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**Bridging the Gap: An Exploration into the Experiences and Challenges
Faced by New Educators and Their Mentors in Aotearoa New Zealand**

A thesis

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Abstract

This research study provides an exploration into current beginning teacher mentoring relationships, with a focus on identifying the experiences and challenges faced by both beginning and mentor teachers. The purpose of this research was to identify key trends in data and possible implications to support the ongoing growth, consistency and quality of mentoring provided in primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. This inquiry not only focused on the beginning teachers' growth and successful transition into their new community of practice, but also on the support in place for mentor teachers to effectively meet the needs of their beginning teachers and provide quality mentoring.

This study contributes to the field of mentoring research by providing a key focus on mentor experiences and perspectives in mentoring relationships that are limited in both domestic and international academic research. Situated in a constructivist paradigm driven by a 'Communities of Practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) theoretical approach, the design of the research was sectioned into two phases. Phase 1 consisted of a mixed method approach using a survey (N=24) as the data collection tool to analyse recent beginning and mentor teacher experiences. Phase 2 followed a qualitative case study approach allowing for in-depth investigation and analysis of the dyadic relationship between two pairs of current beginning and mentor teachers. Case study data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

The findings from this data extend understanding of the inconsistencies in beginning teacher experiences by examining the policy frameworks and practical approaches mentor teachers draw upon. Key findings highlighted that even positive mentoring experiences were bound by the same challenges regarding a lack of support and structure surrounding the mentoring experience and dyadic relationship. Findings highlighted the lack of clarity in the current policy framework; minimal access and availability of professional development opportunities for both beginning and mentor teachers; and a lack of theoretical understanding of the principles underpinning the educative mentoring approach. These findings were grouped into positive impacts on mentoring experiences and challenges impacting the success of mentoring experiences, which were then discussed in relation to domestic and international research findings.

The existing and proposed mentoring and induction programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand provide broad guidance, yet challenges remain interpreting policy into effective mentoring practices. This thesis argues that effective implementation of educative mentoring practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) necessitates a structured mentoring design. The implications of these additions would have significant benefits to the practical application of mentoring practices and procedures within the beginning and mentor teacher relationship. Further practical implications from my study including training and support, considered mentor selection, and stronger dialogue between universities and school communities of practice would contribute to higher consistency in the quality of mentoring provided nationally.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of the Chapter

Throughout the past six decades, induction and mentoring have been common topics among researchers focused on identifying the key needs in supporting beginning teachers (BTs) as they enter their professional teaching careers. Although research in the field has continued to grow over time, several key areas remain underexplored and require deeper thought and analytical insight. This first chapter introduces the research study and provides some background research on the context where it is situated. Next, it describes my personal motivations for research in this area and includes some details of my own background and passion for this topic. The aim of the research and the research question guiding this study are presented, followed by the significance of this study and how it would be a beneficial contribution to the field of education mentoring. Finally, this chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis's organisation and structure.

1.1 Background of the Research

Key understandings in literature available indicate that there is a strong link between positive BT mentoring experiences and retention in the workforce (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kearney, 2014, 2021). Through this literature, it is also clear that the role of the mentor teacher (MT) has a crucial part to play in the success of a BT's transition experience from student to teacher.

Over the past six decades, the development of induction and mentoring practices within policy contexts has expanded significantly. This is due to specific research findings, shifts in leadership and governance, educational trends, and for the most part recommendations from key researchers in the field. It is important to note that in the Education Act 1964 (Parliament of New Zealand, 1964) there is not a single mention of beginning or provisionally certified teachers. At this time in New Zealand's history, induction and mentoring were not even considered a thought, let alone a necessity. Throughout the following decades until now, there have been clear milestones and transformative research that have continued to develop and shape the field of mentoring and induction.

Early recognition of key policy shifts connect to Murdoch's work in the field (1978, 1979a, 1979b). He regularly reported on the conditions of BTs transitioning from teachers' college into the workforce and the lack of support they had available to make this transition successful. Throughout the 1980s to early 2000s, BT release time was an ongoing topic. Initially, only schools of first year teachers received release entitlements, and decades later the introduction of second year teachers receiving a 0.1 release entitlement came into policy (Battersby, 1989; Cameron, 2007; Education Review Office [ERO], 2004; Main and Hill, 2007). In 1988, the Picot Report Taskforce – *Administering for Excellence*, and the introduction of Tomorrow's Schools programs saw the devolution of the middle tier regional educational boards in New Zealand's Education system, forever changing the ways in which schools operate, with increased autonomy to self-manage and a decentralisation of power (Openshaw, 2014).

Renwick's (2001) research focused on collecting data to better understand the current experiences and challenges for BTs to identify their needs for future support. A shortcoming of this research, as noted by Renwick (2001), was the lack of input from tutor/MTs to grasp their perceptions of the process of support in place for BTs. Key areas that were highlighted for future research into the area were: the nature of experiences and skills required to be an effective MT; the depth of understanding the MT had about their role and responsibilities; the training they had received to support their role (if any); and the types of support they felt would benefit their ability to effectively fulfil their role. This was an ongoing finding in domestic research throughout the years, regardless of policy changes (Aitken, et al., 2008; Buchanan, 2019; Cameron, 2007; ERO 2024; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Patterson & Thornton, 2014; Renwick, 2001).

In 2007, the Learning to Teach Three Part Commissioned Project, by the New Zealand Teaching Council, began to be rolled out (Aitken et al., 2008; Cameron, 2007; Cameron et al., 2007). This research project became the key driver in the new drafting of the induction and mentoring guidelines '*The Primary and Intermediate Induction and Mentoring Pilot Programme*' (Langdon, 2009) and led into the launch of the '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011). These guidelines were updated in 2015 (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) after ongoing review and continue to be used today.

Over time, mentoring has shifted from a transition-oriented approach to mentoring with focus on the mentor as expert and holder of knowledge and BT as being assimilated into the school culture and a vessel for the knowledge to be passed on to (Cochran-Smith & Paris,

1995; Kram, 1985). Instead moving towards a constructivist-oriented mentoring approach, focused on the BT and MT relationship as peers inquiring together to co-construct and make meaning of new knowledge collaboratively (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Stanulis et al., 2019). This follows an educative mentoring approach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and is the encouraged approach to mentoring outlined in the 2015 *Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers* (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015).

A range of both international and domestic research into quality mentoring practices highlighted the need for strong relational support between BTs and MTs, inclusive of building trust, open communication, approachability, psychological safety and a sense of belonging (Ewing, 2021; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Larsen et al., 2025; Richter et al., 2013; Vostal et al., 2019). Research by Hairon et al. (2020) also drew attention to the need for a more structured approach to mentoring design and organisation to better implement the policy into practice. Structural focus in meetings, observations, feedback, time, and retention were highlighted as necessary elements in successful mentoring programs (Ewing, 2021; Hairon et al., 2020; Kutsyuruba et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2018; Shanks et al., 2022; Stanulis et al., 2019)

1.2 Personal Motivation for the Research

As a primary school teacher, I have personally experienced both amazing and challenging mentorship experiences. At times I felt incredibly alone and under supported. When beginning my teaching career, I made the choice to move away from my home, Palmerston

North, and up to South Auckland. I was incredibly excited for the change and eager to begin my teaching career. Upon starting, I quickly realised that there were other BTs to share my excitement and nervousness with. In our school we had nine first- and second-year teachers spread out over 23 classrooms. Over 39% of our teaching staff were provisionally certified. This large number of BTs put stress on the rest of the staff to take on the roles of MTs, resulting in my second-year MT being a third-year teacher herself.

Feeling unsettled about the support and guidance I was receiving, I was fortunate when an opportunity presented itself, allowing me to change my situation. This resulted in a positive shift, both physically and mentally, to move back to Palmerston North and conclude my final three terms of provisionally certification at a school where I had completed my student teaching. This change was pivotal in my mentoring experience. I was presented with a MT who chose to support me, made time for me, and enabled me to grow professionally, while reflecting on her own teaching which allowed her to challenge and develop her practice alongside mine. Now, I have eight years of teaching under my belt and experience in a range of schools and age groups. I suspect that without that change and quality mentoring, I would likely not be teaching today.

From Initial Teacher Education and student teacher practicums to the transition into the role of BT, the mentoring relationship, presented in a range of forms, is consistent in supporting every one of these transitions. As an educator, I see value in the education we provide for students of all levels and ages. BTs are no exception and should also be adequately mentored

and supported into their teaching careers to ensure that they have the best possible start.

This positive foundation is reliant on the skills and abilities of the MTs they are learning from, and the structures and supports surrounding the MT to facilitate the growth of this new educator as they begin their teaching career.

Hopefully, research into this field will provide critical insights into support and resources needed. Ensuring BTs and mentors are given the necessary tools to make the best out of their own mentoring experiences and set strong foundations for the quality of educators in the future.

1.3 Aim of the Research

This research study aims to explore current beginning teacher mentoring relationships, with a focus on identifying the experiences and challenges faced by both beginning and mentor teachers. The purpose of this research is to identify key trends in data and possible implications to support the ongoing growth, consistency and quality of mentoring provided in primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. The outcomes of this study could contribute to the field of research by providing necessary insights into the current areas of need in the implementation and sustainability of quality mentoring of new educators to better support all stakeholders involved in the mentoring relationship, including, BTs, MTs, students, whānau, senior leadership, colleagues, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and wider community.

Research Question

How can the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures?

1.4 Theoretical Approach

This study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm that draws on Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as the theoretical framework guiding the exploration of mentoring relationships. This perspective views each school context as its own community of practice and observes the transition BTs make to become an accepted and active participant in their new community.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide a deeper understanding of how mentorship relationships benefit and contribute to the professional growth of educators in Aotearoa New Zealand in the future.

Access to quality and supportive mentoring is a fundamental aspect of teacher development, yet often BT experiences are inconsistent with vague guidelines, shallow content focus and insufficient training and access to support for mentors (Whatman, 2019). By examining the systemic factors, challenges and trends that influenced BT induction and mentoring experiences, this research identified areas for possible improvement in the clarity of roles,

responsibilities, and expectations for both mentors and mentees. Therefore, providing an outline of possible areas of focus around consistency and support in mentoring systems that can assist MTs to be more equipped to successfully fulfil their roles and foster positive and rich mentoring environments.

1.6 Thesis Overview

This thesis is organised into five chapters:

Chapter 1: introduces the research study. It provides a brief background of the current research context and provides some personal details of mine, as the researcher, that support and describe my motivations for this research. It outlines the aim of the study, introduces the research question, explains the significance of this study, and how it aims to contribute to the overall research field. To conclude, this chapter outlines the overall structure and organisation of the thesis.

Chapter 2: provides a critical review of key literature pertaining to the research. It gives an overview of the historical context and policy relating to BT induction and mentoring practices, analysis of key terms and definitions used frequently in literature, and a breakdown of the current model of mentoring which is expected to be used in Aotearoa New Zealand. This review of literature also includes discussion around key influences and challenges in mentoring experiences in both domestic and international research studies.

Chapter 3: outlines the methodological approach underpinning this research. The theoretical framework is introduced, literature to support the three research methods used in the research is presented, and the focus of the study and research question are outlined. It provides reasoning for and explanation of the two phases (quantitative and qualitative) of data collection, as well as the description and recruitment of participants. The research procedures of each phase and method of research are discussed, including the quality of research and ethical considerations that were made.

Chapter 4: presents the findings for this study which have emerged through the analysis of the data. An explanation of Phase 1 and 2 participants' experiences and challenges is presented using descriptive statistics and reflexive thematic analysis. The qualitative findings are organised into themes that represent my interpretive analysis of meaning within the data.

Chapter 5: presents the discussion and conclusion for the study. This discussion chapter makes clear links to the literature and further discusses the findings of this study in relation to domestic and international research findings. An argument regarding the need for structured mentoring design and organisation to support current educative mentoring philosophies in policy and practice is presented. To conclude, the research implications and limitations of the study are considered, and future research areas and recommendations are presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This review of literature aims to critically examine the current domestic and international landscapes of mentoring and induction programmes. Key comparisons and distinctive differences are highlighted to understand and evaluate the position, progress, and potential of Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring practices. Key themes identified and further explored in this review are the historical landscape of New Zealand mentoring policy; mentoring and beginning teacher (BT) support; relational foundations; structured support; professional growth and identity development; and systemic and organisational Factors. The summary of this chapter outlines and identifies the gaps in research, foregrounds the purpose of this research study, and situates it within the field of research.

2.1 Introduction to the History of New Zealand Mentoring Policy

By the early 2000's researchers and government agencies began to look more deeply at the BT provisional years and worked to examine the effectiveness of current policy on the BT's overall progress. Renwick's (2001) research was conducted via a survey of 229 randomly selected BTs across the country. The focus of this research being on collecting data to better understand the current experiences and challenges BTs faced to identify their needs for future support. Unlike previous studies (Battersby, 1989; Murdoch, 1978, 1979a, 1979) in this area, Renwick's (2001) data found that 62% of BTs had listed their tutor/mentor teacher (MT) as their main source of support and 90% of those found that their tutor teacher was either

effective or partially effective at providing support to them. Interestingly, this research noted issues of BT retention and links to induction programmes. Although unable to comment on this directly, based on the scope of the research, Renwick (2001) did state that “it is clear that tutor/supervising teachers play an important role in the induction of BTs to the profession, as does the climate of the school as an effective learning community” (p. 33). A key note to make in the 1985 introduction of 0.2 staffing entitlement for BTs (Battersby 1989b; ERO, 2004; Main & Hill, 2007) at this time is that schools were not entitled to the 0.2 staffing supplement unless the BT was in a permanent position. Renwick (2001) noted that there was an issue with principals hiring BTs on a reliever basis and therefore neither the school nor the BT would be able to access the 0.2 release or induction, or an advice and guidance programme, to support them with their transition to full-service teacher. This lack of support could have clear links to the rising issues of BT retention briefly mentioned above. Second year BT 0.1 release staffing entitlement was not introduced until 2005 (Main & Hill, 2007). Renwick’s (2001) research also outlined findings of support influencing BTs other than MTs, including leadership and colleagues; important qualities and skills of mentoring/tutor teachers; and areas of teaching the BTs received support in. A shortcoming of this research though, as noted by Renwick (2001), was the lack of input from tutor/MTs to grasp their perceptions of the process of support in place for BTs. Key areas that were highlighted for future research were, the nature of experiences and skills required to be an effective MT, the depth of understanding the MT has about their role and responsibilities, if and what training they have received to support their role, and the types of support they feel would benefit their ability to effectively fulfil their role.

The 2004 Education Review Office (ERO), research study centred solely around the

effectiveness of second year teachers at the end of their provisional training. Albeit rather brief, they concluded that majority of second year teachers were 'doing well' (p. 1). Unlike previous studies on BT induction and experiences, ERO's (2004) research focused solely on the BT's effectiveness to improve student achievement. All three of its focus questions were based on this effectiveness driver. These sections were; the BTs' ability to effectively teach across their areas, ability to engage students in their learning, and the effectiveness of the schools' support and guidance to further develop the BTs' skills, knowledge and values as a professional. Throughout the findings, all three key questions resulted in 77-86% response in the BT's ability to exceed or meet the expected effectiveness requirements (ERO, 2004). However, of concern was the fact that this effectiveness was inconsistent across all areas with many cases of BTs rating well in one area but less effective in others. This meant only 65% of primary Year 2 BTs in the study were consistently meeting expectations of effectiveness across the major areas of learning being evaluated (ERO, 2004). Interestingly, as with Renwick's (2001) considerations, ERO (2004) noted the need for further action in the provision of professional development for MTs and strengthening the role and status of MTs within the career path. Confirming Murdoch's (1979b) findings, ERO (2004) also found a strong correlation between the positive relationships a BT has with their tutor/MT and meeting expectations of effectiveness. Specifically, BT feedback cited the need for a balance of encouragement, mentoring, supporting challenges, and collaboration necessary for such positive relationships.

In 2005, the New Zealand Teaching Council identified a need for more in-depth national research to be conducted on BT induction to support plans for future policy. To support this, they commissioned a three-part Learning to Teacher research project. This included; a

literature review (Cameron, 2007), a nationwide survey (Cameron et al., 2007), and success case studies (Aitken et al., 2008). Firstly, Cameron's (2007) *Learning to Teach Literature Review* on BT induction highlighted a range of local and international approaches to BT induction. This critical review identified key gaps in the current induction system and opened the door for new practises to emerge. Key findings included the correlation between induction quality and teacher retention, the vast range of induction programme implementation and quality provided throughout New Zealand, the lack of mentor training available, and a push for educative mentoring practices. Cameron's (2007) review also identified four main qualities of effective programmes: regular meetings between MTs and BTs; opportunities for observation of mentor, BT and other colleagues as well as feedback; structured professional development opportunities; and targeted learning during release time (Cameron, 2007).

The second of the commissioned research projects by Cameron et al. (2007) was a nationwide survey of provisionally registered teachers. From the Primary and Secondary teacher sampling, 199 of the 393 participants who completed the survey worked within the year 1-8 (primary/intermediate school) context. A key focus of this survey was on collecting current local data from BTs/provisionally certified teachers (PCTs) connected to the four main qualities of effective programmes highlighted above in Cameron's (2007) *Learning to Teach Literature Review*. Key findings from this research identified a sense of uncertainty amongst BTs about their entitlements as provisionally registered teachers to receive an induction programme and the responsibilities they had to their registration body. Many BTs also began their teaching career in relieving positions, which like Renwick (2001) found, meant that no one school was taking ownership for the growth and development of that BT. This

untethered experience and lack of foundational support can be detrimental to the BT. The research also identified that many BTs were using significant amounts of their allocated release for “planning, preparation and assessment” (Cameron et al., 2007, p. xiv) requirements rather than professional development and learning from teachers around them. Most participants identified having an assigned MT to support and guide them through certification, however 5% of primary BTs noted that they did not receive anyone specifically assigned to them. A high level of importance was placed on the mentor/mentee advice and guidance meetings which were aimed at setting goals, pinpointing individual's needs and providing experiences to support the growth of the BT in their journey to full registration. However, the data showed that the frequency and type of feedback they were receiving could have been more focused to better meet their teaching and professional development needs. Retention issues in the teaching workforce continued to be an ongoing area of concern. When asked about their joy of teaching towards the end of their second year, 23% of primary participants stated that they were not enjoying teaching as much as they expected to be and 17% noted that they expected that they would no longer be teaching in 5 years' time (Cameron et al., 2007).

The third and final phase of the New Zealand Teaching Council commissioned research, by Aitken et al. (2008), was *Learning to Teach: Success Case Studies of Teacher Induction in Aotearoa New Zealand*. The key focus and difference of this report was to showcase exemplary induction and mentoring practices present in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to identify gaps and areas of need through case studies. Researchers followed a mixed method approach using focus groups, 1-1 interviews, observations and documentary analysis to collect and analyse the data. Interestingly, although the data gathered through the case

studies was identified as highlighting successful mentoring experiences, the three key questions driving the research focused on using the success case studies to identify problem solving solutions for detrimental experiences that other BTs may be facing. This research is not a sugar coating of selective best practices but instead a perspective lens of approaching difficult situations with the aim to create positive outcomes. This research conducted by Aitken et al. (2008) distinguished key elements of success in their case studies in the following ways. The first was allocated time for meetings between the MT and BT allowed for regular opportunities, both informally and formally, for the pair to discuss, plan and support the BT. Secondly, it was noted that participation for both the BT and MT to attend internal and external professional development opportunities was beneficial in the success of their experience. Thirdly, an openness and willingness for the BT to receive and take on board constructive feedback was necessary in their growth, and many schools noted the need for particular care to be taken when pairing BTs with their MTs to ensure a successful fit. Research recommendations from this study were extensive, however the main findings were related to implementing support, availability and opportunity for all BT and MT relationships to attain the key elements of successful case studies identified above.

New Zealand BTs' practices have been internationally praised for their commitment to implementing policy, guidelines, funding, resources, and time. However, research on the experiences and quality of both induction and mentoring since 1989 paints a different picture. Despite the image of comprehensive support provided, the inconsistency in quality of induction and mentoring experienced by BTs is concerning (Langdon et al., 2009). Key concerns were that many BTs "did not have access to a structured induction programme, and

that much of the mentoring was little more than emotional support and enculturation into the workplace” (Langdon et al., 2009, p. 82). In 2009, off the heels of the Learning to Teach three-phase research project (Aitken et al, 2008; Cameron, 2007; Cameron et al, 2007), the New Zealand Teachers Council sought to pilot the newly drafted induction and mentoring guidelines.

