teachers are eagerly listened to so they feel free to discuss their views.

It is not enough for mentors to be eager and willing to facilitate preservice teachers' professional development; mentors will achieve little if they are ill prepared for their role (He, 2009). Teacher education programs can screen mentor teachers according to their attitude and character, professional competence and experience, and communication and interpersonal skills (NFIE (National Foundation for the Improvement of Education), 1999). The next step for teacher education is to prepare the selected mentor teachers for their mentoring task through in-depth training programs designed to develop their mentoring skills and heighten their awareness of their key roles and responsibilities. In some states in Australia such as NSW and some countries like the UK there are mentor training programs designed to prepare mentor teachers for their mentoring role (Bignold & Barbera, 2012; Rodrigo et al., 2014). For instance, in Europe, a project named TISSNTE (Teacher Induction: Supporting the Supporters of Novice Teachers in Europe) was designed to develop a mentor training program for European mentors (Jones, 2009). Yet, in other contexts such as Western Australia and Turkey scant attention has been paid to preparation programs for mentor teachers (Aslan & Öcal, 2012; Tok, 2013). This research calls for the inclusion of rigorous mentor training programs within teacher education in all contexts and more research on what constitutes mentor training. It is hypothesized that mentor teachers receiving adequate training would be better prepared and have more effective impact on preservice teachers' professional development.

4.4. Use of Metaphors in the Mentoring Relationships

Purpose: The fourth paper is about the metaphors the preservice teachers and mentor teachers used to describe their mentoring relationships at three different phases; before they started their practicum, at the end of the first placement and at the end of the second placement. Use of metaphors further revealed the perceptions of participants of the mentoring experiences.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine preservice teachers' and their mentor teachers' metaphorical images of the mentoring relationships and determine whether or not their metaphors change as they go through their practicum. Three rounds of interviews were conducted with seven preservice teachers who were taking part in a one-year Graduate Diploma of Teaching: at the outset of the first placement, at the end of the first placement, and at the end of the second placement. The mentor teachers, comprising 13 in the two placements, also took part in two interviews before and after each placement. The findings indicate that the metaphors constructed by both groups significantly overlapped and focused on interpersonal relationship and providing guidance and support. Changes were noticed in the participants' metaphors at different stages depending on their relationship with the other party. The implications for teacher education are discussed.

Keywords: Metaphors, preservice teachers, mentor teachers, practicum.

Introduction

Metaphor is defined as an analogic device beneath the surface of a person's awareness, which functions as a means for framing and defining experiences (Mahlios et al., 2010; Neisser, 2003; Yamamoto et al., 1990). According to Martínez, Sauleda, and Huber (2001), "metaphors are not just figures of speech, but constitute an essential mechanism of the mind" (p. 965). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposed that humans live by metaphors, which "provide ways of comprehending experience; they give order to

our lives ... [and] are necessary for making sense of what goes on around us" (pp. 185-186). Other researchers have also contended that use of metaphor helps us to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another through using something familiar (Zhao & Huang, 2008). In a similar line, Oxford et al. (1998) suggested that metaphor "involves employing a familiar object or event as a conceptual tool to elucidate features of a more complex subject or situation" (p. 4).

In an educational context, metaphor is considered as a source of insights into teachers' thoughts and feelings (Connelly et al., 1997). It can also serve as a tool by which a teacher distances themselves from their practice and look upon and reflect on their practice as an external observer (Leavy et al., 2007). Researchers use metaphors developed by teachers as a way to gain insights about teachers' thinking about their work and thus facilitate their professional development (Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou, 2010). More importantly, given that beliefs and action are interactive and "one construct tends to influence the other" (Haney, Lumpe, Czerniak, & Egan, 2002, p. 181); therefore, use of metaphors is perceived to provide insights into teachers' beliefs and consequently their practices (McGrath, 2006).

Over the past two decades, metaphors have been widely used by preservice and practising teachers for describing their beliefs about their teacher's role and their experiences of teaching and working with students (Gillespie, 2006; Greves, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; McGrath, 2006; Shaw & Mahlios, 2008; Sumsion, 2003). Zhao et al. (2010), for instance, carried out a study on Mandarin teachers of English in China and investigated participants' professional adaptation under strenuous challenges through metaphors. Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, and Kron (2003) conducted a study in Israeli asking 60 senior high school teachers to match their image of themselves as teachers with drawings of different occupations. The findings suggested that the teaching context had a significant impact on teachers' images of their professional selves.

Some researchers have encouraged use of metaphors in preservice teacher education; for example, Leavy et al. (2007) asserted that metaphors are valuable tools for understanding preservice teachers' practical knowledge and they can assist them to understand themselves as teachers and relate their understanding to their own practice. There are a few research studies on preservice teachers' use of metaphors including

those of Mahlios and Maxson (1998) and Gurney (1995). In these studies preservice teachers were asked to describe their role as a teacher and it was found that preservice teachers viewed their role as telling, stimulating, nurturing, guiding, and changing students. Among the research on metaphors there have been longitudinal studies on changes in participants' beliefs and images of themselves as teachers. For example, Alger (2009) documented changes in secondary teachers' metaphors in the USA at three different stages and claimed that 63% of teachers changed their conception of teaching over time. In similar studies by Leavy et al. (2007) and Thomas and Beauchamp (2011), preservice teachers' preconceptions of teacher roles were examined through metaphors at two stages: on entry/upon graduation and following graduation/half-way through their first year respectively. Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) found that new teachers changed their views from the conception of seeing themselves as ready for the challenge, to one of adopting a survival mode.

Although teachers and preservice teachers extensively use metaphors, less research has been conducted with preservice teachers' use of metaphors to describe their mentoring relationships during the practicum, and whether or not such metaphors change at different stages of the mentoring relationships. Ben-Peretz et al. (2003) maintained that images about teaching are important because they might have an impact on teachers' actions. They further asserted that through scrutinizing metaphorical images teachers' underlying assumptions concerning education could be revealed. The same holds true about mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' images of the mentoring relationships. It is assumed that the mental image each party has of this relationship reflects the way they approach and interact with the other party. By examining each parties' metaphorical images of the mentoring relationships, deeper insights into their perceptions and expectations of the mentoring relationships could be obtained. To this end, in this study, the research explores the metaphors developed for the mentoring relationships by a sample of preservice teachers and their mentors. Moreover, by comparing the metaphors constructed at two stages, at the outset of the placement and at the end of the placement, the researcher examines changes in participants' views of the mentoring relationships as the participants go through a real mentoring experience. Observing changes in metaphors provides evidence for its effectiveness in capturing the participants' genuine feelings about their experiences and thus carries implications for preservice teacher education. The questions addressed in this study are:

1. What metaphors were used by mentor teachers and preservice teachers to describe the mentoring relationships?
2. What changes occurred in metaphors developed by the participants from the beginning to the end of the mentoring program?
3. What implications do the use of metaphors have for preservice teacher education?

Method

The study was conducted on seven preservice teachers (five females and two males) from the disciplines of music (five) and drama (two) and in an age range of early 20s to early 30s. All preservice teachers were enrolled in a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary course by March 2014 and were recruited for the research during the orientation period. The preservice teachers' mentor teachers in the two placements also took part in this study. A few preservice teachers had more than one main mentor in their first or second placements, so the total number of mentor teachers was 16. However, for this study only the mentor teachers who provided answers to the metaphor question in the interviews were included. Hence, the second group of participants comprised 13 mentor teachers (six males and seven females) who were approached for the research purposes before the start of each placement. The mentor teachers had three to 34 years of teaching experience, and except one mentor who was new to the mentoring role, the rest had mentored preservice teachers for three to 25 years. All participants volunteered to take part in the research knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each mentor teacher prior to and after each placement. However, the preservice teachers attended three rounds of interviews: before the first placement (March, 2014), at the end of the first placement (July, 2014), and at the end of the second placement (December, 2014). All participants were provided with a sheet containing a clear definition of a metaphor and an example (i.e., a teacher is like a gardener because s/he helps children grow) to help them fully understand the meaning and function of metaphors. However, other than the example,

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no metaphors were available for selection. Before the placements, the participants were asked to come up with their own metaphor to describe the ideal mentoring relationships they thought they would have with the other party. After the placement, the participants were provided with the transcript of their interview where they had talked about the mentoring metaphor to refresh their minds. Then they were asked to reflect on the mentoring relationships they had experienced, use a metaphor to best describe it (either the same metaphor or a new one), and explain their reasons for their selection.

To analyse the data, the interviews were transcribed and the interpretation of the data was attained in an iterative manner. More specifically, initially the interview transcripts were read multiple times and a table was compiled for the metaphors used by both groups of participants. Second, the "vehicles" (Chiappe, Kennedy, & Chiappe, 2003) were identified and listed. Chiappe et al. (2003) explained that:

> The topic is the subject of a figurative statement (i.e., ''man'' in ''man is a wolf''), and the vehicle is the concept that we are using to say something new about the topic (i.e., ''red, red rose'' in ''my love is like a red, red rose'') (p.52).

Given that the topics were the same in all statements (i.e., "mentoring relationship" and/or "mentor"), only vehicles were identified to be compared and contrasted. For example, "mentor is like a guide" and "the mentoring relationship is like the cup and the water" (vehicles: "a guide" and "the cup and the water") were contrasted and grouped into two different categories. Other vehicles were also analysed and fed into the table. Once the patterns were identified, the metaphors were interpreted both collectively and individually. Yet, as Patton (2002) suggests, "the analyst's first and foremost responsibility consists of doing justice to each individual case. All else depends on that" (p. 449). Thus, an attempt was made to delve deeply into each participant's metaphors and examine any possible link between their experiences of the mentoring relationships and their metaphors to provide more detailed within-case analysis in this paper, especially for the preservice teachers. In the last stage the most telling or representative extracts were selected for reporting.

Below the analysis of the metaphors is presented. It is worth noting that pseudonyms are used for the preservice teachers in this study but not for the mentor teachers. Since this

study is part of a larger study of the identity formation of the preservice teachers, the same pseudonyms are used for the participants in all research papers to provide a stronger link between the studies.

Findings and Discussion

Mentor Teachers' Metaphors

Two main groups of metaphors were used by the mentor teachers participating in this study; metaphors focusing on interpersonal relationships and metaphors about providing direction and support.

Interpersonal Relationships. Several mentor teachers compared the mentoring to interpersonal relationships, such as "dad and son", "master and apprentice", "teacher and student", "colleagues", "friends", and "older sister and younger sister". Ganser (1998)'s study on mentors' use of metaphors also yielded similar results. He found that the most common metaphors focused on interpersonal relationships, such as parent and child and grandparent and grandchildren. The mentor teachers in the present study argued that, for instance, the mentor and mentee were like colleagues and they should work together:

> We are just colleagues, I do not think I am kind of like the boss or in
> charge, it is not that kind of thing, I think we work together and
> discuss things and I might explain to him what I am thinking of doing
> and he might have some ideas of how he might like to do it, and we
> can discuss it and try it and see which ways we like things.

Another mentor used the metaphor of an older sister to highlight their close and intimate relationship:

> A much older sister is there alongside of you as opposed to being a
> boss, but they have got a lot more years under their belt of experience,
> so they can also guide you where you need to improve on things.

The above excerpts present an image of an equal and friendly mentoring relationship, suggesting the mentor teachers' understanding of the importance of maintaining a collegial relationship with their mentees. The significance of rapport between mentors and preservice teachers has been discussed by researchers and correlated with the

success of the practicum (Draves, 2008; Fung, 2005). Fung (2005) for instance, stated that developing a collegial relationship with preservice teachers during practicum cultivates "an attitude of working together, providing room for experimentation, and respecting personal orientations" (p. 53). The mentor teachers who used the above metaphors similarly stated that by maintaining a collegial relationship with their mentees they try to set a good example to propel the mentees to copy and emulate the same positive relationship with their future students.

Whereas the above metaphors indicated an equal relationship, two metaphors (i.e., dad and son and the cup and the water) in this category conveyed an element of power and hierarchy. Some researchers have found unequal power relations in mentor-preservice teacher relationships to have a negative impact on preservice teachers' perceptions of who they are (Axford, 2005; Patrick, 2013). Other researchers have also critiqued traditional models of professional experience, calling for non-hierarchical, reciprocal relationships (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Phelan et al., 2006). Using the metaphor of a dad and son, a mentor in this study argued that the mentoring relationship "at the beginning is like your dad telling you off and giving you advice but, the mentor added, "then the mentor gradually starts to treat the mentee more like they are closer to being colleagues". Thus, although this mentor thought a degree of power and hierarchy was inherent in the mentoring role, he highlighted that the dynamics of the relationship would change gradually and they would become like colleagues. Another mentor likened the mentoring to the cup and the water (object relationship), also suggesting there was a hierarchy and the flow of information was top-down:

> It would be like the cup and the water pointing to the cup, so the knowledge is coming in, obviously there'll be when the knowledge is coming in and the best practice is coming in, need to ensure that there's a steady understanding between both, because if at any moment the cup itself is shaking or moves away, then the knowledge won't be going in correctly.

Providing direction and support. The second group of metaphors focused on themes associated with providing direction and support. These mentor teachers compared the mentoring relationships to roles in which the element of support and guidance was uppermost, such as "coach", "sport trainer", "guide", "training wheels", "facilitator",

and "life guard". One mentor teacher stated: "I'd be like a one-on-one sport trainer who takes a lot of care, a lot of responsibility". Similarly, another mentor argued that he was like a coach:

> Like bringing a new player onto some kind of sporting team, so from day one they'd be fully integrated… and my role is to both, as a senior player on that sporting team, to both play alongside her and to act as her mentor in that capacity as well.

Another mentor used the metaphor of a dad who puts training wheels on a bike for his kid:

> So it is different ways that you can help them depending on where they are, and be the dad who can pick the right moment to step away from the bike and teach them that they have the capability of riding that bike without you holding it, and even showing them, "Oh look, why don't we just take off those training wheels on the back wheel," and I will hold the bike again and at the right time take your hand off and show them they can do it on their own.

The metaphors in this category conveyed a stronger sense of professional commitment on the part of mentors towards enhancing their mentees' professional development. In other words, compared to metaphors in the interpersonal relationships category, these metaphors suggested the mentor teachers had more "personal investment" in the mentoring relationships and took more ownership of mentees' success or failure. Ganser (1998) indicated that metaphors for mentoring show different approaches to mentoring and "there is an important difference in the personal investment in mentoring between someone who views being a mentor as raising a child and someone else who sees mentoring as jump-starting a dead car battery" (p. 117). Although metaphors such as colleagues or friends, in the first category, emphasised the importance of creating a friendly atmosphere in the mentoring relationships, metaphors such as coach or life guard in the second category implied that the mentor teachers were more cognizant of their crucial role and assumed full responsibility towards their mentees' success.

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Preservice Teachers' Metaphors

As explained in the Method section, the preservice teachers were asked to use a metaphor to describe an ideal mentoring relationship at the outset of their course. The metaphors used by preservice teachers also reflected the same themes as found in mentor teachers' metaphors, namely interpersonal relationships (e.g., parent figure, older sibling, student-master, Karate master-student) and providing direction and support (e.g., guide, advisor, spinning wheel). For instance, referring to the importance of establishing an intimate connection, Linda used the metaphor of a parent figure. She explained that because the practicum is a new environment for her, she would need to feel comfortable and hoped the mentor would be like a parent figure: "you need to feel so comfortable that you can discuss all your questions, and you can feel like you have an open relationship". Sara expressed that she wished her mentor would be like an older sibling because, she explained, "you are in the same boat, or the same family and you try to do the same thing with the kids". She added "but they [mentors] are that much more on the path than you". As these quotations show, the preservice teachers were mindful that their mentors had more knowledge and expertise, yet they also wanted to feel close to their mentors and forge a bond with them.