The Primary and Intermediate Induction and Mentoring Pilot Programme (IMPP) ran over two years spearheaded by The University of Auckland (Langdon et al., 2009). This pilot introduced a whole-school approach to induction, focusing on shifting wider staff mindset to encourage wrap around support for BTs and a collective understanding of guidelines. Six schools, ranging from low to high decile, with a mix of rural, urban, intermediate, contributing or full primary participated in this IMPP research. This included a total of six principals, 17 MTs, 23 BTs, as well as 145 teaching staff being involved in the research and data gathering. A mixed methods longitudinal research approach was taken relying on questionnaires, interviews, and recorded conversations to acquire and analyse research data (Langdon et al., 2009). This IMPP revolved heavily around the growth and skill development of MTs to build expert status and provide quality induction and mentoring practices. This differs from previous research which had predominantly relied on the feedback and experiences of BTs individually rather than in the dyad relationship of BTs and MTs. Mentors participated in a fully funded 10-session programme aimed at building knowledge, conceptual understanding, and skill acquisition of effective educative mentoring practices.

With the success of the IMPP, the New Zealand Teachers Council launched and distributed the *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) to all ECEs and schools. This was the first policy document in New Zealand education history with clear guidelines for educative mentoring practices. This policy document had a key focus on shifting the narrative of 'advice and guidance' in induction and mentoring practices, which lends itself more to workplace enculturation and surface level support aligning with transition-oriented mentoring (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995), to an 'educative mentoring' constructivist-oriented approach (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, 2001) where there is a co-construction of professional learning, often through reciprocal learning and the skilled facilitation of learning conversations. As found in the IMPP (Langdon et al., 2009), key indicators of success in the pilot were the resourcing and support provided to mentors and schools to effectively implement the new guidelines. In the roll out of the new guidelines (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) 48 national workshops were held throughout New Zealand to support professional leaders and mentors with their understanding and implementation.

Of particular significance to the timeline is that in 2012, very quickly after the launch and distribution of the *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011), the New Zealand Teachers Council commissioned an evaluation of the guidelines (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025c). This was followed by intensive surveys, wānanga (meetings) and case studies throughout 2012 – 2014 of both BTs and MTs, as well as council workshops. Further council workshops focused on targeted areas of the guidelines were run in 2013 and again in

2015. During this time the New Zealand Teachers Council was also replaced by the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2013). Notably, in 2015 the *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) were republished and are still in effect today. Key differences between the original in 2011 and 2015 republishing of the guidelines document were adjustments to terminology to be more inclusive of the workforce and more culturally responsive. The republished guidelines also aimed for clarity and consistency as well as cleaner simplified language and refined definitions, based on the research findings from the 2012 - 2014 guideline's evaluations, which highlighted the differences in interpretations and lack of application of the original guidelines into practice.

In 2024, ERO released a research report on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and BT readiness to teach. This report highlighted three action areas that would become the recommended focus of future policy and guidelines. These were: attracting teachers with necessary skills to the profession; strengthening ITE programs; and providing more support to BTs in their first years of teaching. Interestingly, the third action area focusing on supporting BTs was broken into five recommendations involving: employment certainty; evaluation of school board support and development for BTs; observation of peers becoming a requirement for certification; promotion of MT role value and support; and specified professional learning as a requirement to obtain full certification (ERO, 2024).

During my research study, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a; 2025b) sent out a survey and documentation outlining their proposed approach to induction and

mentoring to all teachers via email. This included '*A Nationally Consistent Induction Model*' (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025a) and '*A Nationally Consistent Induction Model to Support New Teachers: Discussion Paper*' (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025b) introducing the proposed approach to mentoring and induction to be implemented, a move towards the updated 2026 Professional Standards of Teaching (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025a, 2025b). It also featured a Site-Based Professional Support Team (SPST) inclusive of the MT and a within-school leadership member, as well as an external Teaching Council appointed Induction Coach (IC) to facilitate and support the BT through their provisional certification years. The outline identifies a first- and second-year plan for BTs, including three check in points throughout each year to assess progress and continuation in the induction programme. First year learning foci included establishing supportive learning environments, culturally responsive teaching practices, and building professional relationships. The outline stipulates each learning foci to be evidenced through peer observation and joint analysis of practice. Second year learning foci included developing pedagogical knowledge and design for learning; building experience with assessment, feedback, and reporting; and critical self-reflections of practice. These learning foci were to be evidenced through collaborative and self-analysis of effective teaching practices (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025b, p.5). The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a; 2025b) documents outline their proposed approach to induction and mentoring, and asked participants to share their experiences via a survey. MTs were also encouraged at the end of the survey to register interest in the upcoming case studies. No further information has been provided since.

2.2 Mentoring and BT Support

Throughout research and practice, mentoring has been an ongoing topic of discussion, debate, and development. “A somewhat contested practice, however, has across time and context taken different forms, been purposed in different ways and been based on a range of theoretical approaches” (Larsen et al., 2025, p. 658). To further develop an understanding of mentoring and BT support definitions and models of mentoring have been explored and analysed in the following section.

2.2.1 Definitions and Models of Mentoring

As highlighted in section 2.1, Introduction to New Zealand Mentoring Framework, and models of mentoring have changed and developed over the years. Table 1 introduces two over-arching fields of mentoring, Transition-Oriented Mentoring and Constructivist-Oriented Mentoring (Richter et al., 2013) and aims to highlight key comparisons between them. This table will be referred to throughout the literature review.

Table 1*Transition-Oriented Mentoring versus Constructivist-Oriented Mentoring*

	Transition-Oriented Mentoring	Constructivist-Oriented Mentoring
Learning Theory	Behaviorist	Constructivist
Approaches to Mentoring	Knowledge Transmission Model (Cochran-Smith and Paris, 1995)	Knowledge Transformation Model (Cochran-Smith and Paris, 1995)
	Traditional Mentoring (Kram, 1985)	Educative Mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001)
Learning	Mentor = expert BT = learner	Constructed through connections to prior knowledge
	Passive recipients of knowledge	Active Process
		Reciprocal
Introduction to Environment	Situational adjustment	Social community
	Socialised into status quo	Growing involvement alongside mastery of skills
Communication	One-way	Two-way
	Hierarchal flow down	Collaboration

Note. Created by author based on Richter et al. (2013)

2.2.2 Transition-Oriented vs Constructivist-Oriented Mentoring

As evident in Table 1, mentoring theory and practices have continued to grow and develop throughout the years, with fresh new insights and changing ecological systems. The shift from transition-oriented to constructivist-oriented mentoring approaches is evident in principle, while the practical application is continuing to evolve (Buchanan, 2019; Larsen et al., 2025; Spooner-Lane, 2017).

Traditional, behaviourist focused mentoring approaches, including Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) Knowledge Transmission Model and Kram's (1985) Traditional Mentoring, see the MT as an expert of knowledge and the BT as a vessel to absorb knowledge, with mentoring framed as a hierarchal process for knowledge transfer using one-way communication (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Larsen et al., 2025; Spooner-Lane, 2017). These are often referenced as onboarding and socialisation models, with a focus on situational adjustment of the BT into their new environment and building and understanding of the status quo (Richter et al., 2013).

In contrast, constructivist-oriented mentoring approaches, including Cochran-Smith and Paris' (1995) Knowledge Transformation Model and Feiman-Nemser's (1998; 2001) Educative Mentoring, see the mentor as a facilitator of inquiry who learn alongside their BT (Richter et al., 2013). In these approaches to mentoring, both mentor and mentee are active participants in the construction of knowledge. The act of mentoring is collaborative, pulling on prior knowledge, reflection, and critical thinking to discuss and define new learning together (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Larsen et al., 2025; Spooner-Lane, 2017; Stanulis et al., 2019; Wexler; 2020). The contrast in these mentoring approaches, from transition-oriented to constructivist-oriented, shows the development of mentoring and the emphasis on the mentor's role. Stanulis et al. (2019) reflects that educative mentors help beginning "teachers understand the **why** and **how** of teaching" (p. 568), not just relying on traditional approaches that tended to focus on **what** was being taught.

2.3 Relational Foundations

Relational foundations consist of the basic emotional and psychological needs required for an individual to feel safe, valued, and supported within professional interpersonal relationships. These foundations ground the development of trust, open communication, approachability, psychological safety, and a sense of belonging. Together, these enable quality mentoring relationships.

2.3.1 Trust, Communication, and Approachability

Grudnoff's (2012) domestic research highlighted the importance of relationships and positive psychosocial interaction between BTs and their mentors. This had a direct impact on the BTs' confidence, sense of self, willingness to approach mentors when they needed support or guidance, co-construction of learning and goals, and ability to reflect and discuss teaching practices with their MTs. These are key educative mentoring concepts (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, 2001), necessary in implementing and delivering quality mentoring programs designed to support BTs to become independent, capable, and confident practitioners. In comparison with transition-oriented mentoring approaches (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Kram, 1985) where the focus of the mentoring relationship is less about the relational fundamentals and more about the efficient transfer of knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Larsen et al., 2025; Spooner-Lane, 2017).

Establishing trust (Ewing, 2021; Vostal et al., 2019), approachability, and strong communication in mentoring relationships has been described as invaluable in supporting the

success of the mentoring relationship and overall growth of the BT (Ewing, 2021). In a small, Australian, idiographic study, Ewing (2021), explored the dyadic relationships within three case studies of a BT and their mentor. Ewing (2021) describes the valued mentor characteristic BTs perceived as being a key element of their relationship success as “being an open-communicator and offering constructive feedback” (p. 56). With inconsistency and ambiguity of which mentoring approaches are being implemented into practice, both internationally (Larsen et al., 2025; Richter et al., 2013; Spooner-Lane, 2017) and domestically (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020) in how the *‘Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers’* (The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) have been interpreted and implemented, many are concerned that mentoring is returning to a one-way model of communication following traditional concepts of teacher registration (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Larsen et al., 2025).

2.3.2 Psychological Safety and Sense of Belonging

The basic need for BTs to feel a sense of belonging within their workplace and psychological safety to complete their work to a high standard has been highlighted throughout literature (Allen, 2009; Burger et al., 2021; Dreer-Goethe, 2025; Ewing, 2021; Robertson, 2025; Wilcoxon et al., 2025). In order to take risks and explore new concepts in their practice without the fear of negative consequences, BTs need to have strong relational foundations with their MT and wider colleagues which provide them with psychological safety (Burger et al., 2021). A nurturing environment where BTs feel valued and confident in expressing themselves (Dreer-Goethe, 2025; Ewing, 2021) also supports a BTs sense of belonging. This

sense of belonging, feeling valued, validated, and being an active participant within the community of learning provides the BT with a sense of acceptance and human interconnectedness which they need to thrive and progress developmentally (Robertson, 2025; Wilcoxon, 2025).

2.4 Structured Support

Research regarding the key structural nuances of mentoring relationships has continued to be conducted both internationally and locally over the past three decades (Aitken et al., 2008; Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kelly et al., 2018; Shanks et al., 2022; Stanulis et al., 2019). Highlighted in this research is the importance of structural features within mentoring relationships, such as meetings, observations, and feedback. The external influences of time, release time and workload are also relevant discussions in literature in analysis of the impacts they have on BT well-being, attrition and success.

2.4.1 Importance of Meetings, Observations, and Feedback

The importance of structured mentoring practices including meetings, observations and feedback, are key themes in local and international literature researching the impacts and challenges of mentoring programs. Many researchers in the field have concluded that there is a strong need for structure in the mentoring approach and practice of mentoring (Aitken et al., 2008; Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hairon et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2018; Shanks et al., 2022; Stanulis et al., 2019). Regular meetings and opportunities to communicate with MTs is necessary in establishing professional relationships and an open

and approachable source of support for BTs to reach out when needed (Aitken et al., 2008; Shanks et al., 2022). In a research project exploring, comparing, and analysing the national mentoring schemes in Scotland, Malta, and Denmark, observations of the BT and opportunities for the BT to observe others were highlighted as necessary foundations in successful mentoring experiences (Shanks et al., 2022). In a study by Shanks et al. (2022), Denmark, who have no formal national induction or mentoring scheme in place, or expectations regarding assignment of MT or framework, were explicitly compared to Scotland, an early adapted of the national induction scheme in 2002, and Malta who adapted a comprehensive national induction and mentoring scheme in 2010, with explicit expectations and requirements for both BTs and mentors. Research highlighted that Denmark's BTs who had been assigned MTs, and the support they offered, felt better equipped to complete their role to a high standard, and those without an assigned MT felt less equipped and supported to succeed in their role (Shanks et al., 2022). Supporting this argument of the necessity of MTs' ability to provide quality and structured mentoring experiences, American research by Stanulis et al. (2019) and Singaporean research by Hairon et al. (2020) drew specific attention to the need for focused observations and constructive feedback for BTs, following an educative mentoring approach to communication (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This approach encourages MTs to use specific evidence from their observations to provide focused feedback, working alongside their BTs to discuss and develop meaningful changes to their teaching practice (Stanulis et al., 2019). The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring has indicated the importance of observations and reflective analysis of practice through their outlined BT requirements.

2.4.2 Time to Mentor

The concept of 'Time' is a recurrent theme in the research of BT mentoring relationships and experiences. Key references are made to the lack of time mentors feel they have when working with their BTs, with many MTs also holding other roles and responsibilities within their teaching positions that also required their time (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ewing, 2021; Le Maistre & Paré, 2010). Ewing (2021) reflected on this time struggle and highlighted that external (off-site) mentors may be more effective mentors to BTs, with a broader perspective on school organisation, a range of different insights, and more time available to efficiently support BTs. Interestingly, although released from their classroom duties and time-bound responsibilities, Le Maistre and Paré (2015), indicate that senior leaderships members, for example deputy principals and principals, should not be MTs as they too have responsibility that inhibits the time they have available to sufficiently support a BT.

2.4.3 Beginning Teacher Retention

Concerns over teacher attrition rates have long been raised in research (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Howe, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2012; Kelly et al., 2019; Larsen et al., 2025; Le Maistre & Paré, 2009; Spooner-Lane, 2017), both domestically (NZEI, 2024) and recognised by Shanks et al. (2022) as a global problem. Madigan and Kim (2021) state in their English research, that to combat rising attrition rates and reach a UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal, 69 million new teachers will need to be recruited across the world by 2030. A multitude of reasons leading to teacher attrition are highlighted in research, with the top drivers being workload, stress, pay, lack of support, and classroom management (Caroll et al., 2021; Shanks et al., 2022; Spooner-Lane, 2017). Kutsyuruba et al. (2019) discussed in their Canadian

findings, the impact of well-being on BT attrition. Within their research, BTs without mentor support reflected lower levels of well-being compared to BTs who had assigned mentors and received support, reporting higher levels of well-being. Aligning with this theory, research from Shanks et al. (2022) and Carroll et al. (2021) also indicated that mentor support positively influenced teacher retention, overall well-being, and creates a much-needed sense of connectedness and community for the BT.

2.5 Professional Growth and Identity Development

The transition BTs experience as they move from university student to BT is crucial in the development of professional identity and ongoing growth. The successful completion of university is not the transition to the workforce; it is just the beginning as new educators close the door on one chapter of their lives and begin their journey to open a new one.

2.5.1 Identity Development

The importance of teachers' professional identity development is highlighted throughout research (Ewing, 2021; Henry & Mollstedt, 2021; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Izadinia, 2015; Larsen et al., 2025). The development of professional identity supports BTs in their sense of self, personal and professional growth, and overall confidence as a teacher (Ewing, 2021). BTs are often challenged when developing professional identity as they are tasked with reflecting on how their values and beliefs align with colleagues around them and the systems and structures they are working within. Due to this, MTs can have the greatest influence on the BT's formation of professional identity (Henry & Mollstedt, 2021). Regardless of a

constructivist-oriented mentoring approach (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995), Larsen et al. (2025) highlight that BTs can often have diminished self-belief or decreased self-view, appearing to stay hidden and silent in the presence of their peers for fear of tarnishing their professional status. Henry and Mollstedt (2021) discussed this struggle for identity development as a part of the complex transition from student to BT, and the 'borderland discourse', thinking, making meaning and conversations that occur in the spaces where professional, cultural and or social boundaries intersect.

2.5.2 Transition and Communities of Practice

Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of learning 'Communities of Practice' situates learning as a social process that occurs through participation in shared practices within a community. This theory of learning encapsulates the process in which new educators, supported by their MTs, transition from student teachers to accepted and participating members of their new community of practice as BTs.

Introduced by Wenger (1998) and later discussed by Ackesjö (2014) and Peters and Sandberg (2016), the socially constructed line separating two communities of practice is referred to in literature as 'Borders' or 'Boundaries'. In Aotearoa New Zealand, BTs are not fully registered when they receive their qualification, instead on completion of their two-year provisional registration period and requirements (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025d). The support BTs receive from their mentoring experiences during this time allows them to transition across the threshold or border surrounding the community of practice (Fuller et al., 2005). This 'border crossing' has been identified as a pivotal moment in academic research

(Ackesjö, 2014; Fuller et al., 2005; Peters & Sandberg, 2016; Wenger, 1998) when discussing transitions, and is applied in this context to better understand the divide between the university community of practice of learning and the school community of practice of being.

The 'Liminal Phase' (Ackesjö, 2014) between the two communities of practice can be observed as the phase in which the new teacher moves from a state of known, into the edge of the new community with peripheral membership, before progressing into the new role. Martínez et al. (2017) draws specific attention to the double membership and liminality student teachers face as they move between the two communities of practice and begin forging their own professional identities. In this phase of transition student teachers are accepted into their practicing school contexts but as limited peripheral participants who have some access but are bounded in their responsibilities within the community of practice (Martínez et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998).

Delving deeper into the process of transition, Peters and Sandberg's (2016) introduce 'Borderlands' a space with blurred edges, that exist around the rigid border, where new shared understanding and experiences take place. In the context of the mentoring relationship and two-year period of mentoring, this borderlands space which encompasses growth, co-construction of knowledge, and transition from peripheral to full participant within a community of practice, reflects the constructivist-oriented shift from mentor as 'knowledge-holder' to facilitator of inquiry and co-collaborator of knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 1998). Peters and Sandberg (2016) also discuss the concept of 'Bridges' which connect two pedagogical settings. There is opportunity for the space

between the two pedagogical settings to act as a bridge to effectively support the subject's transition and continue their professional growth and development further, or as a 'ditch' creating a negative influence on the subject's transition across the border to their new community of practice (Peters & Sandberg, 2016).

2.6 Systemic and Organisational Factors

Aotearoa New Zealand has often been referenced in international research as leading providers of quality BT induction and mentoring policy and schemes (Kearney, 2014), however, domestic research identifies key gaps in the transfer from policy to practice (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Langdon, 2011; Langdon et al. 2009; Langdon & Ward, 2015; Patterson & Thornton, 2014).

2.6.1 Mentoring Frameworks and Guidelines

Internationally, researchers continue to review, analyse, and compare different countries' national induction and mentoring practices, policy and schema to grow and develop their own national practices (Kearney, 2014; Shanks et al., 2022). In an Australian review, Kearney (2014), cross analysed the mentoring schemes for nine international programmes, including New Zealand, with a goal of identifying the key components in a best practice model of mentoring. Similarly, Shanks et al. (2022) conducted a research study analysing and cross comparing three European national mentoring programmes, in Scotland, Malta and Denmark. This research delved deeper than the review of policy conducted by Kearney (2014), realising that each researcher had similar but not identical sets of data on their BTs,

from their own individual research studies. Working instead in a cross-case analysis, the researchers focused on exploring and comparing how mentoring in each country supported the BTs transition into the teaching profession (Shanks et al., 2022). Aligning with Aotearoa New Zealand, our mentor policy and national scheme align closely to Malta and Scotland, with a two-year induction program (Malta), appointed mentor (Scotland & Malta), no requirements for mentor education (Scotland), no formal role of universities within the induction program (Scotland), and successful completion of mentoring/provisional certification period leading to full registration (Scotland and Malta). Across all four countries there are teacher shortages (NZEI, 2024; Shanks, 2022). Key differences identified are that Denmark has no national mentoring scheme with only 40-50% of BTs having access to a MT. Also, due to there being no formal national induction or mentoring scheme in Denmark, there was no provisional certification time leading to full registration, teachers are fully qualified after completing initial teacher education. Another notable disparity is that Malta has a formalised and accredited mentor education programme facilitated by the university (Shanks et al., 2022).

Here in New Zealand a national mentoring scheme was researched, drafted, trialled, released, revised and rereleased from 2005 – 2015 (Aitken, 2008; Buchanan, 2019; Cameron 2007; Cameron et al., 2007; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Langdon et al., 2009; Langdon, 2011; Langdon & Ward, 2015; Patterson & Thornton, 2014). Launching educative mentoring approaches in Aotearoa New Zealand, the *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) is the current mentoring framework in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, rather than

clarifying, shifting, and resetting mentoring practices in New Zealand education (Langdon & Ward, 2015), the national mentoring and induction guidelines appear to have generated uncertainty about how they are enacted in practice with participants creating and implementing their own interpretations of educative mentoring (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020). Researchers (Grudnoff, 2012; Patterson & Thornton, 2014) also came to this conclusion when analysing the effectiveness of the original '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011). In between the two releases, 2012-2014, the New Zealand Teachers Council (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025c) commissioned an evaluation of the 2011 guidelines, leading to the release of the updated '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). However, in this update there were minimal changes and the concerns over implementation from policy to practice were not addressed, with researchers highlighting a lack of clarity regarding requirements, roles, and interpretations of the policy resulting in 'ad hoc' practices (Buchanan, 2019, p. 83; Fyall et al., 2020) and risk of mentoring approaches returning to traditional notions of one-way knowledge transfer, a concern Grudnoff (2012) also shared. The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring appears to provide a lack of clarity around expectations of role and support in the design and organisation of the structure of the approach. This proposed approach briefly mentions educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), as the theory of learning guiding the approach, however unlike the current policy '*Professional Learning Journey: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) this literature does not outline any key practices or expectations of how educative mentoring will be applied. This lack of inclusion indicates this

proposal does not address the recognised need for a structured mentoring approach to support the implementation of educative mentoring in practice.