Some preservice teachers attached more importance to the element of guidance and support. Liz pointed out: "like a guide, someone with a torch or lantern or something leading you through to where you need to be, showing you the road and the paths that you need to take". Chelsey opted for her mentor being like an advisor "someone who can provide guidance, facilitate ideas and provide feedback". And Anna used the metaphor of a spinning wheel:

> Because it'll go in, like, motion and it will work and we'll go together
> sometimes but then it might just stop sometimes during the year
> because we're just not around each other maybe they'll get too busy
> or I'll get too busy so I'll stop that communication for a little bit but
> then it might just start again and start moving.

The metaphor of a spinning wheel suggested that Anna was anticipating the practicum would be a busy time for her and her mentor yet she was hoping they would stick together and support each other throughout the process. It is worth noting that there is

not a clear demarcation between the two categories. Some metaphors in the interpersonal relationship category (i.e., karate master-student and master and student) could also fall into the category of providing direction and support) because factors of support and guidance were also present in these metaphors. It was explained in (Izadinia, 2015) that one of the main components of the mentoring relationships for the preservice teachers was academic and emotional support. Other researchers have also identified the key role of support for preservice teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Rajuan et al., 2007) and argued that the ideal setting for the mentee is one that is welcoming, accepting and supportive (Abell et al., 1995; Cain, 2009). Interestingly, in all the metaphors the preservice teachers used at the outset of the program the elements of support and guidance was present reflecting their main concern for receiving constant emotional and academic support during the practicum.

Changes in Metaphors

Unlike studies by Alger (2009); Leavy et al. (2007); and Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) which reported a difference in participants' metaphors at different times, in most cases no considerable difference was identified in mentor teachers' metaphors between the time the data was collected at the outset of the placement and at the end of it. Table 4.1 shows the metaphors used by mentor teachers at these two stages.

Table 4.1 Metaphors Used by Mentor Teachers

Mentor	Before the placement	After the placement
1	the cup and the water	the cup and the water
2	dad and son and colleagues eventually	colleagues eventually
3	sport trainer	sport trainer
4	master and apprentice	master and apprentice
5	A spark that ignites the flame	a spark that ignites the flame
6	older sister	older sister
7	Guide	guide
8	training wheels	training wheels
9	Colleagues	colleagues

10	Coach	lifeguard
11	Facilitator	guide
12	teacher-student relationship	boss-employee relationship
13	Colleagues	guide

As the table above shows, nine out of 13 metaphors remained unchanged and the mentor teachers stated that they were quite happy with the metaphors they had initially constructed. For instance, the mentor who had used the metaphor of colleagues remarked: "We were like colleagues, it was just like we were two people working together rather than taking orders and giving orders". These mentor teachers confirmed that they still had the same views towards their mentoring role and they had tried to put into practice their theories and ideas during the placement. However, two mentors slightly changed their metaphors (i.e., from coach to lifeguard and from facilitator to guide) and two other mentors used totally new ones (i.e., boss-employee instead of teacher-student and guide instead of colleagues). The mentor who changed his metaphor from coach to lifeguard explained: "Perhaps as a lifeguard, you let kids swim in the deep end and do things but keep an eye on things and just make sure that no one is going to drown." This metaphor still belonged to the second category of providing direction and support, yet it highlighted the mentor's growing awareness of the significance of providing mentees with learning opportunities so they could experiment with their ideas in a safe environment. A similar aim was raised by Rajuan et al. (2007) who recommended "mentor teachers should be encouraged to provide student teachers with learning opportunities of challenge and exploration of personal teaching identities in a safe environment of personal support" (p. 239).

Another mentor changed her metaphor of facilitator to guide, pointing out that with her mentee it was more like "directing her and helping her to think in terms of her style and her future and how she is going to teach". Beltman and MacCallum (2006) asserted that successful mentoring programs have mentors who utilize strategies for improving individual competences according to individual needs and interests. The metaphor of guide still focused on providing direction and support but implied the mentor was willing to adapt her mentoring techniques as she identified her mentee's evident present and future needs.

A more noticeable difference was in the change of metaphor of student and teacher to boss and employee. The mentor explained:

> It is possibly like a boss and employee kind of relationship where I am supposed to control all the aspects of what he is doing…. He [the mentee] is quite determined and he likes to try his own way of doing things, which unfortunately just because of the school it has not been always possible because our programming is quite strict…So he cannot be doing something completely different … I've sort of had to bring him back, and he has been understanding of that, to his credit. I guess from that perspective of me having to sometimes lay it down and say, "Sorry, no, it just needs to be this way," yeah, kind of boss-employee.

Although the new metaphor still focused on interpersonal relationship, it showed the mentor had assumed more control and power over the mentee. Whereas the mentor had initially argued that she "would not want [her] prac student to become exactly the same as [her] and [she] want[s] them to find their own way of teaching", the metaphor she used at the end of the placement suggested she imposed her own teaching styles on her mentee. Morton (2003) contended that the mentor's role is to help the mentee find their own ways and reach their own conclusions about issues through discussions. He further added, "but it is not the mentor's role to make them change their ways" (p. 5). If power relationships frustrate the development of open and trusting mentoring relationships and the mentees feel they have no freedom to try out their ideas, tension might arise and the mentoring program is unlikely to work optimally (Colley, 2003; Patrick, 2013; Wildman et al., 1992). This argument is supported by Eden's (the preservice teacher who worked with the above mentor) contentions that he did not feel he improved much as he experienced a "partially negative" mentoring (see Eden's story below).

What adjustments were made to the preservice teachers' metaphors? Some preservice teachers adapted their metaphors at the end of each placement, depending on the kind of relationship they had developed with their mentors. Table 4.2 shows the metaphors constructed by the preservice teachers at the three stages.

Table 4.2 Metaphors Used by Preservice Teachers

Preservice Teachers	Prior to the practicum	At the end of the first placement	At the end of the second placement
Liz	guide (someone with a torch)	Guide	Guide
Sara	older sibling	Aunt	Mother
Linda	Parent figure	Friend	parent + friend
Chelsey	Advisor	Guide	safety net
Eden	karate master and student	big brother-little brother	a driving examiner
Anna	a spinning wheel	a bridge	Distant
Simon	mentor-mentee relationship	student-master relationship	not a mentor-mentee relationship

As the table above indicates, Liz, Sara and Linda used almost the same metaphors at all stages. Although there were some slight changes in their metaphors, they still conveyed the same messages. For instance, Sara and Linda had very positive mentoring experience and their metaphors (i.e., aunt, mother and friend, parent and friend) constructed at the end of the first and second placement, suggested the existence of friendly, strong and close relationships with their mentors which adequately fulfilled their expectations. For these two preservice teachers the ideal mentor was someone who had teaching and mentoring experience but also was able to connect to their mentee at a personal level and support them like a sibling or a parent. Thus, for instance, although Sara and her first mentor "were not equals" (like "siblings", her first metaphor), because her mentor "had more authority and experience" (more like an "aunt"), they still "had an incredibly positive relationship". The metaphor of "mother" also suggested Sara's second mentor "was really motherly". She even "enquired whether [Sara] had a boyfriend, which was hilarious" and showed the mentor and mentee had a close and intimate relationship as Sara desired.

As explained above, Chelsey used the metaphor of an advisor at the beginning of the program to highlight the role of guidance and feedback. However, when she started the practicum she recognized the importance of having the leeway to try out her teaching

ideas; for example, when Chelsey decided to do group work with her, "hyper-active students who were already mucking up so much", her first mentor encouraged her to apply her ideas and reminded her that "this is your chance to practice". Thus, Chelsey "did that [group work] and it was semi-successful". At the end of the first placement, Chelsey emphasised the role of guidance by using the metaphor guide, yet she explained: "We are only six months away from doing this completely by ourselves, you don't want so much guidance that you cannot do it by yourself, you don't want your hand to be held for the entire process". As it happened, the second placement was also another positive experience for Chelsey. At this stage Chelsey grew even more certain that a mentor should provide "less guidance" and just play the role of a "safety net" so that the mentee can easily practise her ideas:

> I do think the mentor teacher's job is to offer advice and guidance, be
> a safety net. Student teachers need to be given the room to test new
> ideas and strategies, knowing the safety net is there if they fail.

Eden, Anna and Simon did not experience positive mentoring relationships in both placements, thus not surprisingly, the metaphors they constructed at the end of the first and second placements were significantly different. Eden using the metaphor of "karate master and student" at the outset of the practicum, had envisaged that the mentoring relationship would be about learning the skills and techniques taught by a master. Yet, at the end of the first placement he likened his mentoring to a "big brother-little brother" relationship and remarked that he had a "very good rapport" with his first mentor. He explained that like brothers his mentor and he were both "from the same state", "the same age", and "had the same background knowledge…but one had more experience". Eden attributed his development to the support, encouragement and extensive feedback he received from his first mentor. However, Eden used the metaphor of a "driving examiner" for his second mentor, lamenting that he "did not improve and went backward". Failing to build a rapport with his second mentor, as they "did not have anything in common", Eden declared his mentor "put more emphasis on assessment than teaching" and "did not recognize and value his skills". Consequently, Eden felt he "did not exist as a teacher", and he was there, "just to pass the test".

Malderez (2009) recommended that mentor teachers should not consider themselves as a supervisor, teacher trainer, or evaluator. He explained that having an evaluative

orientation to mentoring impedes the development of trust and open communication between mentor and mentee. Arguably, what happened to Eden in his second mentoring relationship supports Malderez's position. As evident in Eden's comments, their communication failed and Eden felt he did not improve in the second placement as his second mentor, the "driving examiner", mainly played the role of an evaluator. Yet, the extensive feedback of the first mentor not only never put Eden on the spot but helped him improve and accomplish more because the mentor played the role of a big brother.

Anna had a "very supportive" mentor in her first placement. She used the metaphor of a bridge to describe her first mentoring experience:

> So the framework of a bridge is supported by the axis or the structure, so I think using that supportive kind of term in relation to the relationship, we were supportive of each other, and I think once we had the actual structure made, we could both go over the bridge and it was just easy, and you are getting along and you just kept going and it was fine; it helped solve the mystery.

As the metaphor suggests, Anna "had a really strong relationship" with her first mentor and the mentor teacher's "advice, support and feedback" helped her overcome her initial fears and gain confidence as a teacher. Conversely, not receiving "the same sort of response or feedback or support" from her second mentor, lowered Anna's confidence in the second placement. Similar to Eden, Anna also mentioned that she did not think she "improved as much compared to the first placement". When asked to use a metaphor to describe her second mentoring relationship, Anna said the relationship was "distant" and she "did not feel like she had a mentor at times because it was just [her] there just doing [her] things". Mentoring is viewed as a social relationship whose effectiveness hinges upon the strength of the relationship between mentor and mentee (Garvey & Alred, 2000; Pitton, 2006). Beutel and Spooner-Lane (2009) pointed out that "when a relationship is forced the relationship can be emotionally demanding" (p. 356). The relationship Anna experienced was emotionally demanding; she did not feel supported by her distant mentor, which resulted in her feeling less confident as a teacher.

Simon enjoyed working with his "fantastic and accomplished" mentor in the first placement and developed great respect for him. Although Simon's first mentoring relationship "was very equal" and he "felt more like a colleague than a mentee", he used the metaphor of master-student to express his admiration for his mentor's breadth of knowledge and professionalism. Conversely, in the second placement, Simon argued that he did not have a lot of respect for his second mentor as a teacher and a performer because "she was not very strong in her performance skills". Simon pointed out that his second mentor "was really nice, really friendly, really supportive… but a lot of the things she was doing are talked about as examples of bad teaching". In the final interview at the end of second placement, Simon could not think of a metaphor to describe his mentoring. He just mentioned that he did not have a mentor-mentee relationship: "On paper it was a mentor-mentee relationship, but it is very hard to be mentored by someone who you do not agree with or you see a lot of things they are doing are just really wrong". Koerner et al. (2002) pointed out that preservice teachers need mentors who can provide examples of good practice for them to evaluate and emulate. Simon felt he did not have a mentoring relationship with his mentor he could not accept her as a role model and a teacher he wanted to be in the future.

Conclusion

This study revealed mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' preconceptions of the mentoring relationships through their use of metaphors. It was found that there were considerable overlaps between preservice teachers' and their mentors' metaphors at the outset of the program. The mentor teachers viewed their mentoring role either as cultivating a close and friendly relationship or providing guidance and support. Similarly, the preservice teachers used metaphors that had an element of support attached to them. Even when the mentoring was compared to interpersonal relationship, the need for receiving emotional support was indicated.

The data gathered at the end of the two placements suggested that most of the mentor teachers retained the metaphors they had initially constructed because they thought the metaphors reflected their recent mentoring practice. It was discussed in the Introduction that the mental images teachers have reflects their professional practice. Based on the preservice teachers' feedback on their mentors' professional conduct, it was found that most of the mentor teachers' metaphors did represent their actual mentoring practices.

For instance, the mentors who had used metaphors of "older sister" or "friends" did maintain a collegial relationship with their mentors.

However, changes were observed in metaphors used by some preservice teachers and mentors. Some mentors changed their metaphors because, they argued, the nature of their relationship with their mentee was different from what they had initially anticipated. Similarly, preservice teachers who experienced a negative mentoring relationship constructed less positive metaphors (e.g., distant or driving examiner) at the end of their placement than their initial images. Therefore, as the findings indicate, metaphors are powerful tools, which adequately reflect participants' real feelings, emotions and ideas and, as such, can be employed by mentor teachers and in preservice teacher education. Although finding a metaphor that perfectly reflects one's ideas and viewpoints is challenging, as it was for the participants in this study, mentor teachers can still encourage their mentees to share their mental images of the mentoring they would like to receive. Knowing about preservice teachers' metaphors helps mentor teachers to correctly identify their mentees' needs and expectations. For instance, a mentee who perceives her mentor as a "mother" has different emotional needs than someone else who regards their mentor as a "guide". Thus, mentor teachers can examine their mentees' metaphors for mentoring and define their roles accordingly. Also it seems useful for mentor teachers to consider their own metaphors for their role and their reasons for this selection, revealing the tacit knowledge that underpins the way they view and prioritize different aspects of their mentoring role.

Metaphors could also serve as a tool in teacher education programs for making a better match between mentors and mentees. In other words, teacher education can take a critical step towards providing a more effective mentoring for preservice teachers by stimulating both mentors and mentees to think about their ideal metaphors for mentoring at the outset of their program and pairing up the parties who have the same views and expectations. As such, there will be fewer personality clashes that jeopardize the mentoring relationships and reduce the learning that might occur. The findings of this study lend support to this argument. When preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' views and metaphorical images of mentoring corresponded this resulted in a strong one-to-one relationship and consequently preservice teachers' satisfaction of the mentoring program. However, when there were mismatches between mentors' and

mentees' ideas and expectations and the mentees' mental images remotely matched the reality of their mentoring, feelings of disappointment, lack of achievement and dissatisfaction were expressed.

4.5. Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk: Preservice Teachers' Evaluation of Their Mentors. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning.* **2015**

Purpose: The valuable experiences of the preservice teachers of their mentoring relationships and the impact of the mentoring on their professional identity were reported in the above four papers. An attempt was made to investigate the mis/match between mentor teachers' perceived mentoring practices and their real performance before and after each placement. Although this part of the research did not directly serve the overall purpose of the main study, it aimed to highlight the potential gaps in mentor teachers' practices through evaluating preservice teachers' ideas about their mentoring experiences. It also aimed to heighten mentor teachers' awareness of their real practices and their significant role in creating lasting positive impact on their preservice teachers' teacher identity.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities between mentor teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 mentor teachers to investigate their perceived mentoring roles prior to the placement. Their seven preservice teachers were also interviewed at the end of the practicum to explore their ideas and evaluation of their mentors' mentoring practices. The findings indicate that 14 mentor teachers did put into practice their ideas regarding their roles. However, only two mentor teachers appeared to act against their espoused theories. Implications for practice are discussed.

Keywords: Mentor teachers, preservice teachers, mentoring roles, Practicum

Introduction

Mentoring is defined as "an intentional pairing of an inexperienced person with an experienced partner to guide and nurture his or her development" (Pitton, 2006, p. 1). Mentor teachers also referred to as cooperating and associate teachers, are believed to have the most significant influence on preservice teachers and play a key role in their professional development (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1996; Clarke, 2001; Glenn, 2006; Koerner, 1992; Leshem, 2012). Mentors, for instance, provide professional knowledge, technical support and help preservice teachers develop their own teaching style (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Pajak, 2001; Sanford & Hopper, 2000). The roles defined for mentors in the literature range from carer, helper and sharer (Baird, 1993) to support system, trouble shooter, and counsellor (Abell et al., 1995; Liliane & Colette, 2009). Some researchers have also described critical characteristics for them such as willingness to share knowledge and competency; willingness to facilitate growth and honesty; willingness to give critical, positive, and constructive feedback; and ability to deal directly with mentees (Knox & McGovern, 1988).

During the last decade there has been growing research on the mentoring relationships as it is believed that the success of the practicum hinges upon the positive relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Graves, 2010) . In order to improve such a relationship there has been extensive research on identifying the roles of mentor teachers and the significance of their roles (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Barnett & O'Mahony, 2005; Beck & Kosnik, 2000, 2002; Rowley, 1999; Tauer, 1998), features of optimal mentoring relationships (Glenn, 2006; Jacobi, 1991), student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions of their roles (Abell et al., 1995; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Draves, 2008; Izadinia, 2015; Zanting et al., 2001), tensions and conflicts in the student teacher-mentor teacher relationship (Martin et al., 2011; Patrick, 2013) and the necessity to train mentor teachers (Garvey & Alred, 2000; Russell & Russell, 2011) to name a few. One of the areas of research that has received considerable attention is identifying the roles of mentor teachers. Researchers have contended that mentor teachers and student teachers are better able to support the growth of the professional relationship during practicum when they identify and understand their own and each other's roles

(Guyton, 1989; McGee, Ferrier-Kerr, & Miller, 2001). In addition, a shared understanding of such roles contributes to the success of the mentoring relationship (Tauer, 1998). As such, researchers have thoroughly investigated the views of mentor teachers about their mentoring roles. For instance, in studies by Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005), Jaipal (2009), and Hall, Draper, Smith, and Bullough Jr (2008), the main roles as perceived by mentors were provider of feedback, supporter, and encourager, model, coach, scaffolder, observer, and critical friend. There are also studies which examine the perceptions of student teachers toward their mentors' roles. For example, Maynard (2000) interviewing 17 student teachers, described the role as providing inclusion, support, and advice, teamwork, and role modelling.

Although research on mentors' roles is integral to the effectiveness of mentoring, there is a need to examine mentors' actual practices during the practicum as there might be a mismatch between their espoused theories and theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974). In other words, although mentor teachers might have thorough understanding of their roles, they might fail to put into practice their intended roles. Yet, little attention has been paid to research in this area. One of the studies which partially investigated this issue is that of Beck and Kosnik (2000), who found that despite the mentor teachers' intention to provide freedom and leeway, in practice they were inflexible and required their mentees to follow the curriculum closely. More research seems to be needed to examine mentor teachers' actual mentoring practices from the perspective of their mentees. Such research would help mentor teachers recognize possible gaps between their own espoused theories and theories-in-use and strive to reduce such gaps. Moreover, by giving voice to preservice teachers' ideas of their mentoring experiences, this research highlights the importance of seeking mentees' feedback and perspective for improving mentoring practices. In other words, it suggests mentor teachers would be able to mentor more effectively when they receive their mentees' honest feedback on the effectiveness of their mentoring practices.

Thus, in this study, which is part of a larger research, the researcher examines mentors' perceptions of their roles before the placement and compares and contrasts them with their mentees' perceptions and evaluation of such roles after the placement. The questions addressed in this study are:

1. How did the mentor teachers define their roles and responsibilities toward their preservice teachers at the outset of the practicum?

2. How did the preservice teachers evaluate their mentors' practices after the practicum?

3. To what extent did mentor teachers' espoused theories match their theories-in-use?

Method

Participants

The research was conducted at a university in Western Australia, which had one of the largest teacher education programs in Australia. The first group of participants taking part in this research were seven preservice teachers (five females and two males) from the disciplines of music (five) and drama (two), who were aged in the range of early 20s to early 30s. The participants were enrolled in a Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary in March 2014 and were recruited for this study during orientation period. The second group were the mentor teachers of the preservice teachers during their first and second placement. The mentor teachers comprising 16, nine in the first practicum (six males and three females), and seven (six females and one male) in the second, were approached and recruited for the research before the start of each placement. The mentor teachers had three to 34 years of teaching experience and except for four mentors who were new to the mentoring role, the rest had mentored preservice teachers for five to 25 years. All participants volunteered to take part in the research study knowing that their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the data, they would be assigned pseudonyms, and they would be able to withdraw from the research at any time.

Data Collection

This study is part of a larger study on the identity formation of the preservice teachers. For the present research the data gathered from semi-structured interviews with both groups were used. The interviews conducted with mentor teachers occurred before each

placement and included questions such as: Why did you agree to become a mentor teacher? What are your main responsibilities as a mentor teacher? How do you feel you can best benefit your student teacher as their mentor? The preservice teachers' interviews were carried out at the end of each placement and the questions included: Could you describe the relationship you shared with your mentor teacher? How has your mentor met your expectations about how a mentor teacher would (or should) be? Were there any critical experiences, including tensions you have lived through during practicum? All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Later, all participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis as a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) was used to interpret the data gathered from interviews. To analyse the interview data the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) were taken: transcribing verbal data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. More specifically, after transcribing the interviews, the interpretation of the data was attained in an iterative manner as the interview transcripts were read multiple times to find codes, which reflected the main concepts. Recurring issues were consolidated into new codes, and key quotations were selected to represent the identified themes.

Credibility of the data which parallels internal validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) was enhanced through triangulation. Triangulation "involves checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data" (Mertens, 2014, p. 271). Triangulation was achieved through using Denzin (1989) multiple triangulation strategies including data collection from different sources (preservice teachers and mentor teachers), time (at the beginning and end of each placement) and methods (interviews, observations, reflective journals). It is worth noting that this study only focuses on the interviews conducted with the

participants while reflective journals and observation notes were used in the larger study on the preservice teachers.

Use of a multiple case design strengthened transferability of the data (Yin, 2011) which equals external validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In addition to credibility and transferability of the data, "confirmability", which is a qualitative research alternative to objectivity and authenticity (fairness) in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) was also taken into account. Confirmability audit was provided through memo writing, keeping research journals and asking a third party to review interview transcripts.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the analysis of the interview data is presented. The mentor teachers' interviews conducted before each placement focused on two main themes; their main reasons for becoming a mentor teacher and their perceived roles and responsibilities. These two themes are discussed below and in the next section the preservice teachers' interviews are analysed and discussed.

Reasons for Becoming a Mentor

The researcher began the study by investigating the mentors' motivations for becoming a mentor. It was assumed that mentors' underlying reasons would provide a deeper understating of their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities. Similar to studies by Russell and Russell (2011) and Hudson and Hudson (2010), the research found that the mentors had two major reasons: (a) to support and contribute to the mentoring process and (b) to share and pass on their knowledge and experience. For example, one mentor considered one of his responsibilities was to help student teachers get a placement: "many students find it quite difficult to get a placement and it is something that I can give back to the profession". A few mentors posited that student teachers should have the chance to see the real life of school and mentors could help them see the actual practice: "It is important to help people learn to teach and I want to help out with that". "It is quite vital that they have role models who show what teaching is all about". "I can

give them an opportunity to try things in front of someone who might be more willing to look at some different things". Sharing the knowledge of teaching and the experience, as mentioned above, were another strong motivations for becoming a mentor. For instance, one mentor said: "I have taught for 27 years, and … I want to pass on things that I have learnt over all these years". Another mentor remarked: "it is our duty to pass on our knowledge to other new teachers".

The reasons the mentor teachers gave for being a mentor indicated that they all had intrinsic motivations for being a mentor. In other words, they did not feel obliged to mentor preservice teachers rather they considered it their duty to support the mentoring process and to share their knowledge Christensen (1991) argued that mentoring "should be an intentional process" with both the mentor and mentee wanting the mentoring process (p. 12). When mentor teachers
 are intrinsically motivated and voluntarily assume the role of a mentor they will hold a more positive view about their role, which positively impact their mentoring practices and conduct.

Mentors' Perceived Roles and Responsibilities

The mentor teachers participating in this search were asked to define their perceived roles and responsibilities. The data showed three main roles as identified by mentor teachers; providing support, providing feedback and communicating effectively. Below each theme is discussed.

Providing support. The key role of support for preservice teachers has been identified in several studies (Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Rajuan et al., 2007). Researchers asserted that the ideal setting for the mentee is one that is welcoming, accepting and supportive (Abell et al., 1995; Cain, 2009) for instance, maintained that a collaborative and supportive relationship between student teachers and mentor teachers helped student teachers to develop the confidence to take risks and experiment in the classroom. The mentor teachers participating in this research expressed high regard for

the support element of their mentoring, and argued that offering ongoing support was one of their key roles. Gold (1996) noted there were two types of support: instructional-related support and psychological support. Instructional support refers to the knowledge, strategies and skills given to student teachers and psychological support refers to enhancing their self-esteem, confidence and feelings of effectiveness. The two types of support identified by Gold (1996) were discussed by the mentor teachers in this study. For instance, they talked about providing instructional support such as "helping them with designing lesson plans", and psychological support, which included "helping them to fit in and get a realistic exposure to the school life", "letting them make mistakes, not take control of their program", "guiding the mentees rather than directing them", and "allowing their expertise to develop rather than taking the high ground or pretending that you know it all".

As the above examples suggest, mentor teachers attached more importance to the psychological or emotional support than to the instructional support- an emphasis noted in other studies (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Caires & Almeida, 2007; Izadinia, 2015; Rajuan et al., 2007). One mentor teacher referring to the importance of emotional support stated:

> I can best benefit her by giving her an opportunity to try some things
> in class knowing that there is a mentor teacher who is not going to
> pooh-pooh her idea, but who is willing to hear her ideas and then give
> her some honest opinion.

Another mentor also underscored her role as provider of emotional support: "I want to have that safe and fun environment, I guess an environment where it is challenging but they feel emotionally it is positive so that they feel free to grow and experiment. Another mentor mentioned by providing support he tried to develop a sense of trust:

> I do not say, "Do this lesson here … I want to see development as we
> go through." So we teach them … rubricing all those things that we
> have to do. Making them understand that we're not just going to

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throw them to the wolves and sit at the back and have a coffee and smoke a cigarette as ... as used to happen.

Providing feedback. Some researchers suggest that feedback is fundamental to a successful mentoring relationship (Bates et al., 2011; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; P. S. Christensen, 1988; Glenn, 2006; Leshem, 2012; Smith, 2005; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Other researchers also have contended that mentors should have specific mentoring strategies to mentor effectively among which is the ability to provide feedback (Hudson, 2007; Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005). In a study by Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005), it was found that the mentor teachers gave overwhelming attention to the mentoring role as a provider of feedback. Similarly, in this study, it was revealed that for the mentor teachers providing feedback was among their main mentoring roles. They repeatedly talked about "open and honest feedback", "valid feedback", "constant feedback", "verbal and written feedback" and "positive and negative feedback given in an appropriate way". For instance, one mentor contended: "it is not helpful for them to not know exactly what they need to improve on and what they are doing well, so I want to give that clear feedback". Another mentor stated:

> One of the main things would be identifying areas that are weak and come out with strategies for fixing that and expressing it in such a way that they feel like they want to improve rather than if you express it in a way that's demeaning or highly critical then they're probably not going to want to.

When feedback given to student teachers is not helpful they might feel frustrated (Hobson, 2002; Maynard, 2000). Mentor teachers in this study also talked about "effective feedback" and acknowledged that the feedback should be constructive aiming to develop their mentees' style and never put mentees down. A few mentors also argued it is more effective if mentors provided feedback at the ends of lessons and in smaller portions rather than a big debrief at the end of the day.

Communicating effectively. Another critical role of mentor teachers is maintaining effective communication with student teachers (Nevins Stanulis & Russell, 2000; Wildman et al., 1992). It is believed that open communication is one of the main

ingredients to a successful mentoring relationship (Beyene et al., 2002). Liliane and Colette (2009) found that student teachers showed a higher level of confidence to express their ideas when mentor teachers exhibited openness to their ideas and encouraged them to reflect on their practice. The mentor teachers participating in this research considered establishing an open line of communication with their mentees as one of their main roles: "I need to ensure that what I am communicating to her that she is understanding what I am meaning and there is not miscommunication and vice versa", "Just being able to communicate to one another, to explain to him what I would like him to do… and also for him if he has got any queries to feel that he can ask me".

The mentor teachers highlighted the importance of power relations as a factor that blocks open communication. According to Martinovic and Dlamini (2009), the practicum is inherently laden with unequal power relations, which often results in student teachers' silence and lack of learning. Some mentor teachers in this study expressed an awareness of the power disparity and acknowledged they should make a special effort to facilitate student teachers' learning by encouraging open dialogue and communication: "You have to be very careful of power balance, and I think often mentors do not realize they have an inherent power just by being the mentor". Another mentor argued that in order to establish effective communication, the mentor has to make the mentoring relationship more symmetrical:

> It's very important that we have got this open line of communication because she needs to feel comfortable and I need to feel comfortable that we can exchange knowledge in a way that will cater for her to learn in the best possible way. So if she's feeling stressed in ways because of maybe the way that I'm coming across, or if I'm feeling stressed, we can feel open and we should be able to feel open to talk to each other about that.

Preservice Teachers' Evaluation of Their Mentors' Practices

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the seven preservice teachers were interviewed at the end of their both placements. In their interviews the preservice teachers were asked to reflect on their mentoring experience and express their dis/satisfaction with their mentoring relationship. The preservice teachers' evaluation of their mentors'

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performance in the first placement was very positive and they mentioned that their mentors had surpassed their expectations. In another study conducted before the first placement (Izadinia, 2015), the preservice teachers had stated that they had high regard for open communication and friendly relationship with their mentors. The findings of the present research revealed that the participants received constant emotional and academic support. For instance, Chelsey mentioned her mentoring relationship, "was a pretty supportive relationship" and she explained that her mentor gave her "a lot of time and attention and resources". Anna commented that her mentor "was very supportive of everything [she] kind of did". Similarly, Sara remarked that her mentoring experience was, "incredibly positive" and she "always felt supported by her [mentor]". Liz also pointed out that she hugely valued the emotional support of her mentor. She explained that during a stressful time her mentor teacher had made himself available "pretty much the entire weekend for [her] to swing emails at", so she could write a lesson.

In addition, all preservice teachers stated that they had positive relationships with their mentors in the first placement. Draves (2008) underscored the significance of rapport between mentors and preservice teachers by correlating a positive mentoring relationship with the overall success of the practicum. The data showed that the preservice teachers generally felt "very lucky" working with their mentors, suggesting an apparent success of the first placement. Comments such as "we had a very good rapport", "we had a lot of fun", "we got along very well on a lot of levels", "I had an incredibly positive relationship", "I could work well with him", strongly indicated the existence of a positive relationship. Simon, for instance, argued that he developed a close and friendly relationship with his mentor:

> I was really treated like one of the music staff on a professional and
> personal level. After concerts I was always invited out for burgers,
> drinks and cigars and a real effort was made to make me feel included
> and welcome.

Fung (2005) referred to the positive impact of mentors developing a collegial relationship with preservice teachers during practicum such as cultivating "an attitude of working together, providing room for experimentation and respecting personal orientations" (p. 53). As suggested in the above extract, Simon felt included as a result

of the friendly and personal relationship he experienced with his mentor. He noted that his mentor put a lot of trust in him and gave him freedom that consequently helped him "develop [his] own teaching style".