Internationally, researchers have begun inquiry and exploring beyond the basics of educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser 1998) and constructivist-oriented mentoring practices (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). With researchers identifying gaps in the transfer of educative mentoring from policy to practice (Hairon et al. 2020; Larsen et al., 2025), there has been a call for a more structured mentoring model to sit within the constructivist perspective of mentoring to provide more clarity and an organisational design of the mentoring programme (Kelly et al., 2018; Larsen et al., 2025; Wexler, 2020).

2.6.2 Mentor Selection and Alignment

Buchanan (2019) and Hobson & Maxwell (2020) both noted the need for careful and intentional mentor selection for BTs. Buchanan (2019) argues that in the selection process, one should look beyond the teachers experience and instead focus on their ability to create two-way communication, encourage personal and reciprocal growth, and themselves be aligned to practicing and embodying an educative mentoring mindset. In agreement with this notion, Hobson and Maxwell (2020) also identified issues of mentors 'assuming the role by default' (p. 192) in their research, leading to varying ranges of commitment from the mentors. Highlighting the nuanced relationship between MT and BT, Hobson and Maxwell (2020) encouraged rigorous methods of mentor selection, not placing BTs with their 'line managers' or leadership, BTs having an element of choice in who their mentor would be, and

the use of external mentors if no internal mentor was available who suited the BT. These were identified recommendations based on their research data.

2.6.3 Mentor Training and Support

Research findings by Buchanan (2019) and Fyall et al. (2020) highlighted confusion and discrepancies around the transfer of policy to practice in their data, particularly MTs' responsibilities. Both researchers used qualitative multiple case studies to observe and analyse the dyad relationships between BTs and their mentors. Through semi-structured interviews with participants, field notes and, in Buchanan's research, document analysis of government and local policy, both researchers' findings drew attention to a vast range of experiences their participants, BTs and MTs, had throughout the mentoring process. Comments from mentors concluded that they felt their mentoring role had minimal support and they were often left to make up their own program as they went (Buchanan, 2019). They also expressed feeling like a box tick to appease ministry expectations of schools for mentoring policy, moving through the motions of signing off BTs for their Tūturu/Full Practicing Certificate (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025d) rather than understanding or effectively implementing an educative mentoring approach. It is important to note, in the roll out period directly after the '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011) first launched, 48 workshops were conducted throughout Aotearoa New Zealand targeted at MTs and professional leaders to support their understanding and development of the guidelines. These workshops were beneficial in developing understanding and ways to effectively implement the new guidelines, however, only ran for two years (Teaching Council of

Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025c). A similar professional development programme would have been valuable with the launch of the 2015 republished guidelines (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) and as ongoing support for MTs and professional leaders, evidence by the lack of understanding and effective application of the current guidelines in research by Buchanan (2019) and Fyall et al. (2020).

Internationally, researchers have also come to the same conclusions. With concerns being highlighted about lack of support for MTs, such as resources, frameworks and expectations (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Loughran & Menter, 2019). Researchers have also acknowledged the need for mentor training and professional development to complete the role effectively, reflecting that mentors need targeted and professional learning support to understand and accurately mentor using educative approaches (Hairon et al., 2020; Hobson & Maxwell, 2020; Shanks, et al., 2022; Stanulis et al., 2019; Wexler, 2020). The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a; 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring indicated the plans for ensuring “quality educative mentoring for all new teachers by providing all MTs with appropriate professional learning” (p.3), however analysis of the literature identifies no further mention of this objective throughout the outline or explanation as to how this would be implemented practically.

2.6.4 University Communication from Theory to Practice

Highlighted in literature was the need for clearer processes of communication between universities and school contexts to support the school-to-work transition of the BT (Le

Maistre & Paré, 2009). There is a need to strengthen this partnership to ensure BTs are better prepared for the expectations of their teaching role and school context, alongside senior leadership and mentors being better prepared and understanding what the BTs have been learning and practicing (Ewing, 2021; Loughran & Menter, 2019). In their research, Loughran and Menter (2019) called for more communication between structures, hands on learning experiences for student teachers, and a shared understanding that learning is not confined to the University or the contexts of school, in which they teach. Further stating that:

Quality teacher education is dependent on effective partnerships between universities and schools in order to create well-structured programs based on critical interrogation and research into pedagogical experiences and practices as a positive way of fostering development and change for the future. (Loughran & Menter, 2019, p.226)

2.7 Chapter Summary and Rationale

In summary, the literature review has revealed that quality mentoring is essential for successful BT transitions from student to professional teacher. These experiences are multi-faceted and rely on a combination of effective practices. The literature highlighted the value of educative mentoring approaches (Feiman-Nemer, 2001) and the ongoing shift from transition-oriented mentoring to constructivist-oriented mentoring in theory, policy and practice (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Hairon et al., 2020; Stanulis et al., 2019). Strong relational foundations underpin the BT and MT dyad, while structured time allocation and support for BTs is a necessary component of teacher development. Ongoing assistance is also necessary to create and sustain borderland spaces (Peters & Sandberg, 2016) supporting BTs to navigate the liminal phase (Ackesjö, 2014) of their transition into the new community of

practice (Wenger, 1998). Finally, systemic and organisational improvements are needed, including clearer understanding and implementation of *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015), more targeted selection, training, and support of MTs, and stronger university-school communication to assist more efficient BT transitions.

The focus of this study aims to explore the current experiences and challenges of new educators and their mentors in Aotearoa New Zealand Primary Schools, to reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures. Given the release of the revised *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) ten years ago, and subsequent research exploring the effectiveness of the policy in practice is five years old (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020), until this research study there have been no other related research gathering current evidence of the Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring context. Importantly, throughout domestic literature, researchers have consistently made recommendations regarding:

- Lack of support for BT transitions (Murdoch, 1979b)
- Appeal for specific mentor selection, training, and support (Aitken et al., 2008; Buchanan, 2019; Cameron, 2007; ERO, 2004; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Patterson & Thornton, 2014; Renwick, 2001)
- Concerns over the implementation of educative mentoring approaches not being seen in practical evidence in research, leading to continued transition-oriented mentoring practices (Buchanan, 2019; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Langdon et al., 2009; Patterson & Thornton, 2014)

- Appeal for structure in national mentoring organisation and design, including clarity of mentor role and responsibility (Aitken et al., 2008; Buchanan, 2019; Cameron, 2007; ERO, 2004; Fyall et al., 2020; Grudnoff, 2012; Langdon et al., 2009; Patterson and Thornton, 2014, Renwick, 2001)

Regardless of policy and schema, these findings and recommendations span 46 years and yet continue to highlight what still requires improvement. Although the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring offers some hope for a revitalised domestic focus on BT mentoring practices, in comparison with the field of literature documenting induction and mentoring experiences over the past five decades, the proposed approach outlines do not look to address the ongoing recommendations of researchers findings in domestic policy and practice.

Internationally, research exploring and analysing various angles of BT induction and mentoring processes are consistent, however, domestic research on the topic has come to a stand-still, with no new research published in the field of mentoring in education, relating to primary teaching, since Fyall et al. (2020). It is important to note that internationally, adaptations, revisions and new practices are being introduced, trialled and reviewed to continue growth and development in mentoring techniques. Domestically, it is necessary that research in the field continues to push forward and develop the current schemes and practices, ensuring there is no complacency in the quality of mentoring provided in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter outlines the methodological basis of this research. Firstly, the paradigm and theoretical framework underpinning this research are introduced, positioning the research in a constructivist paradigm drawing on the theory of Communities of Practice and using a mixed methods approach. Following this, the focus of the study is outlined, and the research question is identified. The methods of data collection and procedures for data collection are explained, followed by a description of participants from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research study. Next, the methods for analysis of data collection are introduced, along with ethical considerations for the research. Finally, the quality of the research and trustworthiness are discussed.

3.1 Paradigm

Paradigms, also known as worldviews, can be defined as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”, (Guba, 1990, p.17). Throughout educational research, four paradigms hold prominence. These are Postmodernism, Positivism, Critical Theory and Interpretivism (Mbhiza, 2024). Interpretivism and Constructivism are closely related paradigms that both view reality as socially constructed and emphasise understanding participants’ meanings and experiences. While Interpretivism focuses on interpreting how individuals make sense of their world, Constructivism highlights the active process through which knowledge is co-

created, making the two terms often used interchangeably (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The Constructivism paradigm underpins the beliefs and actions guiding this study.

3.1.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is a philosophical worldview in which knowledge is socially constructed, reality is contextual, and meaning is co-created between individuals. Within this paradigm, the ontological view of reality is shaped through social interaction, while the epistemological view of knowledge and meaning is co-constructed by individuals through social interactions and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These perspectives align with my own beliefs as a researcher and guided the design of this study.

Adopting a constructivist paradigm allowed the focus of this research to center on exploring how people make sense of their experiences, in specific contexts, through mixed and interpretive methods. Constructive thought highlights that knowledge is personal and unique, shaped by participant's prior experience and situated understandings (Bada, 2015). This orientation positioned participants as active contributors to meaning making, rather than passive subjects of study.

Grounded in this paradigm, the study was designed to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection (Picciano, 2015) and analysis that enabled in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis to extend, compliment and support the qualitative findings. As the researcher, my role was to

participant words and my interpretations of the data. I then used these interpretations to carry out the thematic analysis and address the research question that guided this study.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks, also referred to as the “blueprint” (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p.12) of the research design, are conceptual lenses grounded in theory through which we as researchers interpret data and research questions. The theoretical framework provides structure to how the topic is viewed, which literature is relevant for review and supporting references, and is a key influence in the data analysis approaches selected (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Building on my constructivist beliefs and understandings of how reality is socially constructed and how the creation of meaning and knowledge is situated in the interactions and experiences we have, the theoretical approach, or blueprint, for this research study is Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of ‘Communities of Practice’, further developed by Wenger (1998).

3.2.1 Communities of Practice

‘Communities of Practice’, first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991), and further developed in subsequent works (Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 2008), provides a theoretical approach that views learning as a social process. Through this lens, learners are situated in their environment and co-construct meaning through participation in shared practices. Built on constructivist foundations, Communities of Practice explains how knowledge is socially constructed. It recognises that knowledge is not gained through isolation, but through

interaction, experience, dialogue and practice within a contextual setting (Lave & Wenger, 2008).

Within the Community of Practice, masters work to support newcomers to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to move toward full participation within the sociocultural practices of the community (Lave & Wenger, 2008). With relation to this research study, mentor teachers (MTs) assume the role of masters, having already acquired many necessary skills in their profession. These masters are tasked with the role of nurturing and including the beginning teachers (BTs)/newcomers, and supporting them to co-construct, make meaning of, and understand the necessary knowledge and skills they require to become a full practitioner within the teaching community of practice, within each school setting. As Bottoms et al. (2020) conclude, “interactions in shared activities foster learning, as members share their expertise, co-construct knowledge, develop an identity around these practices, and become fully participating members of the community.” (p. 198).

Although no longer the focal theory from Lave and Wenger (1991), but rather an important element within their wider work, their concept of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) is well referenced throughout research on mentoring practices. This concept captures the trajectory of the BT as they journey from a position of being outside of the community to participating, collaborating, and “becoming” (p. 198) an active and central member of the community of practice (Bottoms et al., 2020). The use of a Communities of Practice lens in this study provided a useful framework for understanding the nature of mentoring relationships and interactions that occur throughout various pairing dynamics and contextual settings.

3.3 Focus of the Research

The focus of this small-scale research study aimed to explore education mentoring programs of BTs by identifying the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors. The significance of this study is in its potential to provide a deeper understanding of how current mentoring relationships operate, and how these findings could benefit and contribute to the professional growth of educators in Aotearoa New Zealand in the future.

By examining the systemic factors, challenges and trends influencing BT induction and mentoring experiences, through surveys, questionnaires and semi structured interviews, this research aimed to identify areas for improvement in and around the mentoring relationship. Highlighting opportunities to enhance consistency and support within mentoring systems would better equip MTs to fulfil their role and foster a positive, rich mentoring environment.

Researching within a constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), ensured that this study focused on the understanding that reality is socially constructed and that multiple perspectives exist. Each participant contributed knowledge shaped by their individual experiences, cultural contexts, and social relationships. As the researcher, care was taken to ensure that the methods of data collection enabled participants to share their perspectives clearly and meaningfully. This research study was split into two phases, reflecting a mixed methods approach.

The first phase used a mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative questioning into the survey. BT and MT participants from 2017 – 2024, throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, were invited to share their thoughts, experiences, and challenges about their mentoring relationships. The quantitative questioning and data collection in this phase supported the identification and measurement of perceptions of belonging or engagement within the participants' communities of practice, as well as identifying patterns in collaborative behaviour throughout the data set. The second phase of the research followed a purely qualitative approach which narrowed in on the inner working relationships of two current BT and MT pairs, using case studies. A qualitative approach was beneficial here to further develop an understanding of how knowledge is transferred or developed within these dyad relationships, and how identities and roles evolve or develop within the community of practice.

This mixed methods approach enabled me to identify key trends, opinions, and findings from the first phase of research and explore how they related to, impacted or supported interpretation of the data collected from the current working relationships in the second phase of data collection. Collecting data through semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility in the direction of the questioning and ensured each participant's personal and unique experiences were accurately captured in the responses.

3.3.1 Research Question

How can the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures?

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In this research study, a mixed methods approach was used to gather data. Mixed methods of research combined the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This allowed for a more robust analysis of the data and research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Greene, 2021; McKim, 2017).

This research was separated into two phases of data collection. The first phase of data collection consisted of the 'BT and MT Data Collection Survey' (Appendix A). This survey included both quantitative and qualitative questioning and data analysis. The purpose of the mixed method survey was to effectively gain participants' views and feelings about their experiences using the Likert Scale (Robinson, 2014; Rokeman, 2024; Sullivan & Artino, 2013) and support these with the addition of their qualitative descriptive explanations about those experiences.

The second phase of the research study adopted a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018). This design allowed an in-depth investigation analysing the dyadic relationship between BTs and MTs within two mentoring relationships. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews specified for BTs and MTs (Appendices B & C) and two questionnaires (Appendix D & E), with one formative and one summative, to provide a cross-analysis of the mentoring

experiences and challenges represented by both BT and MT perspectives. Each dyadic mentoring relationship represented one case study. This phase of the research study was conducted over two case studies.

3.4.1 Survey

The quantitative data collection tool of the survey was selected as this method allowed for data to be quickly and easily collected from a range of participants throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. The online survey, conducted via Google Forms, was geographically dispersed through the Facebook page 'NZ Teachers (Primary)' page (Appendix F) to gain wide access to possible participants. This was a form of voluntary response sampling (Stratton, 2023), a non-probability form of sampling, where participants had the choice to volunteer and participate in the survey or not. This method also allowed for the highest level of anonymity and ease of use for the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013), which was necessary when conducting the survey where the focus was on collecting current and recent information on participants' positive and negative experiences with colleagues, mentors and mentees.

This survey was designed as a descriptive survey with the purpose of collecting data at one point in time to gather information about the current and past experiences and challenges of BTs and MTs. Pre-existing knowledge and information about the topic collected through the literature review and my own personal experiences were used to guide the quantitative portion of the survey (Bowling, 2005). In designing this survey, a focus was placed on creating opportunities for participants to quantitatively respond to questions using closed questions and the Likert Scale (Robinson, 2014; Rokeman, 2024), to provide opportunities in the

analysis to clearly quantify the findings through the data and visuals (graphs, descriptive statistics etc.) that represented the data collected. This survey also included open-ended qualitative questioning to further explore the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This was necessary as the data from this survey was used to guide the focus of the semi-structured interviews in the second phase of research.

Following recommendations by Mazhar et al. (2021) when designing, writing, conducting and analysing survey data, care was taken to ensure that the survey followed a logical sequence with clear headings that provided ease and clarity for the participants to follow. Within the Google Form, the survey was split into two separate question paths, based on the selection of either 'BT Perspective' or 'MT Perspective'. This allowed participants to move through the survey without confusion or opportunity to mis-read or mistakenly enter data that was irrelevant to their perspective. This split in the survey paths also allowed for easier analysis of the data and clearer comparison of experiences between the two groups, BTs and MTs.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the key form of data collection in Phase 2 of the research study, as they allowed enough flexibility to include the key themes and findings presented from the survey in the first phase of research. However, they also allowed the conversation to change direction to include a personally unique account of each participant's experiences, interpretation of the questions, and perspective (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The interview question guides differed slightly between BT and mentor questions to better encapsulate the differences between their experiences and allow for this to come

through in the interview responses. Both interview guide designs included five themes; general feelings, influences and challenges, structure of mentoring time, goals and progress, and problem solving. The BT interview guide consisted of 22 open-ended questions (not including sub-questions), and the MT interview guide consisted of 26 open-ended questions (not including sub-questions). These questions were designed to flow from theme to theme, building on the experiences each participant shared, following a logical flow design (Mazhar et al. 2021). Each participant received access to the interview guides at least two days before their interview, ensuring time to read through the proposed structure. This allowed each participant autonomy on how they answer the questions, and if there were any questions they would like to refuse to answer or elaborate on further (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Recording of the interviews was conducted via Zoom, and an AI transcript recording of the interviews was conducted via Otter.ai. These tools were explicitly identified to each of the participants, stating the purpose and use of the tools in the research. Participants were given the option to accept the use of these tools to record and transcribe the interview or deny. The transcriptions of each interview were re-written by the researcher, to ensure no artificial intelligence errors were made, and the participants' perspectives and words were correctly represented in the interview transcriptions. Each participant was given access to their own transcripts and were able to make or suggest changes or additions to their interview transcriptions or withdraw their transcripts from the study (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). They had a two-week period to complete this before the data was officially entered into the research to be analysed.

3.4.3 Questionnaires

The research data collection method of a questionnaire was used in this research study as it provided a tool that allowed for participants to easily access and respond to a set of summary questions to conclude their participation in the research study, without the need for a second interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The organisation of the summary questionnaire had been split into two paths, 'BT Path' and 'MT Path', to best meet the question requirements of each participant. This also allowed participants to complete the questionnaire with ease and without having to guess which questions applied to them (Mazhar et al. 2021). Following a similar format to the interview question guide, participants would be familiar with the line of questioning but would be able to highlight or comment on the key experiences that influenced them throughout this research data collection period.

Although, a primarily qualitative questionnaire, this questionnaire included three initial questions which relied on the Likert Scale (Robinson, 2014; Sullivan & Artino, 2013) to respond. This closed type of questioning encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences and respond in a way that could be accurately and directly compared to other participants. However, below each of these three scaled questions was an open text box, which encouraged participants to explain 'what experiences led [them] to this rating'. The inclusion of these three closed-ended questions supports the 'Funnel Approach' (Chauncy, 2013). In questionnaire writing the funnel approach is used to build trust with participants when completing questionnaires by introducing the questionnaire with general, simple and relatively non-threatening questions to hook the participant in. As the questionnaire continued, the questions become more specific and the explanations often more detailed. To encourage completion of the questionnaire in its fullest, a progress bar was also visible

throughout the questionnaire to show participants how far through the questionnaire they were (Mazhar et al, 2021).

3.5 Procedures for Data Collection

Data for the research study were collected over two phases, with the use of three methods of data collection, and in four different contexts throughout the study. Each of these sections describes the procedures for data collection of each of the four data collection points.

3.5.1 Mixed Methods Survey

The Quantitative Survey (Appendix A) used to collect data in Phase One of the research study was designed and conducted through Google Forms. This data collection tool was used as it was highly accessible to the participants, as many schools use Google Drive as their main email and document sharing storage service. The data collected was then automatically tabulated into three options for analysis; overall answers, per question, and per individual response. This automatic sorting of data supported the analysis to clearly identify key themes and commonalities within the responses. This analysis supported the direction of questioning for the semi-structured interviews.

3.5.2 Questionnaire to Gather Basic Information

At the beginning of Phase Two, participants completed a 5-minute Google Form questionnaire (Appendix D) to gather basic information on each individual participant to be included when discussing the context of the findings. This questionnaire was also used as a

communication tool to identify interview availability and improve efficiency for both the researcher and the participants.

3.5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Based on the analysis of the Phase One survey, semi-structured interview questions (Appendices B & C) were drafted and used as a guide for the individual semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. The BT and MT questions followed a similar trajectory, however differed slightly to include necessary perspectives and relevant experiences from each of the participants. Additional questions were also added throughout the interviews to gain a clearer understanding of a situation or build more on what the participant was saying. With the range in types of schools and personal experiences both BTs and MTs were experiencing, the differentiation of the questions by using the semi-structures interviews was necessary in gathering robust data that adequately represented the experiences and challenges of each participant. All participants chose to have the interviews conducted via Zoom. As per the ethical guidelines, each participant was clearly informed of their rights, responsibilities and advised of best ways to keep themselves and the research study protected during the online interview process. An AI transcription tool, Otter.ai, was used to record the meeting, and the Zoom recording feature was also used to ensure that correct transcription was recorded.

3.5.4 Summary Questionnaire

A summary questionnaire (Appendix E) was distributed to each participant, via the Google Form platform, approximately four months after the semi-structured interviews were

conducted. Following a same line of questioning as the semi-structured interviews, the questionnaire was used as a tool to collect summary data on the final thoughts, feelings, experiences and challenges of the participants over the time of their mentoring experience. The comparability of the line of questions was designed to show growth, consistency, or regression in the experiences of the participants. Only three of the four participants completed the summary questionnaire (BT1, BT2 and MT1).

3.6 Participants

The details for recruiting and accessing participants to participate in the research study have been discussed further under heading 3.8 Ethical Considerations. This section will outline the participants' description and context.

3.6.1 Phase 1

The 'BT and MT Data Collection Survey' (Appendix A) was posted on the 'NZ Teachers (Primary)' Facebook page three times over the period of two weeks along with the Facebook post (Appendix F) which clearly introduced the research study and invited participants who met the criteria to participate in the anonymous online survey. 25 participants completed the survey, although one response cannot be included as it was completed in reference to student teachers and not BTs. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the participants and Figure 1 provides the geographic location for each of the respondents.

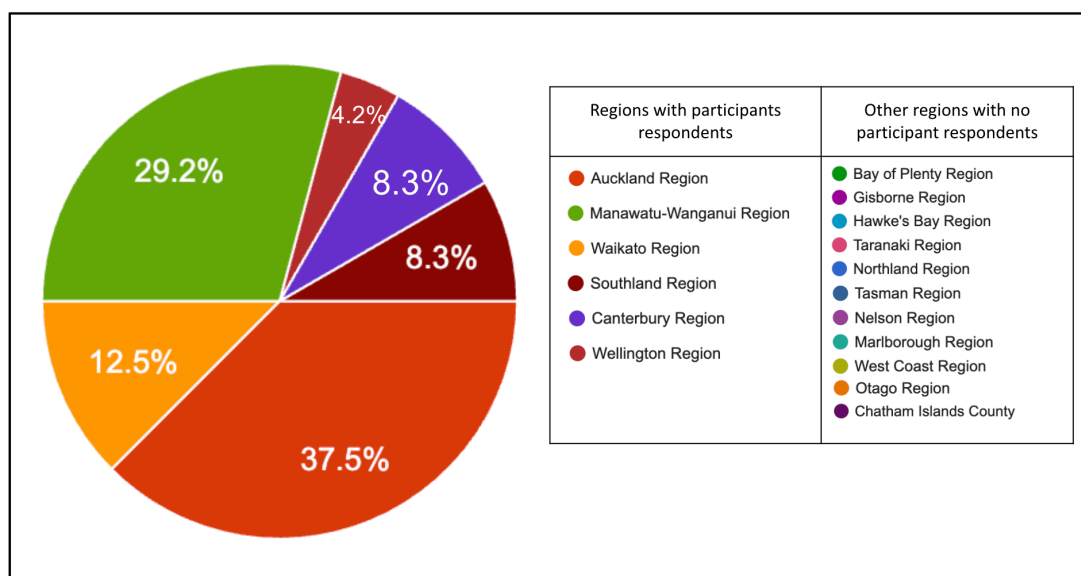
Table 2

Overview of Participants from Phase One 'BT and MT Data Collection Survey'

BT Responses	MT Responses	Total Responses
14	10	24

Figure 1

Pie Graph showing Aotearoa New Zealand region/location of respondents



3.6.2 Phase 2

In the second phase of the research study, participants were invited to participate through three recruitment approaches. These were snowball sampling (Parker et al., 2019) (Appendix G); posting to the Facebook 'NZ Teachers (Primary)' page (Appendix H); and random sampling emailing to 10 Waikato and 10 Auckland principals (Appendices G & I). All participants (BT

and MT) in this phase of the study were recruited through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling (Parker et al., 2019) is a form of participant recruitment which allows the researcher to call on personal contacts who may have other contacts, outside of the researchers' personal circle, which meet the participant criteria that they can invite to be participants. Much like a snowball effect, through snowball sampling the participant pool continues to grow. With the addition of snowball sampling, I had hoped to recruit four mentoring pairs for the case study however, only two were able to meet the requirements stipulated in Appendix M. Refer to Table 3 for an overview of the case study participant pairs.

Table 3

Overview of Phase 2 Case Study Participant Pairs Description and Contexts

Pair	Code Name	Years teaching	N# of BTs Mentored	Current Year Level Teaching	School Size	School Type
Case Study 1	BT 1	2 nd Year BT		Year 5	150 students	Religious School English Medium
	MT 1	9 years	1	Release Teacher Year 4-5		
Case Study 2	BT 2	2 nd Year BT		Year 2-3	207 students	Area School English Medium
	MT 2	10 years	4	Deputy Principal		

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Analysis of Data

A range of data has been collected through various mixed methods data collection tools in this research. For the quantitative section of the Phase One survey (Appendix A), Descriptive

Statistics analysis (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016) was used to analyse the data. This analysis approach allowed for the quantitative data collected through the Likert scale (Robinson, 2014; Rokeman, 2024; Sullivan & Artino, 2013) questioning to be summarised, organised and simplified. This data could then be used to strengthen the qualitative question findings within the same survey. Braun and Clarke's (2019) Reflexive Thematic Analysis has been used for all qualitative data analysis. All methods of data collection involved qualitative approaches, although the initial survey included a mixed data approach, designed to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative components.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016), was used in this study to summarise and present the key findings in the quantitative questions of the research sample from the survey. This analysis focused on organising data to show patterns and trends from the experiences of beginning and mentoring teachers. In the research description, statistics were applied to outline participant demographics and survey responses, including measures of percentages and averages. By providing an overview of the sample's key characteristics, descriptive analysis helped establish context for the study and ensured the findings were grounded in an accurate representation of the collected data.

The Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) approach was selected for all qualitative data analysis as the method design supports the weaving of participant experiences with my ongoing engagement with and interpretations of the data and theoretical framing within a communities of practice approach. This approach is foundational and flexible, and allowed me as a researcher to interpret data through a structured yet reflective process.

Throughout the phases of the approach, reflexive journaling was used to establish an audit trail, keep track of emerging impressions of what the data meant, and create connections to better understand how they related to each other. Establishing this allowed me to keep myself accountable and acknowledge my reflexive role as a researcher, where there is space for my perspectives and interpretations to enter the study but measures in place to regularly check myself and my analytic practice. The six clear phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) ensure trustworthiness in the research analysis and guarantee the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the findings representing accurate reflections of the participants' experiences.

The first step involved immersing myself in the data sets to become deeply familiarised with them. Reading and re-reading surveys, questionnaire responses, and transcripts. Listening to transcript audio recordings and making initial notes and observations on interesting points and potential patterns that occurred. During the second phase of analysis, initial codes were generated based on the initial identification of features in the data that were meaningful or interesting. Throughout this initial coding phase, manual coding techniques, such as highlighting and labelling various segments of data with set codes, were used to identify patterns and similarities.

During the third phase of analysis, codes were organised into groups of broader patterns of meaning, searching for themes. Data was then collated into themes of relevance. A thematic map was then created to identify how the codes related to the themes and sub themes, with a focus on ensuring the themes did not only summarise the data but connected to my

research question. The fourth phase of analysis focused heavily on refining the collected data for each theme and ensuring a meaningful pattern was identifiable. This phase relied on editing data extracts within sets to best support the themes and check if themes overlapped.

During the fifth phase of the analysis, each of the themes were finalised, detailed theme descriptions were recorded, and sub-themes were identified where applicable. Each of the themes were named to ensure clear boundaries and distinct identities to differentiate the themes and support the overall story of the data analysis. Finally, in the sixth phase of the data analysis, the findings were presented, with the results weaving together the themes and supporting data extracts, to provide a clear argument connecting to the research question and supporting literature.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was gained in two separate applications, for phases one (Appendix J) and two (Appendix K), from the University of Waikato's Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee. When conducting this research, the following ethical issues were considered.

3.8.1 Phase 1

The first phase of research involved collecting data via a survey. This survey was a single method, mixed data approach, designed to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative components.

3.8.1.1 Access to Participants

Initially, access to participants was going to be gained via widespread local emails to primary school principals, who then had the option to send an invitation to their teaching staff to partake in the online survey. Unfortunately, after contacting 269 primary schools within Waikato, there were no online responses to the survey. At this point, the decision was made to request an amendment to the ethics application for phase 1. After the amendment was accepted, a different approach to recruiting participants was taken. Participants were recruited through a Facebook post on the 'NZ Teachers (Primary)' page inviting participants (Appendix F). Posts were made on three occasions over a two-week period. As participants were contacted directly through Facebook, there was more engagement with the survey than the first attempt at contact. By adding the survey to Facebook, data was able to be collected from across New Zealand and not confined to the Waikato region. To gain more information on where the responses came from, an adjustment was made to the survey to include the region of the participants.

3.8.1.2 Informed Consent

For this survey, informed consent (Lindsay, 2010) was automatically collected with the submission of the survey. Each participant automatically gave their consent to have their data included in the survey analysis when submitting the survey. A statement about informed consent was included at the beginning of the questionnaire with clear and explicit bullet points of the procedures to which the participants were consenting to and how this consent was collected before participants began to complete the survey. This statement also included clear information about the purpose, use, and how the data was to be securely stored to

maintain privacy and security after collection. Participants were informed of their rights and what they consented to (Lindsay, 2010), a second time, before finalising submission.

3.8.1.3 Potential Harm to Participants

As the survey was posted to an online forum, Facebook, each participant had the choice to engage in the survey or not to. No participants were forced or coerced to complete the survey. The process was outlined in the section before ensuring that informed consent had been gathered by each participant. All participants were reminded throughout the survey not to disclose their names, names of their colleagues, school, children, or families of the school, to protect privacy and confidentiality of all. No potential harm was identified for participants completing this survey. As the survey was posted on an online forum, which included the option to comment publicly, a statement in the Facebook Post (Appendix F) was included to discourage members of the Facebook Group from sharing criticism or complaints in the comments and instead inviting them to share their thoughts within the survey responses itself.

3.8.2 Phase 2

The second phase of research focused primarily on qualitative methods of collecting data.

This phase included participants signing informed consent forms, filling in a basic information questionnaire, completing a semi-structured interview, and completing a summary questionnaire.

3.8.2.1 Access to Participants

At the end of the first research phase, survey participants were given the option to enquire to participate in the second phase of the research (Appendix A). To do this, they would initiate contact with myself, the researcher, via email. Unfortunately, there were no enquiries of interest made to participate in that recruitment approach. To combat this, three methods were executed to recruit participants in the second phase of research. These were, a Facebook Post on the 'NZ Teacher's Primary' page (Appendix H), snowball sampling (Parker et al. 2019) using contacts of my own to recruit new participants and send them the information to enquire (Appendix G), and random name generator to identify 20 schools throughout the Waikato and Auckland regions to email and invite to participate in the research study (Appendices G & I).

3.8.2.2 Informed Consent

For this phase of research, informed consent (Lindsay, 2010) was gained via the signed consent of each participant to participate in the research study (Appendix L). A statement about informed consent was included on the consent form and in an accompanying letter with clear and explicit bullet points of the procedures to which participants consent (Appendix M). This statement also included clear information about the purpose, use of, and how the data would be stored securely to maintain privacy and security after collection. Participants were able to contact the researcher via email to further discuss any questions or concerns if needed. The option to withdraw from the study was included in the informed consent form, and participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw at every data collection point.

3.8.2.3 Potential Harm to Participants

To ensure the safety and protection of each participant, it was crucial that all participants joined the study voluntarily and signed informed consent (Appendix L). As the participants were enrolled in the research as pairs, it was imperative that both members of the pair were comfortable participating and able to commit to the requirements of the research outlined in the various invitations (Appendices, G& M). Although the analysis of the data focused on the data across the pair relationships, the nature of the methodology was individual, and data collected in one participant interview or questionnaire was not shared with their pair to ensure confidentiality and the opportunity to speak and share freely. As the interviewer, a careful line of questioning was chosen, so as not to disrupt or influence the current dynamic of the pairs' mentoring relationship through the course of the interviewing process. During the 1-1 interviews, participants were encouraged to share as much or as little as they wanted to; they had the right to decline to answer a question and the right to stop the interview or withdraw themselves from the study at any time. Participants were informed that they would be receiving the transcript of their interview and would have two weeks to review or amend the transcript before it would be officially entered into the research study as data. Making sure that participants were aware and understood their rights as participants in the research study was a key factor in minimising potential harm to the participants.

After ongoing discussions with supervisors and the ethics committee (Appendix K), it was decided that there was no need to seek the consent of principals to allow their staff to complete this phase of the research. As the study was small, the risk of potential harm to participants was increased if their principals knew about their involvement and analysed the published research to identify the participants and their contributions to the research.

Identification of the participants' responses could be harmful to their professional working relationships and teaching positions. No identifying factors about the teachers or school have been used in the research analysis, and this research was ethically approved to commence with the understanding that this approach to not include principals' consent and input was done to protect the anonymity and prevent potential harm to participants involved in the study.

3.9 Quality of Research

It is essential that all research was conducted in an ethical manner and that the quality of the research and the integrity of the participants was upheld throughout the research process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As this research study was grounded in a constructivist paradigm, with the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, the necessity for clear trustworthiness was paramount to provide an accurate representation of the participants experiences and viewpoints. To ensure the trustworthiness of this research study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) seminal Trustworthiness Criteria guidelines have been followed to guarantee the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research and its findings.

3.9.1 Trustworthiness

From a constructivist viewpoint, knowledge is constructed between the participants words and the researcher's interpretations. Therefore, trustworthiness is essential in validating that the collaboration of meaning-making has been ethical, transparent, and respectful. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) Trustworthiness Criteria has been used to guide and explain my approach

throughout the research, along with supporting references (Koch, 1994; Nowell, et al, 2017; Stahl & King, 2020) to further breakdown the key elements of what makes this research trustworthy.

3.9.1.1 Credibility

The credibility of this research lies in the transparency of meaning making between the participants' words and the researcher's interpretations of this data. Using a "member checking" (Stahl & King, 2020, p. 27) approach, all participants were sent copies of their interview transcripts to review and amend their data for accuracy if needed. Participants were given a timeframe of two weeks to complete this review before the transcript data was officially entered into the analysis process. This timeframe was crucial in supporting the credibility of the data being collected accurately matched with the participants' perspectives and experiences. The summary questionnaire participants completed approximately four months post interview also followed a very similar format of questioning to the interview structure. This intended similarity allowed participants to further reflect on their experiences and viewpoints, include additional comments on the overall understanding of their experiences over the course of the study, and summarise what key findings they have identified throughout the study experience.

3.9.1.2 Transferability

It is widely understood that qualitative research cannot be replicated, due to the intricacies of each participant's experiences and the contexts in which they lie (Stahl & King, 2020). However, by providing a "thick description" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 125) that details key

elements of the research – such as the structure, methods, timeline, approach and analysis – used, transferability of this qualitative research structure can be enhanced to be applied in a new context.

3.9.1.3 Dependability

To affirm that this research was dependable, key efforts were made to ensure that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented. This audit trail provided a detailed record of the research decisions, procedures, and changes made throughout the study to ensure its dependability. Following a reflexive thematic analysis of data, “bracketing” (Stahl & King, 2020, p.28) was also used to ensure data was separated into observations and interpretations and that researcher bias did not influence the analysis of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1995; Nowell et al. 2017).

3.9.1.4 Confirmability

In ensuring confirmability in the research, recommendations (Ahmed, 2024; Koch, 1994) were followed to include ‘markers’ or ‘reasons’ for the theoretical, methodological and analytic choices made throughout the entire study. These markers supported the understanding of how decisions were made, and in combination with the audit trail and reflexivity ensured that the findings have been shaped from participants' responses and that the data and findings were clearly linked and supported by evidence.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methodology of this thesis. It outlined the theoretical framework and situated this study within a mixed methods approach, discussing the connections and grounding of this research within the constructivism paradigm. The focus of the study was described, and the research question was presented. This chapter provided relevant literature to support the three research methods used to collect data, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, and the procedures in which that data was collected. A description of the participants involved in Phases 1 and 2 was provided, and the analysis of data approaches for each of these stages, including both quantitative and qualitative methodology, was explored. Efforts were made to ensure ethical issues were considered and addressed, and finally the quality of the research and the trustworthiness of this research study were examined.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings for this study which explored the experiences of beginning teachers (BTs) and mentor teachers (MTs) within the Aotearoa New Zealand primary school context. These findings, from both quantitative and qualitative analysis, have been derived to support the integration of the participants' experiences and words with my interpretation of meaning.

The findings are organised into two sections, representing the two phases of data collection. Phase 1 findings depict the experiences of past BTs and MTs collected in a mixed methods survey via descriptive statistical analysis (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016) for quantitative data and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) for qualitative data. Phase 2 findings illustrate the current experiences of two BT and MT case study pairs. Data was collected via interviews and a summary questionnaire, then reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) was used to code data and construct themes. The interview and questionnaire responses were woven together to illustrate how each participants' experiences progressed in relation to the themes over the course of six months. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

4.1 Phase 1 – Mixed Methods Survey

Findings from the Phase 1 mixed methods survey include both Descriptive Statistics analysis of the quantitative data collected, and Reflexive Thematic Analysis of the qualitative data collected. This data is also analysed from BT and MT perspectives and then compared to highlight and address commonalities and differences in the findings.

4.1.1 Phase 1 - Quantitative Analysis

The use of descriptive statistical analysis for the quantitative survey questions enabled the presentation of explicit percentages and numerical data that support and complement the qualitative findings. While the questions asked of BTs and MTs varied slightly to reflect their specific roles within the mentoring dyad (Appendices B & C), the questions were intentionally designed to be comparable and provide insight into each group's experiences from their respective perspectives.

For clarity and ease, each of the questions with comparable findings between BTs and MTs will be presented together. MTs were given two extra questions that were specific to their experiences as an MT, and these findings will be presented at the end of this section. Each of the questions followed the Likert Scale (Robinson, 2014; Rokeman, 2024) with a 1-5 response option. In all cases except retention of teachers, 1 was considered the lowest score and 5 the highest. The wording for each question varies slightly and will be stated at each question.

Figures have been grouped into the themes encapsulating questions relating to experience and relationships; access to resources, support, time, opportunities and experiences; teacher retention; and mentor specific questions. In each of the figures below, a double bar graph visually representing findings is included for each theme as well as a summary of the corresponding descriptive statistics. The blue bar represents the beginning teacher responses with n=14 participants, and the red bar represents the mentor teacher responses with n=10 participants.

Descriptive statistics included in these figures present:

- the mean average response;
- mode (most common response);
- standard deviation (showing how much the data values vary spread out from the mean average of the dataset);
- percentages of responses from the Likert Scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) data for each bar on the graph with comparison of BT and MT responses; with negative (1-2), neutral (3), and positive (4-5) Likert scale response percentages.

The descriptive statistics analysis of the Phase 1 quantitative data interpretation and description has focused frequency distribution expressed through percentages rather than mean, standard deviation, and mode. Given that the data is ordinal in nature, frequency distribution better describes the attitudinal perspectives of the participants (Rokeman, 2024; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Frequency distribution analysis expressed through percentages also

supports comparison of BT and MT experiences regardless of the different total sample sizes of BTs (n=14) and MTs (n=10).

4.1.1.1 Comparable Questions

In this section, findings from the comparable questions have been presented under three themes: experience and relationships; access to resources, support, time, opportunities and experiences; and teacher retention.

Experience and Relationship

In Figure 2, Question 1 shows overall mentoring experiences from both BTs and MTs were perceived positively, with nine (90%) MTs and eight (57.2%) BTs indicating positive experiences. More BTs (21.4%) than MTs (0%) reported negative experiences.