After the end of the first placement, the preservice teachers also showed genuine appreciation for the quality feedback they received from their mentors. Glenn (2006) asserted that effective mentors give constructive and honest feedback. He further argued honest feedback is most effective when the relationship between mentors and mentees is positive. As shown above, all preservice teachers felt quite pleased with their mentoring relationships and they further viewed the feedback component of their practicum favourably. Sara noted that her mentor was "generous with her feedback all the time"; Liz considered her mentor's feedback "very detailed"; and Eden stressed the importance of the feedback he received on his learning:

> If the quality of the feedback was not that good, or worse, if the person watching you did not have the knowledge pedagogically… then it would be up to me to try and learn, and I do not think you can do that, you cannot just teach yourself, you need to have those set of eyes watching you.

Although the first placement was highly positive for all preservice teachers, in the second placement only five of the seven participants reported that they had had another positive mentoring experience. Whereas these five participants reported receiving the same level of support and feedback as on their first placement, the other two preservice teachers described negative mentoring experiences. Anna lamented she "did not feel like [she] had a mentor at times", claiming she did not receive "the same sort of response or feedback or support" from her mentor as the first mentor in the first placement. Anna remarked:

> I think there were times when ... just times to make you feel welcomed were limited, or just not really shown, like for example, when I would finish a lesson, she would quickly disappear because she had gone…to have lunch, and I would be there packing up, just

finishing off, but in the last practicum my mentor was always be there waiting or watching or helping me to pack up.

What Anna experienced did not match to what her mentor teacher had stated before the practicum about her role. The mentor had stated that she should keep in mind that the preservice teachers "are on the outside of an environment" and thus she should "help them fit in, or find a place, and not feel depressed". She had also acknowledged that "if the relationship was not supportive, she [the preservice teacher] might hate teaching, and that is really destructive". Although Anna's mentor had viewed her role as a provider of support, Anna, "did not feel welcome" and supported at times. Anna thought her relationship with her mentor was "distant", suggesting a lack of personal connection with her mentor.

The presence of strong emotional support from the mentor is associated with better outcomes for the mentees such as feelings of self-worth (Blase, 2009). Conversely, relationships that are not close have little effect (**Blase, 2009**; **Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009**). This argument corresponded with Anna's contention that she "did not improve as much as the first prac" and that her confidence as a teacher did not increase by the end of the second placement.

For Eden, as well, the second mentoring was a partially negative experience. Eden maintained that his mentor did not value or recognize the skills he had developed over the course of the first placement and thus, he forgot the skills he had. Surprisingly, Eden's mentor had mentioned in her interview the importance of her "being open to different styles". She had remarked: "I do not think it is particularly successful for a mentor teacher to just impose their own teaching style on a prac student, because ultimately it is about finding your own teaching styles". She continued: "I would not want my prac student to become exactly the same as me, I want them to find their own way of teaching that is effective but suits them". Yet, Eden believed he "was not allowed to use the skills [he] had" and thus felt he "did not exist as a teacher": "it was almost like I was trying to become her [the mentor]". Consequently, he thought he achieved less than he did in the first placement: "I did not improve, in fact, in some ways I went backwards, and I realize now that that was because some of my beliefs that I had, I was not able to act on them".

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One of the tensions preservice teachers might feel during the practicum is the lack of freedom to try out teaching ideas (Patrick, 2013). Preservice teachers should be given the chance to explore their personal teaching identities (Rajuan et al., 2007) and their own teaching style (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Pajak, 2001). When they feel limited and perceive their ideas are not welcome and recognized, they engage in self-censoring to ensure positive assessment and a smooth ride (Phelan et al., 2006; Rorrison, 2005). As shown in the above extracts, Eden curbed his own personal skills and unintentionally adopted his mentor's teacher identity resulting in him feeling he did not exist as a teacher.

Conclusion

Aiming to contribute to the mentoring process and share their knowledge and experience, all mentor teachers in this study initially argued that their main role was to provide academic and emotional support. They also highly valued the importance of feedback and fostering a positive relationship with their mentees. The data gathered from the preservice teachers at the end of each placement suggested that most of the mentor teachers did fulfil their perceived roles. More specifically, 14 out of 16 mentor teachers developed strong relationships with their mentees, fully supported them, provided ongoing and detailed feedback and consequently surpassed their mentees' expectations. Thus, the findings indicated that the similarity between mentor teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use was considerable. This suggested when mentor teachers were intrinsically motivated to play a role in the mentoring process, they felt more committed to take on the main responsibilities they believed they had.

However, as the findings revealed two mentor teachers appeared to act against their espoused theories. Although these two mentors stated that they should offer full support and help their mentees develop their own teaching styles, their mentees felt unsupported and limited to try out their ideas, respectively.

There is no doubt that all mentor teachers in this study were well-intentioned and aimed to help their mentees flourish. Yet, it was possible that the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' different interpretations of their roles resulted in misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. For instance, there might have been substantial differences between the

kind of support the preservice teachers needed and the level of support the mentors could and were willing to offer. Therefore, mentor teachers are highly encouraged to have an open dialogue with their mentees prior to the practicum to discuss their expectations, wants and needs. Mentor teachers are also advised to revisit their own views and define their mentoring roles according to the needs of their mentees because if they do things blindly and that is not the needs of their mentee, they might have little impact.

Moreover, mentor teachers should continuously evaluate and reflect on their mentoring approaches to reduce any identified gaps between their espoused theories and theories-in-use. They could also gain a deeper understanding of their performance through their mentees' feedback. Unfortunately, due to power relations, often mentor teachers do not seek their mentees' ideas, feelings and experiences of the mentoring they receive. During the interviews with the mentor teachers in this study it was obvious that almost no mentor had ever asked their mentees' ideas and evaluation of the mentoring process. Some mentors had to look at the Thank-You cards their mentees had given them to report some of their feedback which revealed no information except the mentees' thankfulness. These mentors thus never knew how their mentees felt after finishing the practicum and how the mentees perceived their mentoring experience. Preservice teachers could be a valuable source of feedback for mentor teachers. They live every day of their practicum with their mentors and feel the impact of every single comment on their teacher-self. Mentor teachers could gain a different perspective on their mentoring by providing the mentee with the chance to share their ideas and contribute to an egalitarian conversation about the mentoring process.

Chapter Five

General Discussion

5. Introduction

This chapter summarizes and integrates the research findings. First, I will provide a summary of the main findings of each phase of the study presented in the papers discussed above. Second, I will focus on each preservice teacher; their experiences of their two placements and the mentoring they received to better examine their teacher identity development. Third, I will discuss the key finding of this research to address the main research question raised in this study. Forth I will look at the data collection tools used in this research to examine their benefits for research on teacher identity. Fifth, I will discuss the implications of this study and offer guidelines and new directions for future research. This section ends with a note on the limitations of the study.

5.1. General discussion

The outcome of my PhD research was presented in Chapter Four. It was mentioned that social constructivism was used as the theoretical framework in this study. Social constructivism proposes that ideas are constructed from experience and through social interactions (Kalina, 2009). In other words, knowledge is socially constructed in interactions individuals have with significant others (Johnson, 2003).

During the preservice teacher education course, the preservice teachers in this study started a process of meaning-making about themselves (Hung et al., 2011) through interacting with a significant other such as their mentor teacher. It is worth noting that the identity formation process in preservice teachers did not start as they began their course. As mentioned in Chapter Two, teacher identity is a dynamic process and constantly evolves. Likewise, the preservice teachers' teacher identity in this study was already influenced by some factors such as their prior experiences. However, what contributed significantly to this process was the experiences they gained through their interactions with their mentor teacher. As it was found in the first paper written based on the first round of interviews before the first placement, the preservice teachers started the program with fears and hopes. The first phase of the study aimed to delve more

deeply into the preservice teachers' teacher identity by investigating those fears, their expectations of the mentoring relationship and perceptions of a positive mentoring. The research questions addressed in this phase of the study included: (1) What are the key components of a good mentoring relationship from the perspective of preservice teachers? (2) What are the key components of a good mentoring relationship from the perspective of mentor teachers? (3) What metaphors do preservice teachers and mentor teachers use to describe the mentoring relationship?

It was found that emotional and academic support, an open line of communication and feedback were regarded as key elements of a positive mentoring relationship by both parties. There were small differences between the perceptions of the two groups. For example, the mentor teachers' assertions regarded the feedback element as the most significant factor but student teachers showed more concern for having emotional as well as academic support from their mentors. There was also considerable overlap in the metaphors the two groups used to reflect their perceptions of the mentoring relationships. Metaphors such as coaching, training, guiding were in keeping with participants' views on the importance of support. A key difference was shown in the participants' perceptions toward the impact of the mentoring relationships on student teachers' identity. Whereas the mentoring relationship was seen by the student teachers as a decisive factor in shaping their identity, only three mentor teachers regarded it as significant. This finding suggested mentor teachers' lack of appreciation of the importance of their role in developing their mentee's professional identity.

The questions addressed in the second phase of the study were: (1) What changes occurred in preservice teachers' professional identity after a four-week block practicum? (2) What factors did the participants identify as important in facilitating changes in their identity? (3) To what extent did the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during the first four-week block practicum contribute to development of preservice teachers' professional identity?

The findings from this phase of the study showed that minor changes started to happen in preservice teachers' teacher identity as they finished the first placement. Before the first placement, most of the preservice teachers lacked confidence, and a teacher voice, did not feel in control, and felt more like a student. However, the data from the second rounds of interviews and reflective journals indicated that all preservice teachers had

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undergone some changes in their teacher identity. Their confidence and teacher voice had grown and their vision of the teacher they wanted to be and their teacher roles had altered.

What contributed to these changes was the negotiation of feedback according to the preservice teachers participating in this research. Also it was found that the mentoring relationships were viewed as positive by almost all preservice teachers, which also significantly informed their teacher identity. The mentor teachers and mentees in this research were fully engaged in practices associated with effective mentoring relationships such as encouragement and support, developing personal and professional relationship, and open communication (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Izadinia, 2015a; Jacobi, 1991). As proposed by social constructivism, interactions between the preservice teachers and their mentor played a key role in construction of new knowledge, here development of their identity, as they received social and emotional support and were enabled to take risks. Given that all preservice teachers experienced positive and supportive mentoring relationships, they started to develop a stronger sense of teacher identity evident in their increased confidence and teacher voice.

The aim of the third phase of the study (i.e., third research paper) was to further examine the role of interactions between preservice teachers and mentor teachers to see how the constructed knowledge (i.e., teacher identity) take shape as the preservice teachers develop a new relationship with a new mentor. The questions addressed in this phase included: (1) How did preservice teachers characterize the mentoring relationship in the first and second practicum? (2) What changes occurred in the preservice teachers' professional identity following the second placement? (3) To what extent did mentor teachers in the two placements play a role in shaping the preservice teachers' teacher identity?

This part of research clearly showed the significant role of mentor teachers in construction of teacher identity in preservice teachers. It revealed that although social interactions between mentors and preservice teachers were important in construction of new knowledge (i.e., development of teacher identity), such interactions did not produce the same impact on preservice teachers. In other words, although, as social constructivism believes, ideas are constructed from experiences gained through

interactions with others (Kalina, 2009), the dynamics of that interaction is equally significant.

When preservice teachers enter their teacher education programs their teacher identity starts to develop more fully. If they experience positive relationships with their mentors, they will have a stronger sense of who they as a teacher and what kind of teacher they want to be. As the findings of this phase showed although mentor teachers did not create drastic changes in preservice teachers' professional identity, they positively or negatively informed it. When the participants experienced two positive mentoring relationships in which their expectations were met, they sensed a higher level of confidence to begin their teaching career. Moreover, positive emotions, a happier disposition, and an overall positive self-image were noticed among the participants in this category. Conversely, the confidence declined in other participants where the mentoring relationships changed for the worse and the expectations were not realized. They felt frustrated, not welcomed, and quite unhappy with their progress.

The next phase of the study intended to look at the metaphors the participants used to better examine their thinking and feelings regarding their mentoring experiences. The questions in this part of the research included: (1) What metaphors were used by mentor teachers and preservice teachers to describe the mentoring relationship? (2) What changes occurred in metaphors developed by the participants from the beginning to the end of the mentoring program? (3) What implications do the use of metaphors have for preservice teacher education? It was found that there were considerable overlaps between preservice teachers' and their mentors' metaphors at the outset of the program. The mentor teachers viewed their mentoring role either as cultivating a close and friendly relationship or providing guidance and support. Similarly, the preservice teachers used metaphors that had an element of support attached to them. The data gathered at the end of the two placements suggested that most of the mentor teachers retained the metaphors they had initially constructed because they thought the metaphors reflected their recent mentoring practice. However, changes were observed in metaphors used by some preservice teachers and mentors. Some mentors changed their metaphors because, they argued, the nature of their relationship with their mentee was different from what they had initially anticipated.

Similarly, preservice teachers who experienced a negative mentoring relationship constructed less positive metaphors (e.g., distant or driving examiner) at the end of their placement than their initial images. This phase of the study suggested that metaphors can serve as a window towards preservice teachers' real feelings, emotions and ideas and, as such, can be employed by mentor teachers and in preservice teacher education. Thus, mentor teachers were invited to encourage their mentees to share their mental images of the mentoring they would like to receive through metaphors. Such metaphors would help mentor teachers to correctly identify their mentees' needs and expectations and develop their mentoring practices based on such needs.

The last paper provided a reflection on the preservice teachers' ideas about their mentor teachers' mentoring practices to examine mentor teachers' espoused theories and theories-in-use. The questions posed for this part of the research included: (1) How did the mentor teachers define their roles and responsibilities toward their preservice teachers at the outset of the practicum? (2) How did the preservice teachers evaluate their mentors' practices after the practicum? (3) To what extent did mentor teachers' espoused theories match their theories-in-use?

All mentor teachers in this study initially argued that their main role was to provide academic and emotional support. They also highly valued the importance of feedback and fostering a positive relationship with their mentees. The data gathered from the preservice teachers at the end of each placement suggested that most of the mentor teachers did fulfil their perceived roles. 14 out of 16 mentor teachers developed strong relationships with their mentees, fully supported them, provided ongoing and detailed feedback and consequently surpassed their mentees' expectations. This suggested that when mentor teachers were intrinsically motivated to play a role in the mentoring process, they felt more committed to take on the main responsibilities they believed they had.

However, as the findings revealed two mentor teachers appeared to act against their espoused theories. Although these two mentors stated that they should offer full support and help their mentees develop their own teaching styles, their mentees felt unsupported and limited to try out their ideas, respectively. This might have happened due to misunderstanding between the kind of support the preservice teachers needed and the level of support the mentors could and were willing to offer.

This paper concluded by inviting mentor teachers to revisit their views and define their mentoring roles according to the needs of their mentees. It also suggested that mentor teachers continuously evaluate and reflect on their mentoring approaches to reduce any identified gaps between their espoused theories and theories-in-use.

5.2. Preservice teachers' teacher identity development

In this section, I will look at the preservice teachers' one-year journey of teacher identity formation. I will review their expectations as expressed by them before they started their mentoring experiences. Then, I will look at their mentoring experiences in their two placements and focus on their perceived changes in teacher identity to highlight the role of their mentoring relationships on their identity development.

Chelsey desired to have mentors who were so supportive that she could keep in touch with them even after the practicum. She wanted non-judgmental mentors so she could easily share and discuss her ideas. Her two mentors paid her enough attention and provided her with resources and support. Chelsey expressed that their relationships were based on mutual respect and professionalism. After the first placement that occurred in a low socioeconomic school, Chelsey appeared to find a more pragmatic and realistic view towards teaching. She observed that the challenges of being a teacher wear down teachers. She realized she would not want to teach anymore if she got to the stage where she was not enjoying it. At the end of the second placement, Chelsey developed a holistic view of education and considered her role to be both teaching and building positive relationships with students. Chelsey also experienced a boost in her confidence and mentioned that she developed her own teaching style and felt more comfortable exercising her authority. She regarded her discussions with her mentor and trying to work out what fitted well with her personality as important factors in finding her preferred teacher role. The metaphors of a guide and safety net used for her first and second mentors suggested that the mentors provided guidance and feedback and at the same time they let her try out her teaching ideas.