Figure 2

Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of their overall mentoring experience with their beginning or mentor teacher and corresponding descriptive statistics

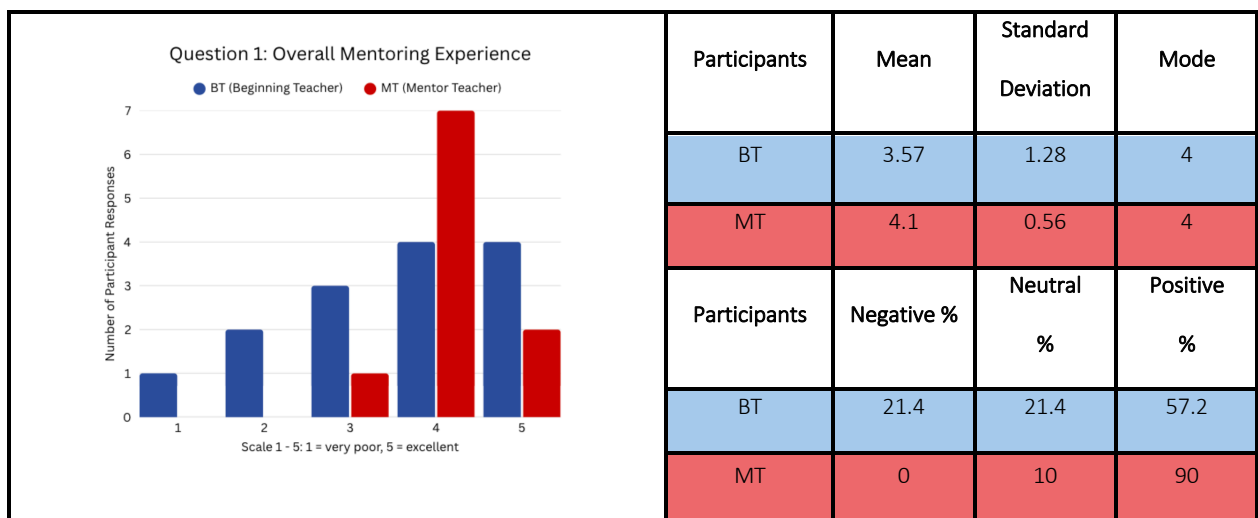
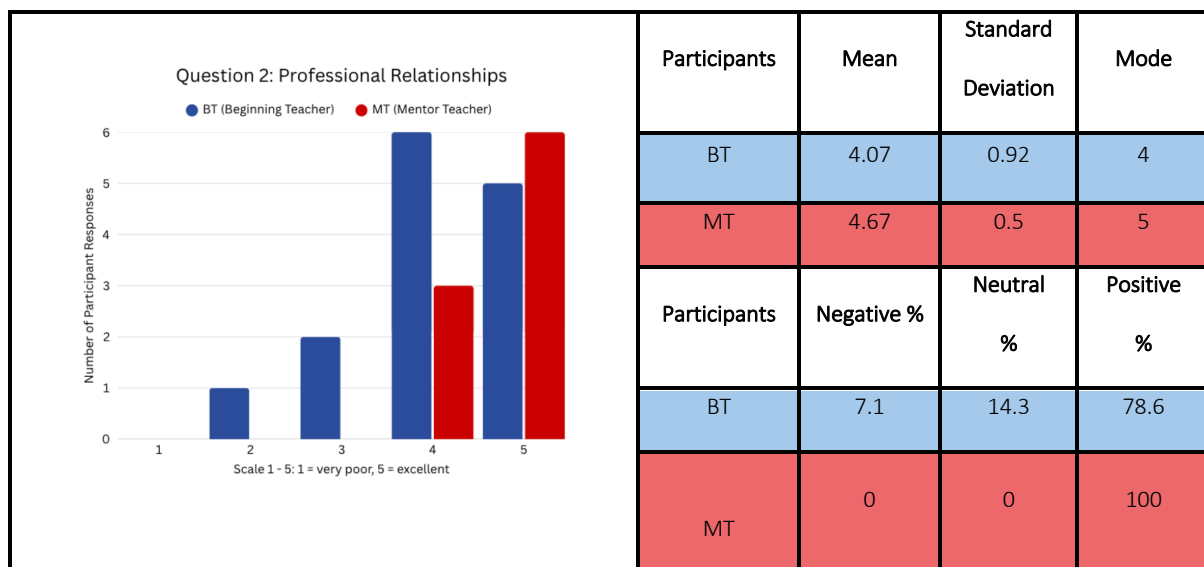


Figure 3, Question 2 shows positive experiences in professional relationships. As above, BT responses show more range with two (14.3%) BTs indicating neutral views and one (7.1%) BT reporting a poor experience. It is important to note that only 9/10 MTs answered this question regarding professional relationships, and all of these rated them positively.

Figure 3

Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of their professional relationship with their beginning or mentor teacher and corresponding descriptive statistics



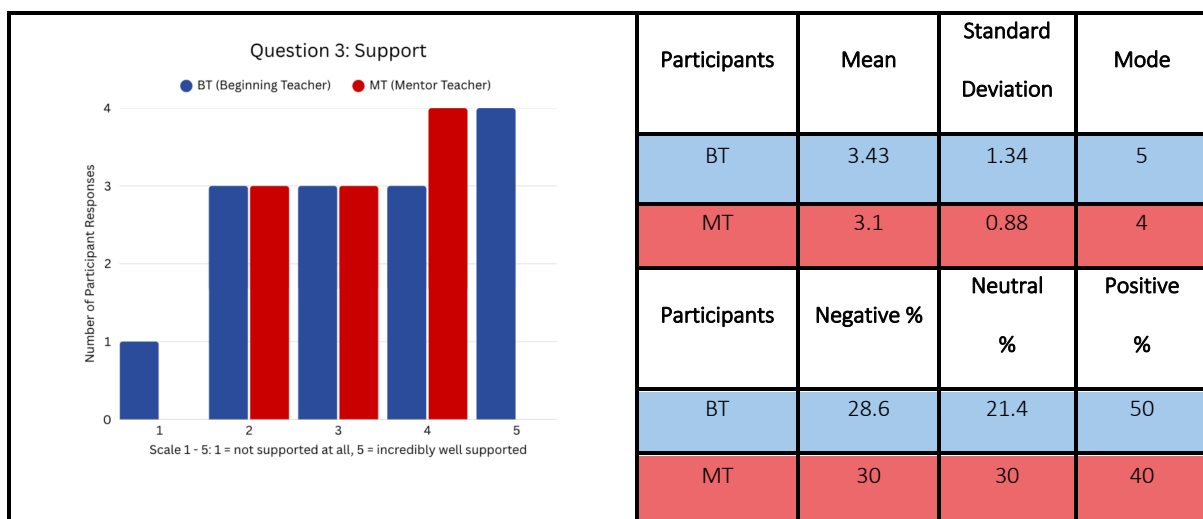
The findings from the questions relating to experience and relationship indicate that overall, both BTs and MTs are having positive experiences and building nurturing mentoring relationships. Although this data reflects positivity, it is important to note that not all BT experiences were positive, and further investigation is needed to address the causes for this.

Access to Resources, Support, Time, Opportunities and Experiences

Looking at the perceptions of support received, Figure 4, Question 3 shows both MTs and BTs reported mean averages between 3.1 and 3.43, reflecting the neutrality of the data. Four (28.6%) BTs perceived their MT as being incredibly supportive, with only one (7.1%) BT reflecting that they felt they were not supported at all. MT perceptions of the support they received to complete their role were very similar, although more positively weighted.

Figure 4

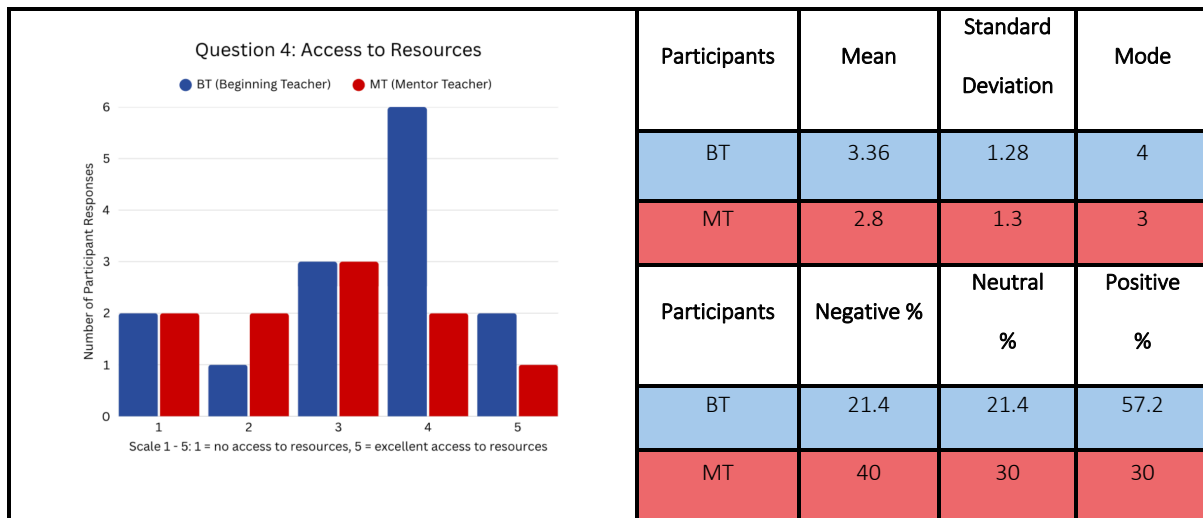
Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of their access to support and corresponding descriptive statistics



Regarding access to resources Figure 5, Question 4 shows a range of access to supporting resources, such as guidelines, frameworks and documents available to both BTs and MTs. These findings indicate both BTs' and MTs' perceptions of support were spread from no access to excellent access; however, BT perceptions were more positively weighted than MT perceptions.

Figure 5

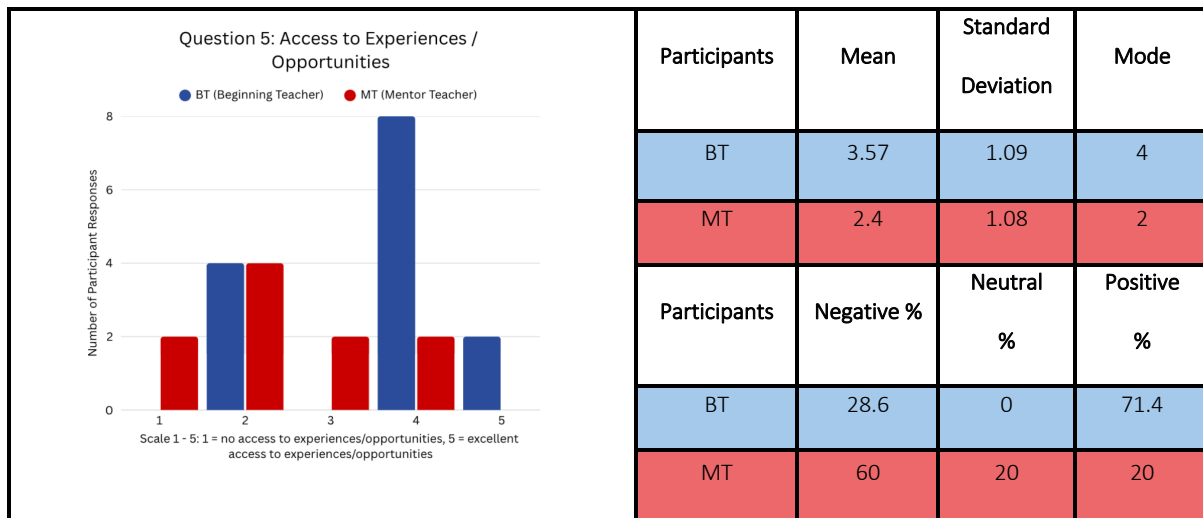
Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of their access to supporting resources and corresponding descriptive statistics



In relation to the access to impactful experiences and opportunities, such as professional development and courses participants received within their mentoring experience Figure 6, Question 5 shows MTs had significantly lower access to impactful experiences and opportunities with six (60%) MTs reporting nil or minimal access. Four (28.6%) BTs also indicated nil or minimal access, while 10 (71.4%) BTs responses showed good access. These findings indicate that there is more access and availability to impactful professional development and courses for BTs than MTs. However, these impactful experiences and opportunities are not accessible or available for all BTs.

Figure 6

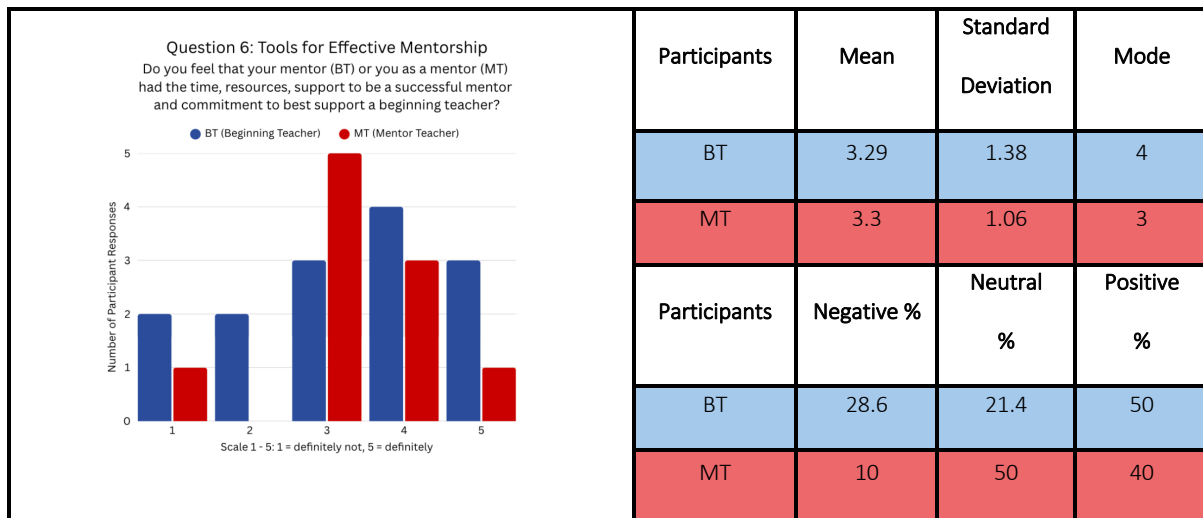
Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of their access to impactful opportunities and experiences, and corresponding descriptive statistics



Regarding perceptions of mentor time availability and commitment to their role as an MT Figure 7, Question 6 shows mixed responses from both BTs and MTs. Seven (50%) BTs responded positively about their MTs' availability, while three (21.4%) BTs shared neutral views, and a further four (28.6%) indicated that their MTs did not have time for them. The MT responses shows that four (40%) MTs had positive views, five (50%) shared neutral views, and one (10%) definitely did not feel successful in completing their role effectively due to time, resources, and support. However, in the written responses, four (40%) MTs commented on their feelings of inadequacy to provide the necessary time, resources, support, and commitment to their BT. This paradox in findings indicates that although MTs feel they are capable mentor teachers, upon further reflection highlighted the need for more support, time, and resources to effectively fulfill their role as MT.

Figure 7

Comparison of beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of mentor time availability and corresponding descriptive statistics



The findings from the questions regarding access to support, resources, impactful experiences, and time indicate a wide range of experiences among BTs and MTs. This range highlights the positive support available to some BTs and MTs currently but also draws attention to the limited access other BTs and MTs are receiving.

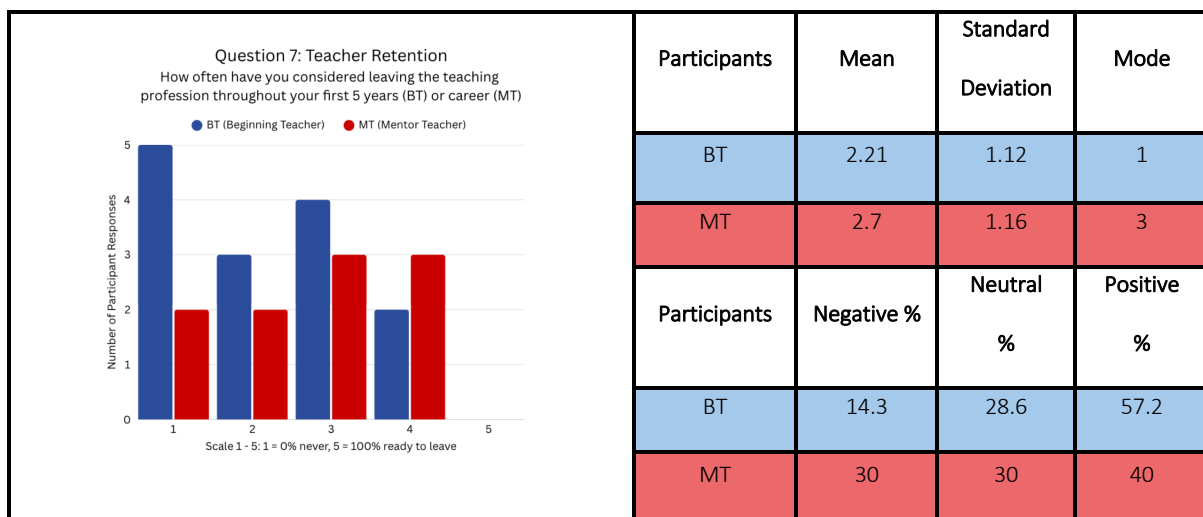
Teacher Retention

In Figure 8, Question 7 the graph shows 1 representing teachers who have never considered leaving up to 5 representing teachers who are 100% ready to leave the profession. Regarding attitudes towards leaving the teaching profession no BTs or MTs indicated that they were 100% ready to leave. However, 17/24 participants had considered the possibility of leaving the profession. Of these participants, 5/24 indicated they had strongly considered leaving. Five (35.7%) BT responses showed that they had never considered leaving compared to two

(20%) MTs. These findings indicate that while no participants were actively ready to leave the profession, a high percentage (71%) had considered leaving and changes need to be made to reduce the risk of this happening.

Figure 8

Comparison of beginning and mentor teacher responses on likelihood of leaving the teaching profession and corresponding descriptive statistics



4.1.1.2 MT Specific Questions

To ensure that the survey gathered adequate information on the MT experience, two additional questions were asked to gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes of MTs accepting the role of mentor and the previous experience the MTs had with mentoring BTs.

In the first question, regarding the level of choice the MTs had when accepting the role, findings show that six (60%) MTs had a definite choice in accepting the role of MT and three (30%) had some choice in the undertaking of the BTs. One (10%) MT felt neutral about their

choice in becoming an MT. This indicates that majority of MTs had some choice in committing to the role of mentor.

The second question, regarding the number of BTs each MT have mentored throughout the career, was provided as a short answer response, not a Likert Scale response. Participants recorded the number of how many BTs they have mentored throughout their career.

Important to this analysis is the range of BTs mentored, as majority of MTs had mentored between one and four BTs; with five MTs (50%) being first-time mentors; one (10%)

undertaking their second BT; one (10%) their third; and two (20%) had mentored four BTs.

Important to note, however, was an outlier in the data that had mentored more than 20 BTs.

4.1.2 Phase 1 - Qualitative Analysis

The process of conducting a Reflexive Thematic Analysis supported the exploration of data;

identification of patterns of meaning; naming of codes identified in the data; and the

construction of themes. There were 15 identified codes in the data research, and these were grouped into 4 themes.

Table 4

Itemised breakdown of codes and themes for Phase 1 Qualitative Analysis

Codes	Themes
1. Mentoring Guidance 2. Certification and Documentation 3. Meetings 4. Observations 5. Lack of Time 6. Role of the BT and MT 7. Expectations	1. Formal Processes of Mentoring
8. Access to Professional Development	2. Professional Development
9. Availability of the MT 10. Communication 11. Relationship Dynamic with the MT 12. Relationships with Leadership 13. Relationships with the Wider Staff	3. Relationships
14. Reciprocal Learning 15. Modelling Best Practice	4. Reciprocal Growth and Best Practice

4.1.2.1 Formal Processes of Mentoring

The theme Formal Processes of Mentoring encapsulates the various attributes of mentoring including guidance, teacher registration and documentation, meetings, observations, release time, expectations of the role of MTs and BTs, accountability of the MT, and availability of the MT. Overall, 22/24 BT and MT responses included this theme, with 9/10 MTs and 13/14 BT responses.

Mentoring Guidance

A key pattern identified in the response analysis was the lack of understanding, guidance, support, and resources available to BTs and MTs to help them fulfil their roles and meet requirements. Of these responses, 7/14 BTs and 8/10 MTs commented on this. Negatives and challenges included:

There were no guidelines for MTs from the school ... to support BTs. ...Because that was missing, my first year wasn't ... supportive (BT)

If I wasn't told to do paperwork, I didn't know I had to. Was no kete of resources or step by steps to follow (BT)

Knowing what is expected of the mentor... The documentation isn't ... clear (MT)

These findings suggest that limitations in the availability and accessibility of supporting documents negatively affected both BTs' and MT's capacity to clearly understand expectations and carry out their roles effectively.

Certification and Documentation

In the findings, 3/14 BTs and 4/10 MTs explicitly mentioned confusion and lack of clarity around certification, documentation, paperwork, and portfolios.