At the outset of the program, Linda used the metaphor of a parent figure to show her need for support and feeling comfortable in the new environment of practicum so she could discuss her questions openly. The two mentoring experiences Linda had were both very positive and she received the level of support she expected. She mentioned

that she felt emotionally supported by her mentors and the mentors were there for her all the time. They also trusted her and helped her build up her confidence and get over the discomfort she felt. Linda used the similar metaphors (i.e. friend and parent) to describe her relationship with both her mentors suggesting that the mentors met her expectations.

Liz desired for a reasonably close relationship with her mentor at the beginning of the program and expected her mentor to be like a guide. She wanted to feel comfortable and be open with her mentor so she could discuss and debate ideas. The metaphor of a guide Liz used for her two mentors suggested that her ideal mental image of a mentor closely matched the mentors she received. The two mentors offered her detailed feedback, let her debate and test different ideas freely and provided the chance for her to "step into that role of authority" in the class. Liz mentioned that she "got so much independence" and could see herself in an authoritative role. Very positive emotions and feelings were expressed by Liz after each placement such as "I feel blessed"; "he was extremely organized"; "he [the second mentor] was amazing"; "I was *really* lucky with both my pracs" and she acknowledged that she grew highly confident as a new teacher.

Sara had two positive mentoring experiences. At the outset of the program she mentioned that she needed a reasonable amount of support and did not want her mentor teacher to spoon-feed her. The two mentors Sara had were both very "fantastic"; they "genuinely cared" about her, and provided her with "detailed" and "excellent" feedback, and "incredible" support and encouragement. Sara felt "a strong sense of belonging" and she believed she "grew enormously". Use of metaphors of aunt and mother for the two mentors suggested that Sara had a close and friendly relationship with her mentors and felt emotionally supported and welcome. At the end of the program, Sara believed she had learned how to fake the confidence she needed as a teacher and developed useful teaching strategies and classroom management techniques, which could help her show more power as a teacher and be in control.

There was limited data about Alex given that he pulled out of research after the first placement. At the outset, he expressed that he needed constant encouragement from his mentors and also wanted them to be honest with him and frankly share their ideas. Although Alex mentioned in his reflective journal that his mentor has been of "outstanding support" to him and the mentor had been just what he needed, he still faced many challenges in the first placement resulting in him thinking "teaching is a

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very tough job". Changes observed in Alex's teacher identity were his perceived increase in confidence and a major change in his vision regarding the teaching job. At the end of the first placement, he mentioned that he did not think he could be a full-time teacher because he "would go crazy". He believed the way media (i.e. Alex's major) was taught within schools was "at times very boring". Also, the challenges that Alex faced in the short four-week block practicum, which he did not want to share in the interview, seemed to demotivate him to be a full-time teacher.

The observation checklists used to document the participants' teacher identity development suggested a gradual increase in their teacher voice, authority and confidence as they went through their two placements. For instance, they managed to maintain a stronger relationship with their students and used more effective classroom management techniques. The effective role of mentor teachers in development of teacher identity in the above mentioned participants was obvious from the notes taken from the debriefing sessions. I noticed that all the above mentioned participants' mentors provided very positive and detailed feedback and encouragement during the debriefing sessions. The notes included many affirmations such as, "You did very well", "the activity went really well", "you did exactly the right thing".

However, three participants experienced two different mentoring relationships in their first and second placements. Simon was nervous and scared going into his first placement. However, his first mentor who treated him like a colleague and gave him lots of freedom to initiate ideas and teaching methods made him "feel like a working teacher" and helped him "blend ideas together and present good lessons". Simon felt "included and welcome" in the first placement thanks to his first mentor academic and emotional support. He mentioned that he had an "extremely positive" mentoring experience with his mentor and the mentor "contributed immensely" to his success during the practicum by showing a lot of faith in him and valuing his ideas and expertise. The metaphor Simon used for his first mentoring was student-master relationship suggesting the amount of learning he gained in his first mentoring experience. Conversely, Simon argued that he did not have a mentor-mentee relationship with his second mentor in the second placement and did not consider his second mentor a good role model. Simon did not agree with his second mentor on her teaching styles that were "very traditional" and "completely wrong". Simon believed

the way the mentor interfered with his teaching to manage behaviour lowered his confidence and courage at times. Although the mentor was nice and friendly, Simon did not want to be like his mentor in the future.

Eden's first mentor validated and recognized Eden's prior experiences by encouraging him to "chip in" with his knowledge and contribute to the teaching. Eden's ideas and attempts were also highly praised by the mentor, contributing to his confidence and feeling more like a teacher. Moreover, the metaphor of a "big brother" used by Eden to describe his first mentoring relationship depicted a close and friendly bond with the first mentor. After the first placement in which Eden felt emotionally and academically supported by his mentor to try out his ideas and experiment in a safe place he felt ready to teach in the same school. However, Eden's second mentor did not give enough credit for his prior experiences and even encouraged him to forget them. Subsequently, Eden felt unable to implement the techniques and skills he had developed in the last placement. Eden's attempt to become like his mentor while feeling like a diminished teacher suggested his lack of opportunities to implement his ideas, resulting in him thinking he did not exist as a teacher. Lack of collegiality was also noted in the second mentoring with a mentor who was described as a "driving examiner" by Eden. As a result the second mentoring experiences Eden had was regarded as "partially negative" by him and he felt he did not improve much.

Anna also experienced distinct relationships with her two mentors. Anna, scared and lacking in confidence at the beginning and hoping to develop an open relationship with the mentor and have his support, received a mentor, in the first placement, who held her hands throughout the process so she could exercise her power and authority in the classroom and feel more like a teacher. The first mentor provided ongoing support, was always there for her, and built a strong rapport with her. Anna's feeling more like a teacher at the end of the first placement, developing confidence and a sense of authority suggested a successful mentoring relationship. However, the relationships that are not close have little effect Blase, 2009; Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009). This was observed in Anna where she felt she did not improve much and her confidence declined as she experienced a "distant" relationship with her second mentor. Anna considered her second placement "incomplete" as she felt she did not have a mentor a times. What adds support to Anna's observation were the notes taken from Anna's solo teaching. Anna

was mainly on her own during her teaching time, while the mentor was either deeply involved in her own work or not present in the classroom. The debriefing sessions following Anna's teaching were also very brief, only a few minutes, and the observation notes stating "how would it be possible to comment on her teaching when you were not present in the classroom?" validated Anna's feelings of being unsupported.

5.3. Key research question addressed in this research

The key research question raised in this research was:

- How does the relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers influence preservice teachers' professional identities during a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education-Secondary (GDE-S) program?

Practicum is full of opportunities for growth and development, and at the same time full of moments of overwhelming emotions, stress and doubts. The findings of this research drew attention to the powerful role of mentor teachers to facilitate or inhibit the process of learning to teach for preservice teachers. The findings of the research indicated that four participants of this study (i.e. Sara, Linda, Liz, and Chelsey) transformed into confident, motivated and inspired beginning teachers after working with mentors who provided continues feedback, encouragement and academic and emotional support. They gradually grew and gained increasing confidence in their teaching, so much so that they felt ready to teach even after the short four-week placement. The positive emotions experienced by these participants such as feeling "more like a teacher", being "lucky", "thankful", and "inspired" by their mentors were indicative of their sense of self-satisfaction and achievement. Conversely, three participants (i.e. Eden, Simon and Anna) believed they "did not improve", "went backward", "lost confidence" and "did not exist as a teacher" as they worked with mentors who mainly played the role of an assessor, did not establish a close bond with them and were not a good role model. Therefore, this research proposes that mentor teachers have a powerful role in preservice teachers' professional identity development and their mentoring styles do

crease changes in the way preservice teachers perceive their abilities and potential for being a teacher.

5.4. Research methods used in this study

As discussed in Chapter 3, Methodology, the majority of research studies on preservice teachers' teacher identity used interviews as the main data collection tools. However, there were a few studies which drew upon reflective journals or observations to collect data. In this research, I used the three of data tools to examine changes in preservice teachers' teacher identity. I found that use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews was an effective data collection method as they provided an opportunity to discuss the questions in detail with participants, and I had a chance to ask for further elaborations and delve more deeply into the preservice teachers' experiences and emotions. However, use of interviews was costly given that I had to pay for transcription of data. Thus, it might not be considered as a suitable tool for those who have limited budget. In addition, I asked the participants to keep reflective journals and I found that reflective journals were also very effective tools because they allowed the participants to write and share their feelings and ideas when they had time. Use of observations was also very useful although arranging a suitable time with both mentors and preservice teachers was quite challenging at times. I would recommend researchers to benefit from the three data collection tools while keeping in mind the limitations of each.

5.5. Implications and recommendations for future research

I believe mentor teachers should be effectively trained for their mentoring role and appreciate their unique contributions to identity construction of preservice teachers. Russell and Russell (2011) underscored the necessity of mentor training and argued that even though the teachers know their job, this does not mean they know how to mentor effectively. Schwille (2008) and He (2009), similarly, considered designing, implementing and evaluating mentor training programs critical to the development of

preservice teachers. Pitton (2006) and Wong (2005) added that the mentoring relationships are most effective when mentors are trained for their roles.

Thus, as Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) commented "all professional work is complex and demanding. Poor professional judgment can result in a patient's death, buildings falling down, or people giving up on their own learning" (p.50). In other words, if mentor teachers are ill-prepared for their role and lack adequate skills in mentoring, this can negatively impact their preservice teachers' professional development (Russell & Russell, 2011). Conversely, mentor teachers who have adequate preparation are better able to help their preservice teachers with classroom management, problem solving, and lesson planning (Evertson & Smithey, 2000). In addition, mentor teachers equally benefit from training programs as well. Researchers (Carter & Francis, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Kelly, Beck, & Thomas, 1992; Pitton, 2006; Schulz, 1995) refer to the benefits of mentor training for mentors including:

- Encouraging reflection on one's own practices and knowledge
- Developing specific skills such as listening, observing and counselling
- Renewing and revitalizing teachers; and
- Enhancing teachers' self-esteem and self-confidence

Given the significance of training programs for mentors, recently there has been a few research studies on the design and implementation of such programs; for example, Russell and Russell (2011) designed a two-day workshop for nine mentor teachers in the US and provided strategies for effective mentoring and building positive relationships. The participants in their study asserted that the training program "gave them an opportunity to express their concerns about mentoring student interns, raised their awareness of the importance of the mentoring relationships, and developed their mentoring skills" (p.13). In a study conducted in Australia, Beutel and Spooner-Lane (2009) implemented a mentoring development program to build mentoring capacities in experienced teachers. Their program comprised four Modules completed during two consecutive days and required the participants to reflect on material presented and interpret the research in relation to their own professional context. The findings of this study showed that the mentors' involvement in the program raised their awareness of

"(1) how their actions influenced the mentoring relationship, and (2) the importance of taking the time to develop strong collegial relationships with their mentees" (p. 358).

Despite research on mentoring, researchers believe mentors often do not receive formal training (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Gershenfeld, 2014; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Russell & Russell, 2011) and less attention is focused on developing and implementing mentor preparation programs. As a result, the mentoring that preservice teachers encounter is often considered hit or miss (Russell & Russell, 2011) which might be a factor contributing to teacher attrition.

In some states in Australia such as NSW, mentor preparation programs have been already designed and incorporated into teacher education programs. However, in WA such programs seem to be still lacking. The informal conversations with a few mentor teachers of this study suggested that they had not received any training before they started their mentoring role. Also, there seemed to be no criteria for screening and recruiting mentor teachers and all teachers who were willing to mentor preservice teachers were welcome to join in regardless of their teaching and mentoring experiences. This research proposes that future research examine the contributions of a comprehensive mentor training program to the professional development of mentor teachers as well as preservice teachers in Australia. It is recommended that researchers use a mixed-methods approach to provide both quantitative and qualitative data on mentoring training programs. Use of online surveys administered to teacher education office across Australia would provide statistical data on current rules and criteria for the recruitment of mentor teachers and the extent to which teacher education programs currently incorporate mentor trainings into their programs. Further research questions to consider are: (1) To what extent do teacher education programs in Australia offer mentor trainings? (2) What percentage of mentor teachers receive training before they start their mentoring roles? (3) Which states currently have/do not have mentor preparation programs? (3) What are the reasons for lack of mentor training in some states?

The data collected from the surveys can be used to look at current mentor training programs and examine their effectiveness. Interviews with mentor teachers who have received training before they started their mentoring roles could provide rich data on the effectiveness of current mentor training programs. Further research questions include:

(1) What are the main features/components of current mentor training programs? (2) How effective are training programs for mentor teachers? (3) What are the perceived changes in mentor teachers' perceptions and understanding of their role after receiving the training? (4) What is lacking in current mentor training programs from mentor teachers' perspectives? (5) Is there any correlation between mentor training and mentors' readiness for their mentoring roles?

The findings from the interviews would be useful in designing and implementing comprehensive and innovative mentor training programs to address present gaps. Researchers are suggested to select a group of school teachers to investigate the effectiveness of a comprehensive and innovative mentor training program on their professional development. Researchers are recommended to interview the participants before and after the implementation of the mentoring program and document changes in their professional practices. The questions addressed for interviews could include: How ready do you think you are to mentor preservice teachers? What are some of the characteristics of an effective mentor? What are the key components of a successful mentoring relationship? The questions in the second round of interviews conducted after the training could include: How do you define your role as a mentor teacher at this stage? What are the most significant learning outcomes from the training program? Do you think this program has better prepared you to become an effective mentor? The findings of these interviews would provide reliable data on the effectiveness of the designed mentor training program which can be incorporated in all teacher education programs across Australia.

The importance of mentor training to professional development of preservice teachers cannot be overemphasised. As mentioned above, the creation of a new generation of teachers who have a strong sense of who they are as teachers and are passionate and excited about their teaching role hinges upon effective mentor teachers who know how to instil a sense of self-confidence in their preservice teachers and construct their teacher identity. In other words, one way to increase teacher retention is to provide positive and professional mentoring experiences for all preservice teachers during teacher education and this cannot be achieved unless mentor teachers are effectively trained and are familiar with key components of their mentoring role. It is hoped by

designing mentor training program in Australia we have a higher level of teacher retention.

5.6. Limitations of the study

In the papers presented above, several limitations of the study were discussed. In this section, I will highlight the limitations again. First, there are a number of factors at play to inform preservice teachers' identity formation in a learning community like the practicum. While the significance of all these factors, including the role of other members of the community and the school context is acknowledged, the present research only considered the impact of the mentoring relationships on the preservice teachers' identity formation. Therefore, some changes in preservice teacher identity might have occurred due to other external factors, which were not examined in this research.

Second, given that the preservice teachers participating in this research were very busy with their course, the researcher could not ask them to check the conclusion of the study for verification. However, the researcher tried to enhance the credibility of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) through other triangulation strategies (Denzin, 1989) such as collecting the data from different sources (preservice teachers and mentor teachers), time (at the beginning and end of each placement) and methods (interviews, observations, reflective journals).

5.7. Conclusion

This research makes an original contribution to the knowledge of preservice teachers' identity by highlighting the considerable role of mentor teachers to their identity formation process. It was discussed in the literature that little research was conducted on the role of mentor teachers in creating changes in preservice teachers' identity. This research attempted to address this gap by examining changes in preservice teachers' teacher identity during their one-year teacher education course. Based on the findings,

this research proposed that mentor teachers do create changes, however small, in aspects of preservice teachers' teacher identity such as confidence and voice. The quality of interactions between mentors and preservice teachers is an important issue to consider. In other words, it is only through maintaining a supportive and positive relationship with preservice teachers that they can develop a stronger sense of teacher identity. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Four, having a teacher voice and feeling confident as a teacher (which are two aspects of teacher identity, Izadinia 2013) correlate with teacher retention. Thus, this research further argued that in order to maximise retention we need confident preservice teachers who feel good about themselves, and this can be achieved if we have efficient mentor teachers.

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Appendix A

A review of research on student teachers' professional identity

Mahsa Izadinia*
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

This article presents a review of 29 empirical studies to identify the main foci of research on student teachers' identity, the methodologies used and their major findings. The reviewed studies were found to investigate four broad factors: the contribution of: (1) reflective activities, (2) learning communities, (3) context and (4) (prior) experiences. Reflective practices and interviews were found to be mainly used by researchers as data collection tools and the findings were mainly reported to be changes in components of student teachers' identity, including their cognitive knowledge, sense of agency and voice. Questions raised in this review and suggestions for further research are discussed.

Keywords: *teacher identity; student teachers' identity; teacher education programme*

1. Background

As Wenger (1998) suggests, we are always involved in becoming a certain person. The dreams we have about the type of person we want to become influence all dimensions of our lives: the job we look for, the place we settle in, the people we interact with and even our subsequent dreams. But, knowing what we want and who we dream to become impinges on knowing who we are and where we are at the moment. In other words, it is our identity that helps us with setting goals and shows us the route to take. Without making sense of our identities, we are not able to achieve what we want effectively as we are not clear as to where we are headed.

Teacher identity, as one type of identity, has been variously defined (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). Some have defined it as the conceptualization, conscious or not, teachers have of themselves (Murphey, 1998; Singh & Richards, 2006) or as 'a certain "kind of person" in a given context' (Gee, 2000, p. 99). Others like Hoffman-Kipp (2008) believe teacher identity is 'the intersection of personal,

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*No 48, Mehr Nejad Alley, East 46 Metri, Narmak, Tehran, Iran. Email: Mizadiniya2006@yahoo.com

duration of the study and major findings. This process facilitated systematic comparative analysis of texts. Analysis of the content of the 29 studies was conducted at three levels. Level 1 analysis determined the specific focus(es) of each study. The systematic comparative analysis showed researchers in the 29 studies mainly focused on STs and the role of: (1) Reflective activities (in 11 studies), (2) Learning communities (5 studies), (3) Context (8 studies) and (4) (Prior) Experiences (5 studies). However, some overlaps were noticed across the studies, which made the categorization more complicated at certain stages. For example, Samuel and Stephens (2000), which was classified into the category of Context, appeared to partially belong to (Prior) Experiences at the same time. Consequently, it was decided that the major emphases in each study form the basis for grouping. Therefore, given that the major focus of the study in the above example was on Context and not Prior Experiences, this study was grouped under Context. Level 2 analysis considered the methodologies utilized in each study. For instance, the main data collection tools, theoretical frameworks, duration of the data collection and so on were collated and compared. Finally, at level 3 analysis, the reported outcomes in each study were subjected to a systematic analysis to identify how changes in ST identity after the implementation of certain variables were interpreted and discussed by the researchers.

2.2.   Limitations

One limitation of the review arises from the focus of some studies, which were not specifically on STs' identity. To be more specific, in some articles (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Schepens *et al.*, 2009) STs' identity was not the main focus of the research, rather, it was investigated among other variables. I included these studies as well to add to the reviewed studies and treated them similarly. In addition, there might be other studies in other languages than English that I did not include in the present review.

3.   Findings and discussion

3.1.   Main focuses of the studies

3.1.1. Reflective activities. Use of reflective practices in professional activities is foregrounded by Schön (1983) as a way of questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and teaching practices stabilized in early stages of a teacher's career. In the literature on STs' identity, reflection is widely considered as a critical process in construction of teacher professional identity (Korthagen, 2004; Sutherland *et al.*, 2010) and a means by which STs 'construct their own learning through an interaction among their beliefs, their prior knowledge and their experiences' (Lin *et al.*, 1999, p.5). As Table 1 shows, researchers in this group drew upon different reflective activities such as reflection cycles/forums (Webb, 2005; Maclean & White, 2007; Sutherland *et al.*, 2010), reflective writings/journals (Walkington, 2005;

Table 1.   Chronological overview of the studies on STs' identity development and their involvement in reflective activities

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
1. Weber and Mitchell (1996) Canada	Drawings done by STs, reflective journal	No mention	Brought to light nuances and ambivalences in teaching identities that might otherwise remain hidden
2. Antonek *et al.* (1997) USA	STs' portfolios	During the 2nd semester of the professional year programme	Through anchored reflection mediated by the portfolios STs constructed a professional identity
3. Estola (2003) Finland	Autobiographical stories	During 3 narrative-biographical courses	Autobiographical stories were a powerful tool for making the moral dimensions of teachers' identities visible
4. Webb (2005) Australia	Two cycles of reflective meetings	12 weeks	The reflective research group was a powerful process for debriefing, trying out ideas and finding commonality
5. Walkington (2005) Australia	A record of STs' thoughts, perceptions of their motivation for enrolling in the program and beliefs about what they would learn	1 semester	STs' reflection affected the dynamics of their learning to teach and the establishment of their identity as a teacher
6. Cattley (2007) Australia	Reflective writing logs	During 8-week practicum block	Writing a reflective log contributed to the development of their identity as a teacher
7. Maclean and White (2007) Australia	Video reflection cycles	The second year of a 2-year teacher education	Identities of STs were shaped by joint reflection on videos of their own teaching
8. Poulou (2007) Greece	Reflective journals	At the end of 8th semester of teaching practice	STs engaged in moral, ethical and pedagogical considerations, circling through patterns of cognition and affection, professional identity, desires, motivation
9. Vavrus (2009) USA	Autoethnographic narratives	3-week period	Demonstrated varying degrees of critical consciousness

Table 1. (*Continued*)

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
10. Chitpin and Simon (2009) Canada	Interviews, classroom discussions, STs' reflections on their portfolios	8 months	Cyclically reflected on taken-for-granted assumptions, articulated growth and gained perspectives
11. Sutherland *et al.* (2010) Australia	Online-seminar groups/ Reading group forums	12 weeks	Changes in STs' postings from Week 2 to Week 10 were along two dimensions: cognitive process and professional stance

Cattley, 2007; Poulou, 2007), autoethnographies (Estola, 2003; Vavrus, 2009), portfolios (Antonek *et al.*, 1997; Chitpin & Simon, 2009) and drawings (Weber & Mitchell, 1996) to examine the process of identity development in STs.

All studies suggest that having STs reflect upon their own values, beliefs, feelings and teaching practices and experiences helps shape their professional identity. Among these studies are those of Webb (2005), Maclean and White (2007) and Sutherland *et al.* (2010), which used reflective cycles/forums as a reflective tool. Maclean and White (2007) examined the development of four STs' professional identity through an action reflection cycle in which they reflected on their own filmed teaching experiences. Through video recordings of their teaching practices and reflective sessions, the researchers documented changes in STs' pedagogical practices such as use of professional teacher language (e.g. we started off with, we talked about, we were basically recapping). Webb (2005) also used collaborative reflective cycles in which STs analyzed their attitudes, former actions and feelings to develop new strategies. Through reflection cycles the participants identified themes significant to their identity including the influence of teacher education and the secondary-school context. Similarly, Sutherland *et al.* (2010) examined the development of STs' perceptions of themselves as teachers through analysis of online learning discussion forums and observed the emergence of 'teacher voice' in participants.

The impact of reflective practices is further examined by another approach, namely reflective writings/journals by Walkington (2005), Cattley (2007) and Poulou (2007). Cattley (2007) investigated the changes in identities of eight STs who were required to reflect on their answers to and observations of different elements of teaching environments like daily classroom practices, staffroom activities and parent liaison. Cattley discussed five elements considered as effective by STs in developing their professional identity including their relationships with others, particularly other staff and parents, awareness of wider social and political world and awareness of the need to support their colleagues. Foregrounding the importance

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of reflection on the development of STs' functional role, Walkington (2005) similarly argued how STs' reflection on their perceptions and beliefs informed their teacher identity.

Other approaches like use of portfolios (Antonek *et al.*, 1997; Chitpin & Simon, 2009) and drawings (Weber & Mitchell, 1996) were also adopted by researchers as reflective tools and they similarly found outcomes such as constructing the self as an educator, building confidence as a result of using reflective portfolios (Antonek *et al.*, 1997), growth in terms of questioning taken-for-granted habits or views (Chitpin & Simon, 2009) and articulating their unexamined ambivalences and tensions around their identity and work as teachers (Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

The above research studies unanimously show that use of reflective activities in teacher education programmes bring about positive changes in STs' self-knowledge, cognitive and emotional selves, sense of agency, voice, confidence as a teacher and self-dependency. However, neither negative outcomes of reflective practices nor any challenges presented by these practices in the process of identity formation are reported in these studies.

3.1.2.   Learning communities. Wenger (1998) argues that individuals develop an identity as they become a valid member of a community of practice where learning happens in collaboration with others and through activities situated in that learning community. The studies categorized in this group generally rely on Wenger's (1998) and Gee's (1999) conceptualizations of identity as actualized through discourses and communities of practice and they show positive outcomes of STs' involvement in different types of learning communities.

As depicted in Table 2, Franzak (2002) reported changes in a ST's confidence, independence and commitment to the profession as a result of her participation in a critical friends group (CFG) in which they would examine teaching strategies, conduct peer observations and analyze evidence of their students' growth. Franzak concluded that the collaborative and transformative nature of CFG provided an opportunity for continuous renegotiation of identity, where the participants' reflection on their teaching practices led to changes in their practices. Similarly, Assaf (2005) explored the contributions of a reading specialization programme to the development of a ST's professional identity. The reading specialization programme required students to, for instance, participate in classroom-based internships and write personal and professional reflections about their field-based teaching. Findings reinforced the importance of involvement in learning communities for development of STs' professional identity, which, in this study, manifested itself in changes in the participant's instructional choices as a teacher and voicing feelings and experiences.

Similar to Seidl and Conley (2009), who documented changes in STs' awareness and critical consciousness as a result of a collaborative enquiry project, Trent (2010) and Farnsworth (2010) reported changes in participants' beliefs about teaching at the end of an action research project and a community-based learning

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Table 2. Chronological overview of the studies on student teachers' identity development and their involvement in learning communities

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
1. Franzak (2002) USA	Interviews, use of portfolio and reflective writings, observation of STs' professional activities	Final semester of teacher education programme	Formal collaborative practice could enhance the STs' conception of the profession as well as function as a psychological safety net
2. Assaf (2005) USA	Observation from class meetings and tutoring, interviews, reflective research journal, web-based portfolio	3 semesters	Negotiating multiple discourses within a learning community influenced ST's instructional decisions and fashioned her identity
3. Seidl and Conley (2009)USA	STs' narratives	1 year	STs developed more critical insight around cultural particularity, structural inequality, and the politics of identity and they started to see implications for their teaching
4. Trent (2010) Hong Kong	Interview	1 year	Action research project played a role in changing STs' beliefs about educational research and its relationship to teaching and learning
5. Farnsworth (2010)UK	Narrative-focused interviews, ethnographic data on school context	No mention	Community-based learning offered a potentially new set of resources for STs' engaging in identity negotiation. It could allow for engagement with an aspect of identity that is typically overshadowed by group-affinity identities

group, respectively. All these studies signify the importance of creating an atmosphere of collaboration and reflection in learning communities and its impact on construction of STs' professional identity.

3.1.3. Context. Literature reveals that professional identity is shaped through interaction with others and the environment (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Korthagen, 2004). In other words, as activity theory proposes, human development, in this case construction of teacher identity, happens in social settings and as a function of social practices involved in those contexts (Smagorinsky, 1995; Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004). Several studies (see Table 3 below) investigate changes in STs' professional identity as a result of contextual factors and reveal their significant roles in development of teacher identity.

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Table 3.　Chronological overview of the studies on student teachers' identity development and role of context

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
1. Samuel and Stephens (2000) South Africa	Reflective written and oral accounts of STs' experiences, reflective journals, researchers' observations of lessons taught, focus group interviews	1 year	Tensions existed between the hopes and ambitions that individuals had for themselves and what they felt they could achieve as a teacher. Similarly, experiences that STs had as school children influenced the formation of their identity as a teacher-in-training
2. Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004) USA	Interviews, concept map activities, artefacts	No mention	ST's student teaching experience allowed her to grow neither toward her own preferred goals nor toward her associate teacher's as there were tensions that affected her identity work as a teacher
3. Larson and Phillips (2005) USA	Meetings between the teacher educators/researchers and ST, e-mail communications, researchers' reflective journals, observation	5 months	Tensions between two competing and authoritative discourses created spaces of resistance and change
4. Findlay (2006) UK	In-depth interviews with teachers and their mentors, narratives	No mention	Tensions between STs' aspirations and the reality of school life were observed
5. Flores and Day (2006) Portugal	Semi-structured interviews, questionnaire, a short essay	2 years	The influence of workplace (negative or positive) played a key role in (re)shaping teachers' understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their professional learning and reconstructing their professional identities
6. Liu and Fisher (2006) UK	Semi-structured interview, questionnaire and end-of-course self-reflection report	A 9-month, 3-term period	Changes in conception of STs' classroom performance and in their teacher identity over the course were observed
7. Schepens *et al.* (2009) Belgium	Questionnaire	No mention	Personality traits as well as the motivation to start the programme were the best predictor of three product variables: self-efficacy, teaching commitment and professional orientation

(Continued)

Table 3. (*Continued*)

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
8. Lamote and Engels (2010) Belgium	Questionnaire	In the context of a 3-year teaching programme	Practical experience with classroom teaching caused a shift: STs focused less on the subject matter, on maintaining order in the classroom, on the long-term educational qualification targets and self-efficacy decreased

Researchers argue that STs undergo positive and negative changes in their perceptions of and attitudes toward different aspects of their teaching profession as they go through their teaching experiences. These changes are to some extent attributable to contextual factors. For instance, in Lamote and Engels's (2010) three-year study changes in indicators of STs' professional identity, namely professional orientation, task orientation, self-efficacy and commitment to teaching, were investigated and significant changes were reported in some. The researchers suggest different reasons for the observed changes such as developing new values and insights, collecting new information on their abilities and getting acquainted with obligations and practices in the field.

Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004) and Larson and Phillips (2005) discuss ideological conflict and tension between STs' teacher education programmes and their student teaching sites. These two case studies, each conducted with one female ST, report changes in STs' identities as they moved from one context to another. For instance, Smagorinsky *et al.* (2004) observed conflicts between the constructivist nature of a university programme and a traditional school context where the ST completed her practicum. They maintained that the mimetic approach (i.e., learning how to teach by imitating teachers' methods) and the strict guidance of the mentor teacher provided little room for the ST's growth and did not enable her to use the constructive tool kit she had learned. Likewise, in Larson and Phillip's (2005) study, the authoritative nature of a scripted reading programme was found to interfere and collide with the comprehensive reading instruction of the university. Despite the tensions the two STs experienced, these studies concluded that they developed resistance and a sense of agency at their sites of conflict and the tensions appeared to benefit the STs in their development as teachers.

Findlay (2006) also verifies the results of the above studies by exploring the impact of both learning factors (e.g. confidence, commitment, feedback and support) and context factors (e.g. allocation and structure of work and encounters and relationships with people at work) on identity development of five newly qualified teachers. She observed that the transition from the semi-protected environment of teacher training programmes to school environments where student teachers received no critical feedback or praise had a significant influence on the STs'

identities. Considering tensions as a factor in creating agency and resistance, Findlay (2006) similarly refers to the existence of some tensions between these settings that Samuel and Stephens (2000) regard as 'tensions between the hopes and ambitions that individuals have for *themselves* and what they feel they can achieve as a teacher' (p. 477, italics in original). These researchers also unanimously contend that contextual factors play an important role in the construction of STs' identities.

3.1.4. (Prior) experiences. Five studies emphasize the significance of prior learning and experiences on STs' professional identity construction (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Olsen, 2008; Andersson & Hellberg, 2009; Cook, 2009; Daly, 2009). As Table 4 shows, they suggest that values, beliefs and prior learning and experiences that STs bring with them into their teacher education programmes play a considerable part in shaping their classroom practices and identity and, thus, teacher education programmes should recognize STs' prior experiences and learning.