I was unaware that we needed a teaching portfolio for our appraisal to become fully registered until I was halfway through my second year. When I spoke to my mentor about this, he said that he expected me to find that information myself (BT)

At times we wondered, were we meeting requirements? Doing enough? Although we had some guidelines of how the process could work, there [was] a lack of criteria to ensure that we were meeting requirements of the mentor/mentee process (MT)

When asked what opportunities, resources and experiences would have benefited their mentoring experiences BTs highlighted the need for:

More explicit information for MTs to remind them of the expectations that are set for them ...the different experiences is astounding (BT)

A more developed BT manual. Something that you can tick off as you go, a solid list of what you should get as a BT and what you should be working towards (BT)

When asked the same question, the MTs responses highlighted the need for:

A clear framework to work through to ensure BTs have covered everything and all paperwork has been signed off e.g. a checklist to go through (MT)

Guide across NZ that we will follow or criteria (MT)

Mentor Guidance Programme (MT)

These findings indicate a need for clarity around requirements of the BT and MT to support them in effectively attaining certification and a balanced mentoring programme.

Meetings

Meetings between BTs and MTs was another significant noticing in the data analysis mentioned in 10/24 responses. Responses regarding meetings varied across both BTs and MTs. Positive experiences with meetings from 3/14 BTs included:

Regular meetings to share positives and things to work on (BT)

While 4/14 shared negative experiences regarding a lack of BT and MT meetings:

One year I only had 1 meeting with my mentor (BT)

Lack of support with ... no pct days, meetings or professional development (BT)

Three MTs also included their perspectives of meetings within their mentoring experiences.

One commenting on the positive meeting experience, they had together:

We set a time once a week for a formal/catch up, meeting – this worked ... well ... I sent out an informal agenda for the teacher to write what she would like to discuss/have advised (MT)

Another reflecting on the professional development they received which supported them in their mentoring role:

Course that provided how the process could look, suggestions of how we could structure meetings/observations was useful (MT)

In contrast, one MT drew attention to their BTs' minimal interest in attending their BT and MT meetings:

A BT that never had planning ready, complained about ... BT meetings we had ... I stopped chasing the BT for meetings as she said she was overwhelmed etc. Then end of term 3 she told the principal I never met for meetings, never checked planning (she barely ever had it) (MT)

When asked about opportunities BTs felt would have benefited them, two BTs commented on the desire for a more frequent and consistent meeting schedule:

More meetings ... [to] have a better understanding of what I can do better (BT)

These findings emphasis the importance of regular, purposeful meetings between BTs and MTs in fostering strong professional relationships, enhancing BT confidence, and supporting the scaffolding of professional growth.

Observations

Observations were mentioned in 5/14 BT responses, with most representing positive influences on their mentoring experience. This included opportunities for BTs to observe their mentors and other teachers, as well as being observed:

It was beneficial to] observe others, [have] other observing me and receiving feedback
(BT)

Three of the five, who included reference to observations in their responses, reported positive experiences when discussing observations as a key part of their mentoring experience. In contrast, two of the five responses were negative.

I had ... few observations and when they were done, I got little feedback (BT)

One MT commented on the use of release time being shared to carry out observations on their BT as helpful.

Ability to use some of my mentees release time ... to carry out observations on my mentee (MT)

While a BT expressed their desire to have had more access to observations during their BT years.

More ... observations to reflect on my teaching (BT)

These findings indicate the importance of observations on the BT with quality feedback, as well as the need for BTs to observe their MT and other teachers modelling best practice.

Lack of Time

Throughout responses, both BTs and MTs discussed MTs not having enough time to fulfil their roles effectively.

Time – felt between juggling other areas of managerial roles that I often didn't give her the best of me (MT)

Five BTs also noticed the lack of availability their MTs had for them.

I felt as though my MT did not have enough time for me (BT)

My second MT was a lot better, but also quite busy, so didn't feel as approachable (BT)

One MT commented on the need for more release time to better support their BT.

More release time [would have been a beneficial experience] (MT)

Although one MT did not comment on their experience as being negative or challenging, they shared that they are the only MT at the school which they have been for years, to provide consistency in their BT programme. They are also the team leader and classroom teacher.

Sometimes it's like having a class and you differentiate to meet their individual needs.

Currently I am MT to 6 BTs (MT)

One BT even noted that they would benefit from sharing release days with their MT.

More classroom release time with my mentor so that we get to have our 1-1 sessions

to co-plan and have meaningful conversations (BT)

These findings highlight that a lack of time available to MTs is a negative impact on their ability to effectively meet the needs of their BTs, requiring consideration in future programme developments.

Role and Expectations of the BT and MT

Present in both BT and MT responses was the lack of understanding around the respective roles of each participant within the mentoring relationship. One BT reflected on how they found it hard to decipher their role as a BT and what the school expected of them.

Understanding the expectations of the school and the requirements of being a BT.

Lack of communication about expectations (BT)

Within these BT responses, 4/14 also stated that they felt there needed to be clarity around the role of the MT to ensure they were receiving appropriate mentoring and quality mentoring experience.

[There needs to be] more explicit information for MTs to remind them of the expectations. You hear BTs talk about their mentors and the different experiences is astounding (BT)

Having a checklist for me to check the mentor to make sure I was being looked after properly (BT)

Four MTs also commented on being unsure of their role as MTs and how they can best support their BTs.

So hard to know what is expected and not expected from me to and BT (MT)

Knowing what is expected of the mentor... the documentation isn't ... clear and most new teachers ... have their own way of recording their journey (MT)

In addition to the lack of understanding regarding roles, mentioned above, unclear role boundaries between BTs and MTs contributed to a lack of clarity around expectations of the BT role. 8/14 BTs commented on the expectations placed on them by their MTs and school leadership. Three BTs drew attention to the high expectations of their leadership and the confusion and uncertainty this created.

Understanding the expectations of higher management. There are no clear outlines or things that need to be done which makes it a grey area (BT)

Connections with other BTs to share experiences. ... There seems to be differences across schools (BT)

Another BT shared how these high expectations had a detrimental impact on their mental wellbeing.

The school I was at had very high expectations and on top of being a BT led me to have a breakdown at work (BT)

One participant made the reflection that an opportunity which would have been beneficial would have been leadership support and care for the BT and their dyadic relationship.

School leadership should be part of the wraparound of a new teacher. Checking in, making sure they have everything they need. (BT)

In contrast to this, three BTs commented on the positive outcomes they encountered by receiving high expectations from their MTs.

My first MT was very knowledgeable and had high expectations which has helped me to this day (BT)

My MT was approachable and thorough. She always prepared and had high expectations of me (BT)

These findings indicate the importance of clarity, and the need for an explicit breakdown of roles and expectations is needed to ensure high quality mentoring and support.

4.1.2.2 Professional Development

The theme of Professional Development, in the context of this survey, relates to the opportunities for BTs and MTs to access courses, programmes and materials that better support them to complete their role. The data responses showed that 7/24 BTs and MTs had attended some form of professional development targeted for their role as either mentor or mentee.

In my first year the school ... provided external PD, it was very helpful! We were with BTs from other schools, and it was targeted at us (BT)

When asked what opportunities, resources and experiences they felt would have been beneficial throughout their mentoring experiences 7 of the 24 BT and MT responses brought attention to the desire for more access to professional development to meet their learning needs in their respective roles.

Attending PLDs, access to resources and teaching tools (BT)

Mentoring Guidance Programme (MT)

One MT also indicated a desire to access professional development opportunities alongside their BT, to further build their mentoring relationship and collaborate on the mentoring experiences, expectations and processes together.

Very little PD options for both myself and my BT (MT)

Having access to and a desire for targeted BT and MT professional development was a key theme throughout the survey responses appearing in 50% of BTs and 60% of MTs data. These findings indicate that for both MTs' and BTs' access to professional development to support them in their respective roles is a key element in the success of mentoring relationships.

4.1.2.3 Relationships

The theme of relationships was consistent throughout BT and MT survey responses, with all 22 participants who completed the qualitative section of the survey commenting on relationships. The responses included positive and negative experiences in relation to the dyadic relationship between BTs and MTs. These experiences also included the relationships BTs had with their leadership, and relationships with the wider staff community.

Four BTs discussed the positive experiences they shared with their MTs. Open communication was a key factor influencing positive relationships.

Positive talk and opportunities to share what was going well, instead of dwelling on negatives (BT)

I can talk to my MT about anything. In a later question the participant elaborated stating that: ... This played a huge role in how comfortable I felt around them. This [allowed] me to have an open channel of communication (BT)

Three different BTs also commented on the impact support from their MT had on their relationships.

[I] was trusted to do my own thing. Supported my decisions (BT)

In comparison, six BTs reported negative relationships or interactions with their MTs which impacted their mentoring experience.

My first MT had lined up another teaching role, so was ... absent the last half of my first year. In a later question the participant elaborated: At times, I was stressed and overwhelmed, and ... had to cope with this on my own (BT)

I'm lucky that with the type of personality I have, I have managed to swim and stay afloat instead of sinking (BT)

All nine MTs whose responses related to the theme relationships had positive commentary about their dyadic relationships. Supportive, keen to learn, open to new things, and proactive were words found throughout the responses.

The relationship with the teachers is hugely important, and their attitude to their journey as a teacher. ... Teachers I have and am supporting ... demonstrate a passion for education and genuinely care about their students (MT)

Having a BT that has respect for my experiences and has a go at the things I have suggested (MT)

Conversely, one MT spoke of the lack of respect they had encountered with one of their BTs and how that had negatively impacted their professional relationship.

A BT that lacked respect and always went to the principal to "double check" (MT)

However, three MTs also included how proud they were of the progress of their BTs over the year, and how much they enjoyed celebrating them.

I really enjoyed mentoring and seeing the confidence and improvement of my BT (MT)

These findings emphasise the importance of building and nurturing positive professional relationships within the dyadic relationship. These positive relationships developed through open-communication, trust, approachability, and time support BTs to develop confidence in their teaching practice, a professional identity and the psychological safety to take risks to develop and better their practice.

4.1.2.4 Reciprocal Growth and Best Practice

The theme of Reciprocal Growth and Best Practice was only identified in the MTs survey data set. This theme was present in 6/10 MT's responses, and all six were positive reflections of the growth and reciprocal learning MTs had experienced through their mentoring opportunities.

Made me cement my practices as I was role modelling best practice (MT)

When asked if the participants had any other comments about their mentoring experience they would like to add, one participant shared:

My key message to... mentors would be [to be] a good listener, being kind, professional and supportive but also being open to learning from them (MT)

These findings indicate that the practice of being an MT is beneficial for the continued growth and development of the MT practice as much as it is for the BT. Therefore, positive and effective mentoring relationships have the ability to strengthen the quality of teaching for experienced as well as beginning teachers.

4.2 Phase 2 – Case Study Analysis

Findings from the Phase 2 Case Study Analysis include qualitative interviews with each participant, followed by a summary questionnaire four months later. The data was analysed through Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Case study design allowed an in-depth investigation analysing the dyadic relationship between BTs and MTs within two mentoring relationships.

4.2.1 Phase 2 – Qualitative Interview and Summary Questionnaire Analysis

Within the qualitative interview analysis, the process of conducting Reflexive Thematic Analysis supported the exploration of data; identification of patterns of meaning; naming of codes identified in the data; and the construction of themes which express the data findings clearly and work to answer the research question. There were 34 identified codes in the data research, and these were streamlined into 6 themes.

Table 5

Itemised breakdown of codes and themes for Phase 2 Qualitative Analysis

Codes	Themes
1. MT Selection 2. Perspective and Approach to Mentoring 3. Policy Guidelines 4. Lack of Framework/Mentoring Programme 5. Lack of Clarity of Expectations 6. Role of MT and BT 7. Lack of Resources and Support 8. MT Designing individual Framework/Mentoring Programme 9. Educative Mentoring 10. Mentor Training 11. Mentor Support Network 12. Fear of Quality and Coverage of Mentoring Content	1. Mentor Selection, Preparation, Capability and Resources
13. Meetings 14. Documentation	2. Structure, Systems and Certification
15. Communication and Approachability 16. Constructive Conversations 17. Active advice, feedback and feedforward 18. Sense of Belonging 19. Trust and Relational Safety 20. Reciprocal Learning 21. Collaboration	3. Relational Foundations of Mentoring
22. Hauora and Mental Health 23. Support 24. Time 25. Observations	4. Wellbeing and Relational Support
26. Professional Development PD 27. Access to PD 28. Self-searching for PD Opportunities 29. Curriculum Changes 30. University Training Experiences	5. Professional Learning and Development Pathways
31. Growth and Confidence 32. Leadership Opportunities 33. Range of Experiences in Mentoring 34. Professional Identity Formation	6. Professional Growth, Confidence and Identity Development

The summary questionnaire allowed an extension of participants' perspective of their experiences over time. Reflecting on their experiences as MTs and BTs in this way highlighted clarity and grounded summary statements that support and consolidate the previous data findings. This summary questionnaire also provided participants the opportunity to reflect and share any changes, shifts, new challenges or experiences they have faced within the fourth month period between data collections (unfortunately, only three of the four case study participants completed the summary questionnaire). The findings from the summary questionnaire are included at the end of each theme.

4.2.1.1 Mentor Selection, Preparation, Capability and Resources

This theme of Mentor Selection, Preparation, Capability and Resources encompasses the participants' perceptions of what defines a mentor, who should mentor, how are mentors prepared for their role, and why this preparation matters. The importance of the process of MT selection on the overall success of the mentoring relationships has been captured in the participants' accounts.

The Case Study 1 pair were in a mentoring relationship for this year only, with the BT placed with another teacher as their MT in their first year. The second case study pair had been in a mentoring relationship for 3 years. Firstly, the pair were placed together during the BTs' second year practicum placement as a student teacher. They have then been in a mentoring relationship for both her first and second year as a BT. Two separate processes for MT selection for the role were evident in the analysis.

In case study 1, the MT recognised that the BT was struggling in their current (first year) mentoring relationship pairing and asked to be her mentor for her second year. She saw the gaps in her professional mentoring relationship and attempted to fulfil her BTs' mentoring needs before the end of her provisional registration.

I asked because she had a very experienced teacher last year, but was a different kettle of fish ... Not a young female ... Different ideas and methodologies, different ways of doing things. She didn't have the best start, so I asked, part way through last year, can I be her mentor next year? (MT Case Study 1)

The BT in this case study also highlighted the contrast between mentoring relationship experiences in their first and second year. She described the positive shift in her mentoring relationship due to this change, and how this supported her overall growth in confidence and capabilities.

We're close in age, so our training that we got is ... similar, and that's helped, ... having the same teaching philosophies, that's been great. A more honest, open, mentor relationship. ... I can express more ideas. I think my training and her training was more modern than some of the older teachers. It's quite different. In a later question, the participant elaborated: Last year was a bit blurry because in this situation I was ... getting a lot of bad feedback because it wasn't explained this is how the school wants it done. (BT Case Study 1)

In contrast, the MT in the second case study described entering the mentoring role through a more informal and unplanned process to meet situational needs.

There was no process. In our SLT team [we discussed that] there are two teachers that need BT mentoring, and the primary is in my area; that's how that came about. In a later question the participant elaborated: We have a really good relationship. I was her associate teacher when she was doing her teaching practicum, and then gave her her first job. We've known each other for a long time and that relationship has developed over time and got stronger. (MT Case Study 2)

Interestingly, her BT also credits their mentoring relationship as a student teacher as the grounds for their successful BT mentoring relationship.

Our mentoring relationship started when I was on placement in my second year, and she kept contact from my second year of study through to when she offered me the role. (MT Case Study 2)

Professional relationship experiences appeared more effective when BT and MT pairings were perceived as well matched, aligning the pairs' approaches and values. The importance of thoughtful and well-planned BT and MT pairings was highlighted in this mentor's account:

Place someone with either someone who's like minded and or just open minded. Don't just place them with the team leader because they're the team leader. Any teacher is capable of mentoring, you want to make sure they're with the right person. She could have been mentored just as well with a teacher in the other syndicate, you just have to put some thought into who will help them be their best teacher self. (MT Case Study 1)

Both BTs commented on the likeness of themselves to their MTs and how this supported them in their professional relationships.

I think we've clicked because we have lots of the same ideas, and the same teaching philosophy. That's really helped me. (BT Case Study 1)

I'm forever grateful for the relationships that she kept, but we think so alike, I guess she could see herself in me, and where I could potentially benefit the school and benefit herself, looking years down the road. (BT Case Study 2)

All participants were asked about the mentoring approaches they were using or had received. Both MTs mentioned the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2015) 'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers' document; however, neither account found the document overly helpful or supportive in their role as MTs.

I've read over that, ... [took] bits of what we need. (MT Case Study 2)

I got given that ministry document, that's like 30 something pages about how to be a mentor, and I found it all waffle. There was one page on what you're expected to do, and that was it. (MT Case Study 1)

Across participant accounts, none were able to name a specific approach they were using or felt their mentor was using with them. Both MTs discussed how the current guidelines lacked specificity, structure and material support available for MTs to complete their job to a high standard.

It would be nice to have a jumping off point, so you know you haven't missed anything. There weren't a lot specific things, like this is what you should do, you should do this many observations, you should be meeting this often, you should be supporting these

curriculum areas first and then focus on these or you need to work on these behaviour management skills. (MT Case Study 1)

Instead, they commented on how they had each designed their own mentoring programmes to outline what they needed to teach their BTs and how to track progress towards certification. Both mentors also reflected their fears of not meeting the needs of their BTs or meeting the expectations of their roles.

All of the templates I have made up myself. The MT before me left, but she did her own thing too. There wasn't anything set. Just did it ourselves. (MT Case Study 2)

I wasn't given a lot to start with. I'm going off my experiences as a BT and what worked for me and what didn't, because I had a good and bad year with my mentors. I ended up on one of those document pages, and I had to break down my role as an MT. I made a graph/table, breaking down the role of an MT, and then how am I going to show it. Just to make sure that I have evidence that I'm meeting my obligations, making sure she is getting all the support. That was probably my biggest challenge as an MT, not having anything to go on. (MT Case Study 1).

When asked about the educative mentoring approach, the key mentoring approach encouraged to be used in the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2015) 'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers' document, no participants had heard of the approach or understood what it encompasses.

No, I didn't know of any approaches, and just made it up. (MT Case Study 1)

One MT shared about a mentoring course she attended and how this was a positive influence, growing her confidence and capabilities as a mentor.

It was really good. It was free, it was a full day, and they gave you heaps of resources printed out. Some stuff I already knew, but there was quite a lot of learning as well. On the Education Sector Site, they had another course that you could do which was associated with it. (MT Case Study 2).

Even with this opportunity, both MTs expressed their desire to have access to mentor training and support to feel more secure, resourced and capable in their roles as MTs.

As a mentor, it would be good to get ... training. Even a one-hour Zoom. Something to make sure that I'm on the right track as her mentor, because I am just winging it to make sure I'm covering everything. I don't want her to get to the end of the term, and we've missed something hugely obvious in her training, and I didn't know about it. You don't know what you don't know. (MT Case Study 1)

I'm in [a] DP forum, and when we meet, [it] always comes up that you don't get trained how to be a leader. You just do it yourself. ... You never get any training on how to be a leader unless you go and do your masters or whatever. Something that's come up quite a lot from a few DP's in this position, is that it would be cool if there was some training or mentoring to support you as a mentor as well. (MT Case Study 2)

Also in support of MTs, access to specific mentor training and explicit guidelines and expectations within the mentoring programme is the BT from case study one. Having had two very contrasting mentoring experiences she expressed her concerns regarding the lack of

clarity around expectations of roles and access to the tools and information she needed to ensure she was getting the level of support she deserved from her mentors.

With both my mentors, they're new to mentoring. It would be great to know more explicitly what is expected from us both. I know there's that guideline sent out, but broken down more, and what does that look like in a school. That would benefit me the most... We're both figuring out what we need to do. Knowing if there were programmes that we could both go to saying that this is what we should be doing before the start would have been great. Someone from the Ministry saying, 'this is what it should look like.' (BT Case Study 1)

Key findings from the summary questionnaire were the approach to mentoring being learner focus and tailored around the BT's needs, and the lack of guidelines, resources, exemplars, specificity in role and requirements, and training available to MTs to effectively and successfully mentor BTs. Even without the clarity of guidelines, participant accounts reflect the diversity in mentoring approaches taken to ensure success in the BT mentoring experience.

We are both enablers, we get on with tasks, organised and plan ahead. This benefits us working similarly to each other. (BT Case Study 2)

We had similar ways of working, and both took a flexible approach and mindset... I knew she had found her first year as a PCT challenging, so made sure at the start of the year we had clear expectations of my role and what was expected of me and her. I feel like it was a successful approach. (MT Case Study 1)

The lack of guidelines, resources, exemplars, specificity in role and requirements, and training available to MTs to effectively and successfully mentor BTs was a key challenge highlighted in the summary questionnaire. One mentor account referred to this challenge in response to 5/23 questions.

As a first-time MT, there weren't any resources or guidelines or programs available to me in my school to support my BT. Any programs would've been a cost to the school... It was hard to find resources about what was required of me and there wasn't a good set of guidelines. (MT Case Study 1)

These findings emphasise the importance of careful consideration in the mentor selection process to ensure BTs and MTs are well matched with aligning values and teaching styles. The findings also highlight the lack of clarity in the current framework '*Professional Learning Journey: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) as participants expressed they do not provide clear expectations of the role of the BT and MT or a breakdown of the expected structure of mentoring MTs should be following, aligning with Phase 1 findings in section 4.1.2.1 Formal Processes of Mentoring. In lieu of this lack of clarity, case study MTs resorted to designing their own individual mentoring approaches relying on their own experiences and what they felt would benefit their BTs.