Olsen (2008) investigated the impact of STs' reasons for entering the programme on their identity and professional development. Referring to gender and perceived personal compatibility with the job of teaching as two major reasons for entry, Olsen (2008) maintains that 'a teacher's reasons for entry bridge *prior events and experiences* with the kind of *teacher one is becoming*' (p. 36, italics in original). Therefore, he encourages teacher educators to become familiar with their STs' reasons for entry and make teacher identity visible to novice teachers so 'they can learn to identify and adjust what (and how) they learn from their pasts' (p. 37). A similar suggestion is provided by Akyeampong and Stephens (2002), who explored background characteristics, experiences, beliefs and expectations of a group of STs. They argue that STs' images and understanding of teaching and teachers 'need to be made more explicit and given voice in the training process, so as to promote deeper reflection on professional knowledge and pedagogical classroom practice, which can then lead to a personalised understanding of teaching' (p. 273).

Andersson and Hellberg (2009) interviewed a group of STs to explore what influence their prior experiences as childminders had on their trajectories. They found that their prior learning and experiences made positive contributions to shifting their identities and their trajectory into university student. Focusing on field experiences of a group of first-year English teachers, Cook (2009) interviewed them at the end of their first year and documented commonalities in their experiences including 'former teachers' influences on their teacher personae, understanding how and why to set boundaries with students and demonstrating resilience and resolve in their face of multiple challenges' (p. 274). Cook argues that experiences act as learning opportunities for new teachers. Through reflecting on their experiences, STs can recognize sites of dissonance, manage the disequilibrium of their first teaching experience and create a site of struggle, growth and new understanding which seems to support Dewey's (1938) argument that 'we do not learn from experiences. We learn from reflecting on experience' (p. 78).

Table 4.   Chronological overview of the studies on student teachers' identity development and role of their prior experiences

Author, year and context	Main data collection tools	Duration of study	Major findings
1. Akyeampong and Stephens (2002) Ghana	Questionnaire, autobiography of family life and schooling experiences, focus group interview	No mention	STs come to training with rich and varied images of teachers, teaching and the profession
2. Olsen (2008) USA	Semi-structured interviews, teaching artifacts, documents about the teacher education program	During their 1st teaching year	A ST's reasons for entry into the profession bridge prior events and experiences with the kind of teacher one is becoming
3. Andersson and Hellberg (2009) Sweden	Semi-structured interviews	At the end of the 1st year of their teacher education	Prior experiences and learning were given implicit and indirect recognition in teacher education programs
4. Cook (2009) USA	Three semi-structured interviews	At the end of their 1st year of teaching	By reflecting on their experience, the teachers in this study were able to recognize sites of dissonance and how they made meaning of that dissonance
5. Daly (2009) New Zealand	Semi-structured interviews	Before the completion of an ALTE paper, immediately after completion, at 6 months, 12 months and 18 months into their role as a qualified teacher	STs' conception of what they thought it meant to be an additional language teacher developed significantly from before the ALTE paper to immediately after its completion

The findings from the above studies provide teacher education programmes with concrete evidence of the important contributions of each of these determining factors to development of STs' professional identity.

3.2.   *Methodologies used by researchers*

The majority of the reviewed studies were small-scale and qualitative and the length of data collection ranged from three weeks to four years. Although there appeared to be significant differences between the studies in terms of their duration, no obvious distinction was found between the general findings as a result of the length of data collection. In other words, similar positive outcomes were

observed across the studies in the same category and with the same approach regardless of their duration. For instance, considerable positive changes were noted in STs' identity after the implementation of reflective practices even after a three-week or eight-week programme.

Findings also revealed that reflective practices such as reflection cycles/meetings, autobiographies, narratives and reflective portfolios were mainly used by researchers as data collection tools to document the development of STs' identity. Reflective practices were used as the main data collection tool both in studies that investigated the contribution of the very reflective practices to STs' identity and in those that measured the effects of other variables. This shows that reflective activities are highly effective tools to study identity formation in STs and can clearly illustrate the process of identity formation in STs. Semi-structured interviews were also found to be widely utilized by researchers. In most of the reviewed studies interviews were accompanied by reflective journals, which together appeared to adequately reflect the changes made to STs' identity. Questionnaires were made use of only in six studies, which were mostly longitudinal and large-scale.

Although the majority of the reviewed studies were qualitative, observation was drawn upon in five studies suggesting lack of due attention to this data collection tool. As Wenger (1998) suggests, there is a close connection between identity and practice and 'how teachers teach is in direct dialog with who they are' (Cook, 2009, p. 275). Changes in a teacher's identity manifest themselves in changes in his/her teaching practices and behavior. However, as the analysis showed, five studies (Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Franzak, 2002; Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004; Assaf, 2005; Larson & Phillips, 2005;) used classroom observation among their data collection tools. In the rest of the studies changes in STs' identity were alluded to in terms of STs' own perception of such changes reported in their reflective journals or interviews. This suggests the difficulty of using classroom observation as a data collection tool by researchers in comparison with other methods. For instance, STs might feel alarmed and uncomfortable being observed by researchers during their practicum, which makes use of observations less practical and common.

The reviewed studies were also analyzed for their theoretical frameworks. In 13 out of 29 studies, no explicit references were made to any theoretical frameworks. In the other 16 studies, different theories were drawn upon to explore professional identity in STs. For instance, four studies (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004; Assaf, 2005; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Farnsworth, 2010) used theories foregrounding the importance of social settings and social interactions in understanding identity such as activity theory and socio-cultural discursive approaches. Use of critical theories and critical pedagogy in combination with other theories was observed in three studies (Olsen, 2008; Andersson & Hellberg, 2009; Vavrus, 2009) and in two studies a narrative-storied epistemological framework was mentioned as a framework. No other commonalities were found among the remaining seven studies. However, it was observed that the majority of the 16 studies used theories with a social focus either as the sole framework or in combination with others. These

theories consider involvement in social communities as a determining factor in reproducing and developing identity. One such theory is activity theory, which is of particular significance to identity formation. According to Barab *et al.* (2002), the focus of activity theory is on how participants transform objects and how the components of a system, actor (participant) or actors (subgroups) and the acted on (object) as well as the dynamic relations between them, mediate this transformation. It is the sum of these components, they believe, and the tensions among them that impact the types of transformations a participant can have on an object. The social orientation observed in this and other theoretical frameworks used in the reviewed studies suggests that researchers consider the process of identity construction a social phenomenon that is largely shaped and understood in light of social factors.

3.3.   *Major findings in student teachers' identity*

Looking across the studies, there seems to be a sole reliance on reporting positive outcomes. In other words, most of the reviewed studies failed to describe negative findings of and challenges in research on ST identity. Only in three studies (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Findlay, 2006) did the researchers discuss tensions STs experienced during the programme. Presenting an idealized picture of findings and leaving the challenges and undesirable outcomes out tend to lead readers to conclude that identity construction in STs is a largely simple and straightforward process. A long-term consequence of the overly positive and simple account of identity formation presented in these studies is teacher educators' and policy makers' failure to recognize the challenges and complexities involved in STs' identity formation. As a result, the efficacy of teacher education in facilitating and guiding the process of identity construction will be minimized.

In response to the call for identifying how changes in identity are characterized and what happens in shifting from one identity to another (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), I specifically looked for the main changes in STs' identity and major outcomes as reported in the reviewed studies. It was found that instead of explicitly exploring a construct called 'teacher identity', the researchers had mainly reported changes in STs' cognitive knowledge, sense of agency, self-awareness, teacher voice, confidence and their relationship with colleagues, pupils and parents. Given that teacher identity has remained an elusive construct, and its development process does not seem to be easily identifiable, regarding these variables and their interconnections as constituting teacher identity contributes to a better understanding of its nature. Therefore, these variables can be legitimately considered as the interrelated components of teacher identity. In other words, when we talk about changes in teachers' identity, we refer to fluctuations occurring in all or some of these components. It is worth noting that most of these components account for the personal side of teacher identity and there seems to be only one factor (i.e., relationship with colleagues/pupils/parents) that accounts for its
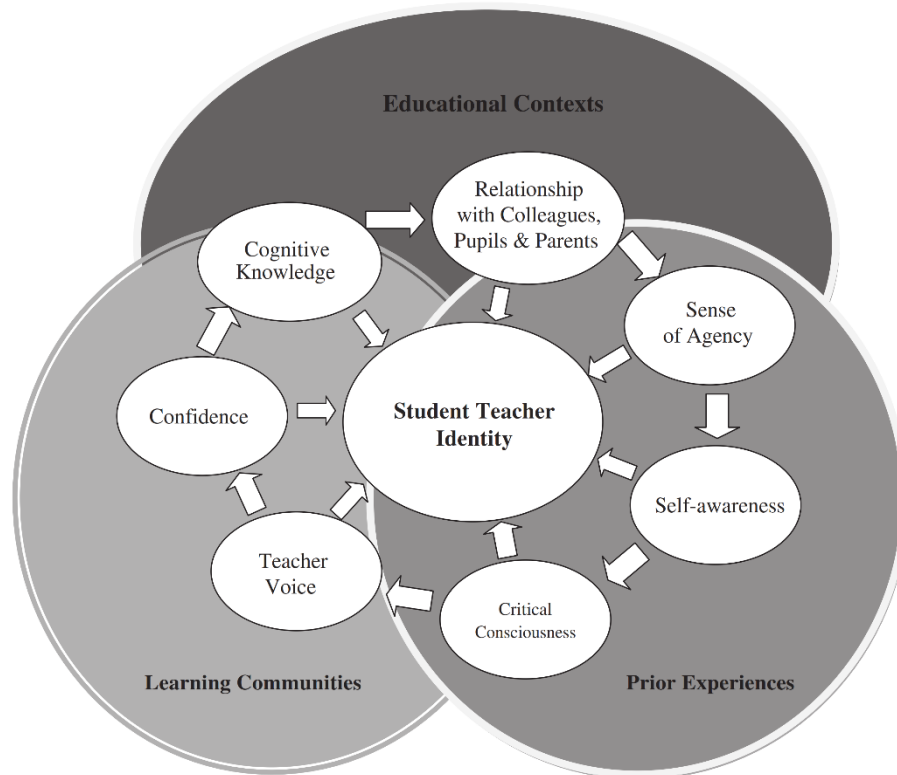
Figure 1.   Student teacher's identity

professional side. This echoes the idea that 'identity development for teachers involves an understanding of the self' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178). This understanding, however, is shaped by interactions between these components and some contextual factors which, in this review, were found to be educational contexts, prior experiences and learning communities.

In light of the above discussion, ST identity can be defined as STs' perceptions of their cognitive knowledge, sense of agency, self-awareness, voice, confidence and relationship with colleagues, pupils and parents, as shaped by their educational contexts, prior experiences and learning communities. Figure 1 represents this definition graphically.

4.   Conclusion

Student teachers should benefit from embarking early on the construction and reconstruction of their teacher identities so that they develop a deeper understanding of their future career, the roles they are going to shoulder and the objectives they want to fulfill. The significance of developing teacher identity in

STs has led researchers to investigate contributions of different factors to the process of their identity formation. The review carried out for this paper revealed that researchers had explored the influence of four broad categories of variables, namely the impact of learning communities STs are involved in, reflective activities they undertake, their (prior) experiences and contextual factors. Each of these variables had been reported to impact STs' confidence, sense of agency, self-awareness, critical consciousness, cognitive knowledge, their teacher voice and relationship with their colleagues, parents and pupils, which I have come to consider as the interrelated components of student teacher identity. However, it was observed that in the reviewed studies only positive changes and desirable outcomes of the studies were discussed and there was no mention of the unfavorable results and the challenges STs faced during the process of identity formation. One of the implications of overlooking the challenges existing in this process is, as discussed above, teacher educators', policy makers' and student teachers' failure to appreciate and address bewildering complexities on the horizon. Therefore, presenting a rosy picture of identity formation in relevant studies keeps teacher educators and STs ignorant of difficulties and challenges that are an inevitable part of the identity formation process. This ignorance hinders STs' identity formation, which, from a sociocultural perspective, is the key component of learning to teach (Nguyen, 2008). Thus, failing to incorporate a realistic and sophisticated understanding of teacher identity construction into teacher education amounts to failure to fulfill the most fundamental aim of teacher education, which is helping teachers learn to teach.

It was also discussed that in researching student teacher identity, researchers had mainly used theories with a social approach as the theoretical framework. This clearly shows that identity is regarded as a social entity constructed and reproduced in social settings and influenced by the social communities in which the STs are involved. Based on this review, I would like to pose some key questions arising from the analysis of studies. Table 5, which shows issues raised for each theme, is partially adopted from Hogg's (2011) review article on funds of knowledge. This table aims to provide a basis for further reflection and research.

4.1.   *Recommendations for further research*

Teacher educators who instruct, guide, teach and support STs (Koster *et al.*, 2005) are a significant party involved in teacher education programmes. Given that STs spend a considerable amount of their time with their teacher educators, including associate teachers and lecturers, the kind of relationship they develop and maintain with them might shape their professional identity in various ways. For instance, teacher educators might inhibit and repress STs' identity (Pittard, 2003) or instill senses of power, agency and confidence in them (Liu & Fisher, 2006) through their interactions with STs. However, there seems to be a lack of attention to research on the interconnection between these two parties in terms of their relationship. Further

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Table 5.   Issues arising from STs' identity research

Review themes	Questions raised
Foci	What other factors contribute to development of ST identity?
	How can teacher education programs facilitate the process of identity formation in STs?
	How does the relationship between STs and significant others such as teacher educators inform STs' identity construction?
	What challenges exist in researching ST identity?
Methodologies	Is there any significant relationship between the duration of data collection and development of STs' professional identity?
	What are the limitations of studies with a short data collection length?
	Why is not class observation used as often as other data collection tools?
	What difficulties do researchers face in conducting class observation?
	Why do researchers mainly use reflective practices to explore the process of identity formation in STs?
	Which theoretical frameworks do researchers draw upon in ST identity research?
	Which theories best support the process of identity construction in STs?
Findings	How do the factors identified so far negatively impact ST identity?
	Why do researchers usually report positive outcomes of their studies?
	In what ways does a rather exclusive focus on positive outcomes affect the contributions of these studies to teacher education?
	What challenges do STs face during the process of identity formation and in shifting from one identity to another?
	How can researchers measure the extent to which ST identity is developed/shaped?
	How are changes in ST identity realized in their teaching practices?
Critical issues	Why is ST identity research concentrated in specific contexts?
	What implications does research on ST identity have for educational systems and teacher education programs in a certain context?
	How can teacher educators contribute to STs' identity construction?
	How can STs embark on building their own professional identity?
	How do findings of STs' research impact curriculum development?

research might investigate the influence of teacher educator–student teacher relationship on the construction of STs' professional identity.

As discussed above, most reviewed studies used interviews and reflective journal writing as the main data collection tools. Only a few studies drew upon observations of STs' classroom behavior and practices. In-depth case studies of STs' teaching practices provide the chance for exploring how changes in their identity are translated into their teaching behavior and practices. More tangible results from the process of identity formation in STs will be obtained if researchers utilize observation as a data collection tool.

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As motioned in Table 5, most of the studies on ST identity originated in the USA, the UK and Australia. This raises the question of why working on identity is concentrated in western cultural contexts, why identity research is more or less absent in underdeveloped and developing countries and what meanings and implications research on teacher identity carry. Given that identity is greatly influenced by a myriad of contextual factors, this gap calls for particular attention of researchers from other contexts to do research on student teacher identity and produce local knowledge.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix B

Information Letter for Mentor Teachers

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

Dear Sir/ Madam

My name is Mahsa Izadinia and I am a postgraduate student in a PhD degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. I am conducting a research project that aims to investigate the influence of mentor teacher-student teacher relationship on student teachers' identity to see how this professional relationship could be enhanced to better develop student teachers' professional identity. The project is being conducted with Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis and Associate Professor Greame Lock as part of my PhD degree at ECU.

I would like to invite you to take part in the project. This is because you as a mentor teacher at this school have agreed to work with ECU and provide teaching practices for ECU Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) student teachers. The student teachers attending the Practicum unit is also a participant of this study and their consent to taking part in the research has already been sought. This school is one of secondary schools in Western Australia approached for their participation.

What does participation in the research project involve?