These findings also revealed that the MTs had minimal knowledge and understanding of educative mentoring practices or how to effectively apply these techniques to their mentoring approach. MTs also expressed a desire for more access to specific training and support to feel more secure in their role. This indicates that MTs are unsure of their

capabilities and are questioning the quality of mentoring they can provide for their BTs, aligning with Phase 1 findings in sections 4.1.1.1. Figure 5 and 4.1.2.1 Formal Processes of Mentoring. One BT from the Phase 2 findings also commented on wanting their MT to have access to more training and support to ensure they were receiving quality mentoring, emphasising the concerns shared between both BTs and MTs.

4.2.1.2 Structure, Systems and Certification

The theme structure, systems and certification interpret the ways in which school and government systems, guidelines and structures shape the mentoring experience. This theme encapsulates the participants' reflections regarding the impact of unclear structures and a reliance on individual mentors rather than aligned systems.

Structured meetings were a key foundation of the mentoring experience highlighted across all participant accounts. When exploring the case studies' real life meeting schedules, there were clear differences. In the first case study, both BT and MT reflected on the regularity of the meetings and how they were adjusted to meet the needs of reporting, assessments, and ongoing professional development.

We aim for once a week, but they've been dwindling because [of] structured literacy training. We just touch base and say, 'is there anything you want to talk about?'

Sometimes there is and sometimes there isn't. Sometimes I'll say, 'oh I want to run through this for your portfolio, or we need to set up and observations.' (MT Case Study

1)

We try to aim for 20 to 30 minutes [a week]. When it gets closer to reports, we do extend it to an hour. We have those meetings once a week, or when we can fit it in during the week. They're around what I need to do, but she's checking along what I need to fill out for the school. (BT Case Study 1)

The second case study meeting schedule became more flexible and less frequent, reflecting the shift from mentor/mentee relationship within the provisional certification realm, to peer collaboration and guidance at the colleague level. These meetings now encompass professional leadership conversations to meet the participants' needs as the BT grows into a more developed teacher who is taking on greater responsibility within the school.

When and if required ... Every, ... two weeks or so. It's quite fluid, but it works for me and her. (BT Case Study 2)

Trying to make regular time to meet with my BT and I [it's] dropped off as we've gone to more independence. (MT Case Study 2)

A developing interpretation of the Teaching Council requirements for provisionally registered teacher documentation towards certification was present in all participant accounts. With mentors feeling confident in their BTs' efforts to pass the certification and BTs feeling hesitant about meeting necessary requirements, but confident in the MTs consistent support throughout the documentation collection.

It's two years of teaching and the evidence towards teaching standards. I do think I'm on track? I'd hope I am keeping on track. (BT Case Study 1)

She's got an E-portfolio, and we've gone through the standards ... She meets all of the requirements, I think. (MT Case Study 1)

I go off Our Code, Our Standards, and make sure that they're meeting that. Then also through our PGC (professional growth cycles) ... as well, they overlap. We have a document that started from the first year of the standards. When we meet, we just go over that, and then she will add evidence of things she's done. (MT Case Study 2)

These findings highlight the importance of the structure of mentoring MTs have provided for their BTs. The findings also indicate concerns regarding clarity of expectations for BTs to attain full registration.

4.2.1.3 Relational Foundation of Mentoring

The theme of relational foundations of mentoring encompasses multiple aspects of a participants' experiences with professional relationships as an integral influence on their mentoring relationships. Professional relationships were constructed through open communication which enabled safety and security for the BTs as they navigated the initial challenges of being a teacher. Approachability emerged as a defining feature in an effective mentoring relationship with this experience evident across both mentoring contexts.

Mentor accounts reflected the importance of open-mindedness and willingness to approach and ask questions as key to successful professional relationships.

We have a good relationship; she's comfortable coming to me for advice and questions. If I don't know the answer, I'm good at saying I'll get back to her. (MT Case Study 1)

BT accounts also reflected the importance of feeling comfortable approaching mentors and knowing that their thoughts and questions would be acknowledged respectfully. Ensuring this

level of trust, relational safety, and sense of belonging illustrates a positive influence on their mentoring relationship.

I can easily come to her with problems. When I do come with problems, it's not shut down ... I'm listened to, and she relates to what I am saying. ... I find it very easy to go to her with problems because I don't feel judged. (BT Case Study 1)

My own doubt in confidently making decisions can ... make me overthink. ... My mentor is amazing in supporting me through constructive conversations and giving me confidence in using my professional judgement. (BT Case Study 2)

The MT in the first case study highlighted the importance of understanding personal perspectives, approaches to mentoring, and being culturally responsive as a necessity in how we mentor BTs.

I am very cognisant that my BT is a young Pasifika woman, and it's been the best thing for our students. We're a very multicultural school, and they absolutely adore her because we've got so many Pasifika kids. I am ... cognisant of making sure that I am not ... sharing things just from my point of view. ... Making sure I'm considering all experiences ... I don't think it is necessarily a cultural thing. ... It is just knowing that it's not my way or the highway, which I think happened to her last year. ... There's more than one way to plan a classroom, more than one way to approach something (MT Case Study 1)

Relational foundations of mentoring also include the interpretation of communication through constructive conversations, collaboration, and problem solving. Communication

through constructive conversations relates not only to open communication, but also advice and feedback/feedforward.

Across participants' accounts, interactions involving constructive conversations were highlighted as positive influences on mentoring experiences. Mentors reflected on their BTs having strong communication skills as a positive influence in their mentoring relationships.

She is a very good communicator... She is not afraid to ask for help. (MT Case Study 1)

I've got an open-door policy... She often sends an email if I'm busy, or 'Can I talk to you for 10 minutes?' It depends on what it is. I listen to her and try and unpack what is going on. (MT Case Study 2)

Participants from Case Study 1 reflected on the paradoxical experiences the BT had received from her first to second year of mentoring. Particularly on how this shift in feedback approach had impacted her understanding, mental health, and overall confidence as a teacher.

It really helps that I'm in her classroom, so I can ... give a lot of positive feedback, things that I see going well and things that I can see ... she wants help with. I can try and give advice. In an earlier question, the participant also commented: I can give better and more relevant advice because I know the kids really well. (MT Case Study 1)

Last year, I got a lot of general advice because they didn't know the kids in my class. And this year, ... because she knows my class, she does my release, I'm getting more insight ..., and I feel more validated, it's easier to say, 'how would you do this?' ... It's

more positive feedback. ... Which ... has been good for my mental health. (BT Case Study 1)

In the second case study pairing, both participant accounts reflected how problem-solving situations using constructive conversations, feedback, and feedforward were beneficial to their ongoing mentoring relationship.

'What do you need from me? Do you need me to come and observe or check in?' ... Just supporting and just asking her what she needs from me. (MT Case Study 2)

Participant responses suggest that collaboration with planning, problem solving, and behaviour management is a key indicator of positive structured interactions within the mentoring relationship.

I prefer to sit down ... together ... and make it more collaborative. ... I won't just tell you an answer. ... If it is a behaviour problem or a parent issue, I'll refer to our school policies and help her with that, and help her work out how to contact parents or how to talk to the kids, and then make sure I am present or nearby if there is an issue. I never want to leave her on her own if she is dealing with something new for the first time, you've always got to be on hand to support. (MT Case Study 1)

As a BT she takes on my ideas ... and what ... experience I've brought from practicums ... My ideas are taken on board, not always used. ... I can say 'oh we should do it like this' and not ... like we always do it that way. I think it's a lot more collaborative. (BT Case Study 1)

MT accounts also drew attention to the reciprocal learning they had encountered from their BTs through the mentoring process. In both cases, they had recognised this as a positive influence on their overall mentoring experiences.

She's got the newest practices and pedagogies in place. She has been innovative with the new curriculum and has a lot of great ideas. I learn as much off her and she learns off me. (MT Case Study 1)

I enjoyed helping my PCT reach her full potential as a teacher and watching her grow. I learnt just as much off her, if not more! (MT Case Study 2)

Key findings from the summary questionnaire (conducted four months later) were the trust, feedback, and reciprocal learning within the participants' mentoring relationships. Both BT accounts highlighted a strong sense of trust with their MTs as a positive influence on the success of the mentoring relationship. This trust encompasses not only the trust within their professional mentoring relationship, but also the trust the mentors have placed in their BTs to independently run their own teaching programmes.

I could share struggles in confidence to my mentor without worry of it going to other staff. (BT Case Study 1)

Trusting relationship my mentor and I have, the continued support and development my mentor provides me and the flexibility within my programme and pedagogy. (BT Case Study 2)

Clear and consistent feedback, feedforward, and advice were another positive influence on successful mentoring relationships mentioned by both BTs and MTs.

I had very clear communication on my schools' expectations of me. This made me feel prepared with what was coming and not blindsided or overwhelmed when things came up. Any feedback was very professional and offered in a calm/safe space. (BT Case Study 1)

I taught the release days in her classroom so I could relate ..., empathise, and provide practical advice when needed. (MT Case Study 1)

Both BT accounts identified key challenges they had experienced as negative impacts on their mentoring experiences. One BT commented on her appreciation for the open and honest communication she felt within her mentoring relationship, however commented on the struggles she was facing to open that trust to the wider staff.

I have always had open and honest communication with my mentor. Not so much other staff. ... I find it hard to trust people. I truly trust my mentor, and this will develop with others overtime. (BT Case Study 2)

The other BT reflected on her feelings regarding a lack of sense of belonging and how this had negatively affected her experience as a BT entering the school. She shared how she did not discuss this with her MT at the time.

Feeling isolated from staff at the start because I am the only Pasifika teacher... (BT Case Study 1)

These findings emphasise the importance of developing strong psychosocial relationships with open-communication and relational safety within the mentoring dyad to support BT confidence, growth, and development.

4.2.1.4 Wellbeing and Relational Support

The theme of Wellbeing and Relational Support brings together multiple participant experiences regarding dedicated time to mentor, observations, use of release time, acknowledgement and support of mental health, and BT entitlements, as influences and constraints surrounding the mentoring relationship.

Acknowledgement of Hauora (health and wellbeing) and psychological safety was particularly important in the establishment and maintaining of professional relationships, as both BTs were facing personal challenges that affected their teaching abilities. BT accounts reflect the advice, guidance and support they received from their MTs when facing these challenges and as they continued to progress in their careers as a strength of their relationships.

I am going on maternity leave, I think everything is tied into that. We've been working on what do I need to get done before I have to go. That's the most guidance I've been getting. Just having someone that's been through it recently and going through it now, saying what you should expect in the future, especially with my career. (BT Case Study 1).

I have always said it's a sacrifice for the end goal. I live 50 minutes away from my school ... The school has been supporting me, [and] we've come up with new systems to sort of mitigate that. In a later question, the participant elaborated: I know, if something ever cropped up moving forward, ... 100% they would support me. (BT Case Study 2)

Participants described the importance of consistent observations and structured feedback and feedforward as a crucial element in their development and growth as teachers. These observations included observations of the BT by their mentors and the opportunities for BTs to observe other teachers as they focused on building their skillsets in various areas of teaching.

I observe her once a term, ... because I see all her planning and I'm in the class all the time, I observe the once and then often I ... follow up with the kids when I'm teaching in there. (MT Case Study 1)

Every term I get two observations. ... We follow a plan, and we're looking at a certain teaching standard that I want to focus on for the term. Then I get to choose two other teachers I want to observe. Sometimes it is my MT, or another teacher that I think specialises in that area. (BT Case Study 1)

Last year she did some school visits. So, she picked ... schools that she wanted to have a look at and did a few observations there. ... This year, we've done more of a focus looking at the teachers within our space and observing them. (MT Case Study 1)

A few times a year, [she will] ... observe me. ... Last year I went to a few classrooms at school and observed them. (BT Case Study 2)

The amount of time and availability to give their full attention to their BT as a mentor was highlighted by the MTs as an area that could negatively influence the mentoring relationship.

I would love to give her lots of time, ... but... obviously not doable. (MT Case Study 2)

In contrast, the MT from the first case study has positively reflected on the increase in time and availability she can provide her BT this year due to her role as a classroom release teacher (CRT) in comparison to that of her BT's first MT.

With my role ... I've had more time than her previous mentor to spend ... making sure she's feeling confident. ... In my role where I don't have my own classroom, I've got more time to dedicate to her. (MT Case Study 1)

These findings indicate the importance of time and availability MTs have for their BTs. Responses show that not only BTs highlight the significant impact MT time and availability have on their growth and development but also MTs recognise their desire to give more of their time to support their BTs.

4.2.1.5 Professional Learning and Development Pathways

The Professional Learning and Development Pathways theme highlights the various BT specific opportunities, experiences and supports available to our new educators. This theme reflects how access to these experiences is seen as supportive influences on the foundations of BTs' careers. One BT was enrolled in a university led second year BT programme, involving five on campus professional development and training days targeted specifically for second year BTs.

This year I'm going to workshops with [] Uni. ... It's definitely helped with some areas that you might feel overwhelmed with. It's taken the panic away because you've got that one-on-one time in a small group of people who are in the same boat as you. And you can pull experience from the people who are hosting it. (BT Case Study 2)

In contrast, the BT from the first case study shared their challenges with accessing PD courses for BTs in their area after self-searching.

I haven't heard of any courses. In a later question the participant elaborated: Last year I did a bus tour that was through NZEI. I have done workshops through NZEI but they were all through the holidays, ... nothing BT specific. (BT Case Study 1)

We didn't have the budget to put her on any BT courses, which is what I did when I was beginning. Even our NZEI beginning programmes, they didn't get enough buy-in in our area, so they didn't go ahead. (MT Case Study 1)

With the curriculum changes coming into place during the BTs transition into teaching the BT in case study 1 highlighted how she felt this period of change and uncertainty negatively impacted her growth and experiences as a BT.

Coming in when there's been a curriculum change, a lot has been 'oh we won't train you for this because something new is coming in'.... That's left a big gap for me to just try and figure out what to do in my teaching. It's delayed a lot of growth, and it's had a negative impact on my confidence as a teacher, especially in my first year because you're not sure what you're supposed to be doing. (BT Case Study 1)

Although unable to access specified BT PD, the BT from the first case study also reflected on her development over the year as ongoing growth in both confidence and capabilities as a teacher due to her access to more in school professional development around the curriculum this year. She also reflected on the paradoxical shift in growth of confidence and abilities in her second year of teaching compared to her first, due to this.

I've had more professional development this year than I did in my first year. I was able to take a lot more into class. Last year I didn't get much, and then this year I've developed more. It's still not where I want to be because of all the changes. I think I'm still like head underwater with how my teaching has been, but some improvement. (BT Case Study 1)

Across both BT and MT accounts, there was a shared acknowledgment that meaningful dialogue between universities and schools is largely absent, and that this had a negative impact on the mentoring relationship and the BT's ability to effectively meet the school expectations.

Coming from the Graduate Diploma Program, principals in schools have a different idea of what training we're coming with, and they expect us to know more than we do know about the various programmes they want in the school. (BT Case Study 1)

[A] leadership day, or how to be a mentor day. Just to share this is what they've been learning at university. This is what they've been studying. And now they have to learn to apply it and you have to help them apply it. I know last year there was a lot of shock over what she has learnt at the Uni compared to what is actually applicable in the classroom. There were assumptions in staff that she would come and know everything, that's not how university works. (MT Case Study 1)

Having an overview or a general sense of what they've learned and what they're coming with because that can be a bit shocking, especially the BTs who only do the one-year teaching. If you had that pre like them coming in, that knowledge of what they do know and they've been taught, ... there's a lot of gaps. (MT Case Study 2)

These findings highlight the significant role universities play in the ongoing professional development of BTs beyond the completion of their degree. Inconsistencies in access and availability of continued learning opportunities may leave BTs feeling underprepared and isolated as they transition from peripheral to full participation within a community of practice. These findings further suggest a need for stronger communication between university providers and schools to clarify the knowledge and experiences BTs bring when entering the school context. The current lack of alignment appears to contribute to unrealistic or unattainable expectations placed on BTs as they seek to meet school expectations.

4.2.1.6 Professional Growth, Confidence and Identity Development

The theme of Professional Growth, Confidence, and Identity Development captures the importance of lifelong learners and developmental mentoring approaches on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. This theme highlights the overall growth and confidence experienced by both the BTs and MTs in completing their respective roles to a high standard.

Across participant accounts, a sense of personal growth of abilities and confidence to perform the job to a high standard were highlighted as key influences in developing professional identity, growth and confidence within the teaching and mentoring roles.

I can ... use my voice, I've gotten more confident to make, professional choices, and I've got better professional judgement. ... I'm not second guessing myself in my head, as much as [my] first year. ... I feel confident. (BT Case Study 2)

Having a lot more confidence in what I am planning is correct and having more professional development around the curriculum. Applying that to my planning now, I feel a lot more confident and independent that I can make decisions in my class and know they're right for my kids. (BT Case Study 1)

Being able to grow and support alongside [my BT]. (MT Case Study 2)

The same MT described an ongoing process of growth in her mentoring role, acknowledging her development in confidence and capability, progressing but not yet complete.

This is my second BT that I've mentored over the last two years. ... I am growing, especially around those coaching skills and still [have] heaps to learn and grow within myself as a mentor. (MT Case Study 2)

One of the BTs also reflected on how they were still growing their confidence and abilities with the curriculum but appreciated how their mentor highlighted and encouraged their skills with connecting to and building relationships with students as a strength as a teacher.

From my teaching philosophy, I connect well to kids, that has been my strength. When I look at teaching ... I think when I have the training, the curriculum, stuff does come easy because the relationship building has been the best part for me. That's been good ..., my mentor's, encouraging that, rather than looking at, ... what I can't do with the curriculum yet. (BT Case Study 1)

Leadership opportunities contributed to the sense of security and growth of professional identity for the BT in the second case study. This BT had previously mentioned her doubts and how she second guesses her decision making and how she is seen by her colleagues, however, her MT/ deputy principal was able to see the quality of work she was producing

overall and the leadership potential she had to lead a unit in the inner school design of the new curriculum.

I did give her a unit in Term two. She has taken on the curriculum space now ... It goes side by side with the BT stuff, and growing her confidence and leadership as well. ... Even next year, I will ... try and give her another unit and some release time to keep working on the curriculum space. (MT case Study 2).

We work really well together. She gave me a unit where you have to be working together. She wouldn't have given me that opportunity if I was someone that we couldn't go back and forth with and share ideas. (BT Case Study 2)

Another key influence in the growth of professional identity, growth and confidence highlighted in the data was the range of mentoring experiences the BTs had comparatively with each other and their peers.

I can only speak positively about [my experience], but when I do have conversations ... with other year two BTs, I quickly come back to reality, that it's not that for everyone. (BT Case Study 2)

My first half of my first year wasn't a good experience. (BT Case Study 1)

Just knowing it's not my way or the highway, which ... happened to her last year. (MT Case Study 1)

The key findings from the summary questionnaire relating to this theme were the overall growth in knowledge and skills the BTs encountered through the mentoring experiences and how this growth positively influenced their sense of self as a teacher and professional identity.

I have seen progress in my students' work over a unit. My planning has become more effective, and I ... adapt better depending on my student engagement/work. (BT Case Study 1)

I have grown in confidence this year and have been supported by my mentor. Also, with more experience I ... have better teacher judgement. (BT Case Study 2)

These findings highlight the positive impacts the development of strong relational foundations in section 4.2.1.3 have on growing a BT's sense of sense and professional identity as a teacher.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the data, exploring the past and current experiences of BTs and MTs within their dyadic mentoring relationships. These findings highlighted the lack of clarity in the current policy framework; minimal access and availability of professional development opportunities for both beginning and mentor teachers; and a lack of theoretical understanding of the principles underpinning the educative mentoring approach. In summary, key findings indicate that although many positive mentoring experiences occur, these are not without challenges. These experiences are the foundation of a teacher's career and require careful consideration and structured support processes. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the positive influences on mentoring experiences of effective mentoring; structured and consistent mentoring supports; and a sense of belonging and professional growth identified in this data and to ensure safeguarding to protect these elements of the mentoring relationship. Whilst also drawing necessary attention to the

challenges impacting successful mentoring experiences including the disconnect between university and school communities of practice; alignment in mentoring relationships; structural gaps in mentoring systems and lack of preparation and support for MTs, which need to be addressed. These findings will be examined in the following chapter in relation to domestic and international research; theories of mentoring; and domestic induction and mentoring policies.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a discussion of the study's findings. The previous results chapter produced several themes which are highlighted in this discussion. These have been reconstructed into positive influences on mentoring experiences and challenges impacting mentoring experiences. The two paradoxical arguments provide perspective into what is working well within current mentoring procedures and what changes are needed.

Firstly, a brief background to the discussion is provided, revisiting the process for data collection and analysis. The findings from this research study are also discussed with other academic research pertinent to this study creating an in-depth analysis of the findings and how the research is situated within the academic field of mentoring in education. Finally, this thesis concludes, providing implications, limitations, researcher growth and reflexivity, summary statements, and research recommendations.