If you choose to take part in the research you will be asked to take part in two interviews one before student teachers' practicum one at the end of it. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes and they will be tape recorded. I also seek access to the informal meetings you have with your student teacher for taking notes. Also I need to observe two sessions of student teachers' teaching practices. Student teachers have already consented to being observed in their classroom and I have attached copies of their consent forms. An observation checklist for evaluating student teacher-mentor teacher relationship will be used. This checklist is available upon request. In addition I seek access to student teachers' evaluation sheets completed by you. Student teachers' consent to evaluation sheets being viewed by me has already been obtained.

I will keep your involvement in the administration of the research procedures to a minimum. However, it will be necessary for you to allocate approximately 30 minutes of your time for the interview in each round.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary.

If any member of a participant group decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation at any time.

There will be no consequences relating to any decision by an individual or ECU regarding participation. Decisions made will not affect the relationship with the research team or ECU.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely on ECU premises in the researcher's postgraduate office in a secured cabinet during the research and only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of five years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by omitting all electronic files held on a hard drive and destroying all paper copies of the interview transcripts and notes.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except in circumstances that require reporting under the Department of Education Child Protection policy, or where the research team is legally required to disclose that information.

Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times.

The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

Consistent with Department of Education policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating site(s) and the Department. You can expect this to be available 02/02/2016

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by ECU ethics committee and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education as indicated in the attached letter.

Do all members of the research team who will be having contact with children have their Working with Children Check?

Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check. The documents attached to this letter show current evidence of the main researcher check.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person about the conduct of the project, please contact

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University

Phone: (+61 8) 6304 2170

Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

My principal supervisor: Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis

Telephone number: 6304 6847

Email: g.lummis@ecu.edu.au

How do I indicate my willingness for the mentor teachers to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for the mentor teachers to participate, please complete the **Consent Form** on the following page.

This information letter is for you to keep.

Student Researcher: Mahsa Izadinia

PhD candidate at ECU

Telephone number: 0450803161

Email: mizadini@our.ecu.edu.au

Consent Form for Mentor Teachers

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

☐ I have been provided with a letter explaining the research and I understand the letter.

☐ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

☐ I am aware that I can contact Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis or the ECU Research Ethics Officer if I have any further queries, or if I have concerns or complaints. I have been given their contact details in the Information Letter.

☐ I understand that participating in this research will involve:
  • Taking part in two interviews before student teachers' practicum and at the end of it and
  • My voice being recorded in the interviews

☐ I understand that the researcher will be able to identify me but that all the information I give will be coded, kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researcher and his/her supervisor.

☐ I am aware that the information collected during this research will be stored in a locked cabinet at ECU for five years after the completion of the research and will then be stored by the researcher after that time.

☐ I understand that the findings of this research will be presented in a PhD thesis and published in journal articles, provided that the participants or the school are not identified in any way.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

☐ I understand that some of the student teacher's teaching practices will be observed during the placement.

☐ I consent to the observation of the student teacher

☐ I consent to the recordings of the interviews (collected without ethics approval) to be used and

☐ I provide continued consent to participation in the research project

☐ I freely agree to participate in this research:

NAME : _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE:_____

Information Form for Education Site Manager

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

My name is Mahsa Izadinia and I am a postgraduate student in a PhD degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. You are invited to take part in this research, which I am conducting as part of the requirement of my degree.

This research aims to investigate the influence of mentor-student teacher relationship on student teachers' identity development. I would like to invite (Names of the schools are not known yet) to take part in this research. This is because the teacher mentors at this school have agreed to work with ECU and provide teaching practices for ECU Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) student teachers. The student teachers attending the Practicum unit are also a participant of this study and their consent to take part in the research has already been sought. This school is one of secondary schools in Western Australia approached for their participation.

I will interview mentor teachers once before the practicum and once at the end. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes. I will also attend informal meetings the mentors have with their student teachers and take notes. Also I will observe a few sessions of student teachers' teaching practicum. In addition I seem access to student teachers' evaluation sheets completed by their mentors.

All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that the school and mentors remain anonymous. All data collected will be stored securely on ECU premises during the research and for five years after the research has concluded and will then be confidentially destroyed. The information will be presented in a written report (i.e., in the format of a PhD thesis and journal articles), in which your identity will not be revealed. The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants. Consistent with Department of Education policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating site(s) and the Department. You can expect this to be available in March 2016.

I anticipate that there are no risks associated with participating in this research, although there will be some inconvenience because of the time you commit to my research.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and there will be no penalty for doing so. If you would like to take part in the research, please complete, sign and return the attached Consent Form to me. The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at ECU and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education as indicated in the attached letter.

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If you have any questions about the research or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher: Mahsa Izadinia

Telephone number: 0450803161

Email: mizadini@our.ecu.edu.au

My principal supervisor: Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis

Telephone number: 6304 6847

Email: g.lummis@ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns of complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University

Phone: (+61 8) 6304 2170

Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Consent Form for Education Site Manager

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

- ☐ I have been provided with a letter explaining the research and I understand the letter.
- ☐ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.
- ☐ I am willing for this [Department site] to become involved in the research project, as described
- ☐ I understand that this research will be published in journal articles and a PhD thesis, provided that the participants or the school are not identified in any way.
- ☐ I am aware that I can contact Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis or the ECU Research Ethics Officer if I have any further queries, or if I have concerns or complaints. I have been given their contact details in the Information Letter.
- ☐ I understand that participating in this research is entirely voluntarily:
- ☐ I understand that [the Department site] will be provided with a copy of the findings from this research upon its completion.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will be able to identify me but that all the information I give will be coded, kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researcher and his/her supervisor.
- ☐ I am aware that the information collected during this research will be stored in a locked cabinet at ECU for 5 years after the completion of the research and will then be stored by the researcher after that time.
- ☐ I understand that the [Department site] is free to withdraw its participation at any time, without affecting the relationship with the research team or ECU.

NAME OF SITE MANAGER (printed): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE:_____

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely

Mahsa Izadinia

Information Form for Preservice Teachers

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

My name is Mahsa Izadinia and I am a postgraduate student in a PhD degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. You are invited to take part in this research, which I am conducting as part of the requirement of my degree. The research has ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at ECU.

This research aims to investigate the influence of teacher educator-student teacher relationship on student teachers' identity development. If you choose to take part in the research you will be asked to take part in the following activities:

-Participating in three interviews one before the first semester, one at the end of the first semester and the last one at the end of the second semester. The interviews will take approximately 1-1.30 hours. I may also need to contact you at other times to clarify information and/or collect other data. However, this will be negotiated so that it is convenient for you.

-Allowing me to observe two sessions of your teaching practice when you start your professional practice at schools. I will also be present at some informal meetings you have with your mentors to record the conversations.

-Allowing me to access to the evaluation sheets completed by your mentors and university lecturer and use the information for research purposes.

-Keeping a reflective journal and allowing me to access the journal and use the information for research purposes. You can write about your ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences during your program if you would like to do so. However, please note that this part of the research project is optional.

All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that you remain anonymous. All data collected will be stored securely on ECU premises during the research and for five years after the research has concluded and will then be confidentially destroyed. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. You may be sent a summary of the final report on request.

I anticipate that there are no risks associated with participating in this research, although there will be some inconvenience because of the time you commit to my research.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and there will be no penalty for doing so. If you would like to take part in the research, please complete, sign and return the attached Consent Form to me.

If you have any questions about the research or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher: Mahsa Izadinia

Telephone number: 0450803161

Email: mizadini@our.ecu.edu.au

My principal supervisor: Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis

Telephone number: 6304 6847

Email: g.lummis@ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns of complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University

Phone: (+61 8) 6304 2170

Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely

Mahsa Izadinia

Consent Form for Preservice Teachers

Title of Research: An investigation into mentor teachers-preservice teacher relationship and its contribution to development of Western Australian secondary preservice teachers' professional identity

- ☐ I have been provided with a letter explaining the research and I understand the letter.
- ☐ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.
- ☐ I am aware that I can contact Associate Professor Geoffrey Lummis or the ECU Research Ethics Officer if I have any further queries, or if I have concerns or complaints. I have been given their contact details in the Information Letter.
- ☐ I understand that participating in this research will involve:
    - Taking part in three interviews before the first semester, at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester;
    - My voice being recorded in the interviews and in the informal meetings with my mentors;
    - Being observed during my teaching practice;
    - Having short occasional conversations with the researcher if needed.
    - My evaluation sheets being accessible to the researcher
    - Keeping a reflective journal

- ☐ I understand that the researcher will be able to identify me but that all the information I give will be coded, kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researcher and his/her supervisor.
- ☐ I am aware that the information collected during this research will be stored in a locked cabinet at ECU for five years after the completion of the research and will then be stored by the researcher after that time.
- ☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.
- ☐ I understand that writing a journal is optional
- ☐ I am willing to become involved in this research, as described.

NAME : _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE:_____

Appendix C

Research Instruments

Preservice Teachers' Interview Framework
(First Round)

1. What made you choose teaching as a career? What is your purpose of teaching?
2. What do you perceive as your main responsibilities as a teacher toward yourself and your students?
3. Do you have a vision of the kind of teacher you would like to be?
4. What metaphor would you use to represent yourself as a future teacher at this time? Could you explain?
5. What changes might you anticipate in your image of yourself as a future teacher? What might influence these changes?
6. What might make you stay in teaching? What might lead you to leave it?
7. How do you think your mentor's role should be? (Parent figure/ support system …) Why do you think so?
8. How do you imagine your relationship with your mentor teachers develops during this year? Can you use another metaphor to describe this perceived relationship? (You could start like this: My relationship with my mentor would be like …)
9. To what extent do you think the relationship you have with your mentors will affect you and your vision of the teacher you want to be?

Preservice Teachers' Interview Framework

(Second Round)

1. How do you now perceive your identity as a teacher?
   - Describe any specific changes in your teacher identity since you began your practicum?
2. Is there a metaphor, you could use that best represents your teacher identity at this stage?
3. To what extent have you been able to find your teacher voice?
   - If you have been able to develop your teacher voice, what do you contribute it to?
   - If you have not been able to develop your teacher voice, what do you contribute it to?
4. Describe the characteristics of the relationship you shared with your mentor teacher?
5. What metaphor would best describe your mentoring relationship?
   - Is it the same as before?
   - Or, if it is different, please elaborate?
6. With respect to your relationship with your mentor teacher:
   - What things would you like to change?
   - What things would you like to keep the same?
7. Has your mentor teacher changed your vision of 'the teacher you want to be'? If so:
   - What things have changed?
   - What things have remained the same?
8. During your practicum were there any significant experiences that you encountered?
   - Describe these experiences.
   - How did these specific experiences affect you?
   - How did you deal with these specific experiences?
9. To what extent did your mentor teacher facilitate the personal resolve and confidence you needed during your practicum?
   - Describe the context and the facilitation role played by your mentor teacher.
   - How did this affect your resolve and confidence?
   - What would you want to change about this type of facilitation?
   - What would you keep the same about this facilitation?
10. To what extent has your mentor teacher met your expectations about mentoring?
    - Describe a mentoring situation that exceeded your expectations.
    - Describe a mentoring situation that fell short of your expectations.

Preservice Teachers' Interview Framework
(Third Round)

1. What do you perceive as your main responsibilities as a teacher toward yourself and your students at this stage?
2. What changes have you noticed in your image of yourself as a teacher? Any changes in your confidence? Voice? Vision?
3. What metaphor would you use to represent yourself as a teacher at this time?
4. How significant was the role of your mentor teachers in changing your teacher identity?
5. Can you compare the relationship you shared with your mentors in the first and second practicum? Which one did you prefer and why?
6. Which of your practicum experiences was more influential in shaping your teacher identity, why?
7. Was there any critical experiences, including tensions you have lived through during the second Practicum?
8. Do you think your mentor could give you the courage and confidence you needed in your role?
9. How has your second mentor met your expectations about how a mentor teacher would (or should) be?
10. What factors do you think played the most significant role in shaping your teacher identity? Your university lecturer? Your mentors? School context etc?

Mentor Teachers' Interview Framework
(First Round)

1. What is your purpose of teaching?
2. Why did you agree to become a mentor teacher? Is this your first time being a mentor?
3. What are your main responsibilities as a teacher toward yourself and your students?
4. How do you describe yourself as a teacher?
5. What metaphor would you use to represent yourself as teacher? Could you explain?
6. What is your mentees' perception of you as a teacher?
7. How do you imagine your relationship with your student teachers will develop during this year? What are the main components of a good mentoring relationship?
8. Can you use another metaphor to describe this relationship? You could start like this:
    My relationship with my student teachers will be like …
9. How do you feel you can best benefit your student teacher as their mentor?
10. How much do you think your identity as a mentor teacher will impact student teachers' identity? How significant do you think your role is in setting an example for them? Please explain in what ways.
11. To what extent do you think your relationship with your student teachers might change their image of who they are as a teacher? Please explain.
12. To what extent do you think your relationship with your student teachers might change your image of yourself as a teacher?

Mentor Teachers' Interview Framework

(Second Round)

1. How would you describe the mentoring relationship between you and your mentee?
2. What metaphor would you use to describe this relationship?
3. Was there any conflicts or tensions between you?
4. To what extent do you think your mentee has developed his/her teacher identity such as his/her teacher voice/confidence/vision?
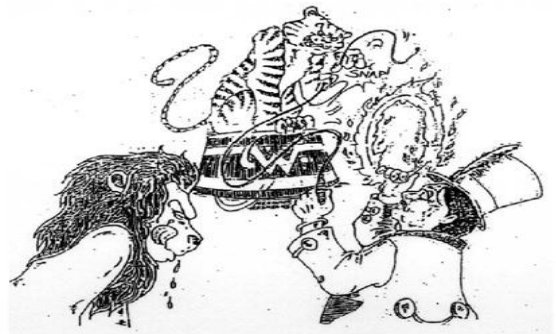
A definition for Metaphor

A metaphor is another way of saying who you are using an object or a role to represent the way you see yourself as a teacher. For example, you could say that I am a gardener because I help children grow."

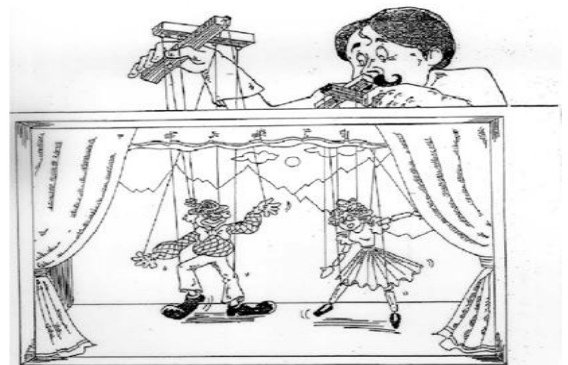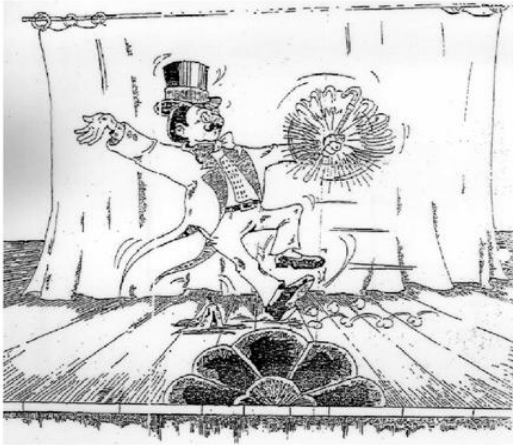Some student teachers' perceptions of their role as a teacher:

Shopkeeper

Animal Trainer

Judge

Puppeteer

Entertainer

Animal Keeper

Conductor

Preservice teacher-mentor teacher Relationship Rubric

TE's pattern of educational behaviour	Examples	Frequency	Notes
Way of giving feedback			
Emotional and academic support			
Role modelling			
Collaboration			
Forging a bond			
Mutual learning			
Open communication (dialogue) vs. silence			
Encouraging gestures			
Respect			
Encouraging STs to have a vision			
Encouraging reflection			
Giving confidence			