5.1 Introduction

Through mixed method data collection and analysis of a survey, and qualitative case studies involving data collection from interviews and questionnaires, this research study aimed to explore current beginning teacher (BT) mentoring relationships. With a focus on identifying the experiences and challenges faced by both beginning and mentor teachers (MTs), the purpose of this research was on identifying key trends in data and possible implications to

support the ongoing growth, consistency and quality of mentoring provided in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research not only focused on the BT's growth and successful transition into their new community of practice, but also on the growth and development of MTs to adequately provide quality mentoring to benefit and prepare BTs for a sustainable career in education.

Research Question

How can the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures?

5.2 Positive Influences on Mentoring Experiences

Key findings in this research study highlighted the positive influences on mentoring experiences. These were relational foundations of effective mentoring; a sense of belonging and professional growth; and structured and consistent mentoring supports. In this section, these positive influences on mentoring experiences are discussed.

5.2.1 Relational Foundations of Effective Mentoring

Through this research study, it was established that the BT and MT relationship dyad was found to be complex, requiring openness, understanding, nurturing, and balance to develop and grow. Within Phase 1 and the Phase 2 case studies, BTs highlighted how respect, approachability, open communication, and listening positively benefit their mentoring relationship. These elements bring trust to the relationship, a key tool for bonding, as found in the study by Vostal et al. (2019), as well as approachability and strong communication

(Ewing, 2021). Within Case Study 1, many of these elements were lacking in the BT's first mentoring relationship, quickly leading to negativity, fear, and limited professional growth. Interestingly, survey findings showed that 90% of mentors reported a positive mentoring experience compared to 57.2% of BTs. In the analysis of participants' perspective on their professional relationships, 100% of MTs in contrast to 78% of BTs viewed their professional relationships with their mentee/mentor as positive. These findings suggest a disparity in the perspective and experiences of participants that require further investigation.

MT accounts, in both Phase 1 and 2, also reflected the importance of creating and nurturing relationships shaped by positive psychosocial interactions with the BTs. MTs worked to ensure psychological needs of their BTs were met within the social environment of the school context, by establishing confidential, trustworthy, and supportive relationships which allowed BTs to be vulnerable and approach MTs without hesitation, a thought supported in Grudnoff's (2012) research. Findings suggest that MTs value BTs' initiative, open-mindedness, and willingness to ask questions. As with the study by Burger et al. (2021), fostering and encouraging strong relational foundations supports BTs to take risks and explore new dimensions of their teaching practice as they feel there are no possibilities of negative consequences to fear. This was also evident in both case studies in this research study.

Although the findings reflect that neither of the Phase 2 MTs were actively applying educative mentoring as the key driver of their approach to mentoring, the data demonstrates that mentors were using evidence and inquiry based mentoring practices. These practices including explicit modelling, deconstruction and reflection of teaching; co-construction of

knowledge; and establishing positive psychosocial interactions, align more closely with educative and constructivist-orientated mentoring as opposed to transition-oriented traditional mentoring (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). It is evident that both mentors attempted to understand the perspective of their BTs' experiences and facilitate an inquiry-based learning journey focused on evidence-based reflections of the BTs teaching practices and open-ended questioning, for example, *"I prefer to sit down ... together ... and make it more collaborative. ... I won't just tell you an answer."* (MT1 Case Study 1). These MT approaches ensured learning and knowledge were co-constructed alongside their BTs, aligning with Stanulis et al. (2019) notion of educative mentoring practices in action. These actions appear highly effective in the development of BT confidence, efficacy, and independence.

5.2.2 Sense of Belonging and Professional Growth

The development of psychological safety and strong relational foundations in nurturing learning environments heavily influenced and supported the construction of teacher identity in the BTs. Within the case studies, both BTs reflected on the growth they have made with the support of their mentoring relationship and experiences. They highlighted the confidence to use their voice more, make professional choices, and trust their professional judgements to independently make decisions about their teaching practice and learners' needs. These reflections highlight the construction of teacher identity and sense of self experienced by BTs, aligning with the findings of Henry and Mollstedt (2021) who emphasised the significant influence of mentoring relationships on identity development. Their research underscores

the importance of providing BTs with agency over their own teaching practice, supported by ongoing guidance from their MTs.

As BTs transition from the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) they originally belonged to at university, through the liminal phase (Ackesjö, 2014), and into their new community of practice at school, they cross through the socially constructed border (Peters & Sandberg, 2016) of being a peripheral participant to a full participant (Lave & Wenger, 2008) in the school context. Regarding BTs' sense of belonging and transition from peripheral participant to full participant (Lave & Wenger, 2008), the undertaking of leadership roles within the school (leading a unit) encouraged and supported the ongoing acceptance of beginning teacher 2 (BT2) from peripheral to full participant in the community of practice, as they were trusted and tasked with more responsibility within the community. This advancement into leadership confirmed the acceptance and approval for BT2, which was much needed in assuring their sense of belonging and supporting human interconnectedness with colleagues (Robertson, 2025; Wilcoxon, 2025). Interestingly, MTs in the case study responses also identified the same progress and growth development during the border-crossing (Peters & Sandberg, 2016) as they grew into their roles, honed their skills and transitioned into a sub-community of practice, as an MT, within the school context. Contrary to this, beginning teacher 1's (BT1) experience highlighted their journey as they prepared for maternity leave. Although in the liminal phase (Ackesjö, 2014) as a BT, their experiences and challenges reflected a barrier to boundary crossing (Peters & Sandberg, 2016) in that they were yet to be fully accepted into the community of practice before leaving it again.

5.2.3 Structured and Consistent Mentoring Support

Across the findings, from Phase 1 and Phase 2, both BTs and MTs expressed the importance of consistent and structured meetings, observations, and feedback as positive influences on their mentoring experience and professional relationship. Taking the approach of Stanulis et al. (2019), focusing less on the **'what'** of teaching and instead addressing the **'why'** and **'how'**, this research shows that consistent meetings support the development of open communication, approachability and trust, necessary in high functioning mentoring relationships. Alongside this, 21.4% of BTs in the Phase 1 survey noted positive experiences with regular and supportive meetings as an influence on their professional development, while 28.6% reported a severe lack of meetings and inconsistencies in structured support.

Another core influence highlighted in both Phases of research data, promoting developmental growth of BTs, was focused observation with structured feedback, leading to specificity in goal planning. Case study mentors reported consistent opportunities to observe their BT, and BTs shared their experiences of being able to observe their mentor and other teachers. The focus of the observation was less on the lesson, instead a more specific focus of identified need leading to quality reflection, constructive feedback, and future planning to build specific skills. One BT in the survey stated their desire to have “more meetings and observations to reflect on my teaching and have a better understanding of what I can do better”, reflecting intentions for development and growth, and their wish for support to do so. Hairon et al. (2020) and Stanulis et al. (2019) also drew attention to the importance of quality, focused and structured observation and feedback, as a positive influence on BT

development, commenting on how this structured approach to mentoring supports the teacher to make meaningful changes to their teaching practice.

Another central finding and identified asset to the overall mentoring experience and BT development was the appreciation of time given its scarcity and significance. The MT in Case Study 2 reflected on her wishes to have more time to give to her BT, commenting on the many other roles and responsibilities she holds as deputy principal. The study from Le Maistre and Paré (2010) also indicated a connection between MTs in leadership and lack of time availability. Ewing's (2021) study suggested that to mitigate this, external mentors may be more effective and have more availability. Supporting this notion, the mentor in Case Study 1, although not entirely external to the school, holds a release teacher position and commented on how she feels more effective than a teacher holding a full time position, making her available to meet the needs of her BT given the flexibility of her release role. In the Phase 1 findings, 60% of MTs expressed they did not feel they had enough time, resources or support to ensure their BT was successful, with 35.7% of BTs also commenting on the lack of time they felt their MTs had to support them. These percentages of discomfort among respondents, in the amount of time available from mentors to support their BTs, indicate an ongoing concern supported in literature (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ewing, 2021; Le Maistre & Paré, 2010), in the level of quality mentoring BTs are receiving.

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring model outline does look to increase the level of support a BT will receive with the inclusion of a SPST (Internal Leader) and IC (External Induction Coach)

alongside the MT. However, many more meetings are expected to take place, not just between the MT and BT but with all four stakeholders. Given the data already highlights issues around MT availability, and leadership issues with availability, attempting to make regular meetings with all four stakeholders could result in an even higher lack of time for the BT to be adequately supported as they aim to work around four busy schedules, not two. Time is already valued as such a precious resource; changes to policy impacting available time need to be respectful of its limits.

These findings highlight the importance of establishing strong relational foundations; developing a sense of belonging and professional growth; and ensuring structured and consistent mentoring supports are in place, as positive influences on the mentoring experiences. It is important to note, however, that even with effective implementation of these beneficial influences, mentoring relationships continue to be impacted by structural and support related challenges.

5.3 Challenges Impacting Mentoring Experiences

Key findings in the research study highlighted the challenges impacting mentoring experiences. These challenges included the disconnect between university and school communities of practice; alignment in mentoring relationships; structural gaps in mentoring systems and a lack of preparation and support for MTs. In this section, these challenges impacting mentoring experiences are further discussed with reference to the findings in the research study and academic literature.

5.3.1 Disconnect Between University and School Communities of Practice

In Aotearoa New Zealand, BTs are not fully registered when they receive their qualification, instead on completion of their two-year provisional registration period and requirements. This registration 'apprenticeship' period, aligning with programmes in Malta and Scotland (Shanks et al., 2022), is fundamental to the ongoing transition BTs experience when moving through the 'Liminal Phase' (Ackesjö, 2014) between two communities of practice. In the BT transition context, these communities of practice can be observed as a BTs a state of known (University student teacher), into the edge of the new community with peripheral membership (BT), before progressing into the new role (registered teacher).

Though physically moving from one community of practice to another through the 'Borders' or 'Boundaries' separating them (Ackesjö 2014; Peters & Sandberg 2016; Wenger 1998), case study participants also reflected on the professional identity transition they faced. BT2 commented how they doubted their own confidence in decision making, often leading to overthinking, reflecting the period of growth BTs need to develop their professional identities as a teacher and build trust in own practices. While BT1 commented on feeling isolated as the only Pasifika teacher in her school in the early stages of entering peripheral participation into her new community of practice and not feeling a sense of belonging. Aligning with understandings from Martínez et al. (2017) on the double membership and liminality student teachers face as they move between the two communities of practice and begin forging their own professional identities. In this phase of the transition, BTs are quickly gaining more responsibility as they move closer to becoming an accepted participant in their new

community of learning, gaining more responsibility and access. However, they must pull away from their previous experiences as a student teacher and the safety net of having their associate teacher's supervision in the classroom.

Within my case study findings, three participants commented on the disconnect between the university and school contexts and the impacts this had on the success of their transition into their new community of practice. In Case Study 1, mentor teacher 1 (MT1) drew attention to the concerns they had about the assumptions of other staff members expecting the BT to come into their first year of teaching from university 'knowing everything'. This perspective caused issues around BT1 not being able to meet impossible expectations and led to fractures in their relationship with staff and leadership, resulting in barriers crossing the border threshold. This finding, also supported by both MTs in the case studies (MT1 and MT2), highlighted the need for MTs and schools employing BTs to have more communication with the university to gather information about what BTs have learned, should know, and will need further exposure and support with.

Within this BT transition, the mentoring experience and the mentor themselves become part of the borderland, the space surrounding the border (Peters & Sandberg, 2016), between university and the school context. Particularly within the milieu of educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), where the mentor works as the facilitator, shaping the experiences the BT has, and co-constructing the understanding of new learning within the new community of practice. Therefore, the opportunity for MTs to communicate with the universities and schools would create a 'bridge' (Peters & Sandberg, 2016) of dialogue, open

the lines of communication and build stronger understanding of expectations to better assist the BT in their transition between the two communities of practice. Decades of literature have highlighted the lack of support and misalignment between the two communities of practice, as well as the ongoing implications for MTs, the school community, and most importantly the success of the BTs transition (Ewing, 2021; Le Maistre & Paré, 2009; Loughran & Menter, 2019; Murdoch, 1978, 1979a, 1979b).

Another key finding was the inconsistent access and availability for both BT and MT to attend professional development. As stated above, BTs are not fully registered teachers until the completion of their two year 'apprenticeship' period. Therefore, the need for professional development and access to learning opportunities does not finish when a BT completes their degree. Although a range of courses exist throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, many BT specific professional development courses are run through the universities. Within my own findings, participants in both Phase 1 and 2 highlighted the benefits of university led BT professional development programmes to support ongoing learning through the transition, also acting as a bridge. In contrast to this, a 'ditch' can be created (Peters & Sandberg, 2016), causing a negative influence on the BTs transition across the border to the school context when these services are not accessible. In the first case study, both BT1 and MT1 noted that lack of access and funding the school had available to enroll BT1 in ongoing BT focused professional development. Alongside a national curriculum change and minimal effort from the school to engage the BT with current pedagogical knowledge and site-specific professional development, a ditch occurred resulting in further misalignment and difficulties

in transitioning to from the university context (as a student teacher) to the school context (as a BT).

Given the findings in Phase 2, it is clear the absence of meaningful dialogue between university and school communities; and the disconnect between university preparation and school practice are key challenges in effective transitioning for beginning teachers between the two communities of practice. Research by Shanks et al. (2022) with reference to the Malta case study, highlighted the positive impacts the university was having on BT transition by being the main initial teacher education provider, offering continued professional development courses for beginning teachers, as well as facilitating the country's formalised and accredited mentoring programme. This program supports MTs with specific training to become an effective mentor and promotes the bridge of dialogue between university and school communities of practice (Kutsyuruba & Bezzina, 2024; L-Università tá Malta, 2026). The effectiveness of this program highlights what can be achieved with a nationally consistent approach to mentoring and indicates possible changes which would be beneficial to domestic practice.

5.3.2 The Importance of Alignment in Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships require a lot of time, commitment, and individual consideration in how MTs and BTs are paired to ensure a successful mentoring relationship. Positive relationship pairings often involve selective processes that align like-minded mentors and mentees who have similar professional values (Kutsyuruba & Bezzina, 2024; Shanks et al.,

2022). Both Case Study participant pairs reflected on their experiences of being well-matched within their pairs and how this was a beneficial foundation of their positive mentoring experiences. Research by Burger et al. (2021) also stressed the importance of considered selection of mentor and mentee during the pairing process to support positive development outcomes. This research discussed the consequences and impacts of “match versus mismatch between mentors and mentees personal beliefs” (Burger et al., 2021, p. 8).

Pertinent to a mismatched mentoring relationship, aside from like-mindedness of professional values and beliefs, is the mentors' time availability and commitment to their role as a MT. The qualitative findings from Phase 1 of this research study highlighted that 28.6% of BTs felt their MT did not have enough time, resources, or support to effectively mentor them. While 60% of MTs indicated that they did not have enough time to commit to mentoring their BTs effectively. The qualitative data from Phase 2 also mirrored these findings. MT2 commented on her desire to have more time to spend with her BT, however reflected on the commitments of her role as Deputy Principal interfering with this. In contrast, MT1 stated how she chose to be BT1's MT as she had observed her BTs' struggles in a mismatched mentor pairing in their previous year. She believed her role as a classroom release teacher (CRT) would allow her more time to fully commit to the role and provide more effective mentoring than her predecessor. Availability and commitment to the role of MT are critical to the positive alignment of MT and BT relationships (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Burger et al., 2021; Ewing 2021).

5.3.3 Structural Gaps in Mentoring Systems and Lack of Preparation and Support for MTs

Key to the findings in this research study, as well as domestic and international research studies, is the lack of framework to support mentoring relationships. In 2015 the '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand) were released. These guidelines are still in effect today and are the only source of policy or framework available to MTs nationally. Domestic research studies by Buchanan (2019) and Fyall et al. (2020) reviewed the guidelines in practice and highlighted concerns over the understanding of the educative mentoring approach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and the application of the approach in practice. Both research studies commented on the lack of understanding resulting in mixed levels of implementation, often aligning more closely within the behaviourist learning theory and Knowledge Transmission Model (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995) as opposed to the intended constructivist learning theory in which educative mentoring is situated (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Within the Case Study analysis of this research, both MT1 and MT2 mentioned they had viewed the national policy guidelines, either as support given by their school or by searching online for support. Both mentors commented on how they had taken small pieces from the document, however overall found the guidelines to be "waffle" with very little direct support for them as mentors. When asked about educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), the recommended mentoring approach highlighted within the guidelines (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015), neither MT had heard of it or knew the key principles of the approach to implement it into their mentoring practices, aligning with findings from Buchanan (2019) and Fyall et al. (2020).

International research (Hairon et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2018; Shanks et al., 2022) also came to this conclusion of MTs showing a lack of knowledge and understanding of educative mentoring in their findings. Within their research and recommendations, a clear shift was made to explore the implementation of structured mentoring approaches in the design and organisation of mentoring programmes at the policy and practice level. The introduction of structured mentoring does not deter from educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) as the theory of mentoring, instead structured mentoring provides a scaffolded design for mentoring framework that supports MTs to understand and effectively apply mentoring practices. Within the Case Study findings, both MT1 and MT2 noted the lack of jumping off point or guidance as they began their mentoring journey. In the interviews, both MTs shared their desire for more detailed guidelines with examples of mentoring programmes, templates for meetings and observations, and a timeline or checklist of necessary programme components. MT1 was a first-time mentor, and MT2 was mentoring her second BT. These findings aligned closely with the Phase 1 quantitative survey in which 50% of BT participants and 80% of MT participants commented on the challenges they faced due to the lack of structure and support within the structure of mentoring practices. 50% of MT participants from the survey were first time mentors, with a further 30% having mentored two, three or four BTs. In the summary questionnaire given to case study participants, MT1 mentioned the request for clearer and more explicit mentoring guidelines in 22% of their question responses.

In addition to requests for more structure within the educative mentoring based national policy guidelines (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015), MTs within this research, emphasised an ongoing need for formalised and specialised professional development opportunities to support them in their role as mentors. Phase 1 quantitative findings draw attention to 60% of MTs having zero or minimal access to impactful experiences and opportunities for support as a mentor. Underscored by both Phase 2 MTs expressing their desire for access to attend specialised mentor training, and for these professional development opportunities to be more widely publicised and funded. This request aligns with domestic and international research findings and recommendations for the field of mentoring practices (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Buchanan, 2019; Burger et al., 2021; Ewing, 2021; Fyall et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2025; Shanks et al., 2022; Wexler, 2020). Of particular significance within the findings was that BTs were expressing their concerns about the quality of mentoring they were receiving. In both phases of this research, BTs indicated a need for a clearer breakdown of role clarity for themselves and their mentors. Suggesting a checklist or BT manual to ensure they were taken care of and receiving quality mentoring. Implementation of these requests would support MT efficacy in the development and growth of the BTs they mentor, as it has in research by Shanks et al. (2022) comparing Denmark, Scotland, and Malta national mentoring policy and schema. This inclusion of formalised mentor training would align Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring practices more closely with the positive findings of the current Academic Mentoring Program in Malta (L-Università tá Malta, 2026).

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand's (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring was released via email to Aotearoa New Zealand Teachers in June of 2025. Although not widely accessible, this proposed approach, including a discussion paper and an advice paper, clearly outlined the intended structure of a new national induction and mentoring schema to be implemented. Aligning most closely with an Action Research approach (Kemmis et al., 2014), this outline looks to have the intended outcome of improving domestic mentoring practices and implementing findings. Key goals outlined in the proposal include producing; a nationally consistent induction and mentoring model; structured learning content for BTs in each year of their provisional certification; and accessible support to all new teachers through the introduction of SPST – (site-based support team), and IC – (external induction coach), alongside the current allocated MT. However, this approach has limitations in its conceptual grounding and misalignment with current research in the field of mentoring.

Of the six references underpinning this proposed approach, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005) benchmarks regarding attraction and retention of BTs are outdated, as well as Wong's (2004) discussion of induction programmes comparing previous research findings. While OECD reporting highlights three recent reports (OECD, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c) inclusive of current teacher attrition statistics, these relevant resources were not included in the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (2025a, 2025b) proposed approach to induction and mentoring. These OECD reports more closely reflect the current education landscape and their inclusion would have strengthened the proposed approach. Domestic references the proposed approach draws on include

educational reform insights by Timperley et al. (2017) and Education Review Office's [ERO] (2024) initial teacher education review. The final source of support the proposal is founded on is Feiman-Nemser's (2001) seminal work on teacher induction and mentoring, specifically Educative Mentoring. However, in review of the proposed approach to induction and mentoring (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025a, 2025b) inclusion of the educative mentoring approach is fleeting and there is minimal evidence to support that an educative mentoring approach will be sufficiently supported to be effective in practice. The other grounding research (Boogren, 2015; OECD, 2005; Wong, 2004) is outdated by 10 - 21 years and not localised to the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Notably absent from the tightly worded survey questions is the opportunity for participants to provide critical feedback. With the way this proposed approach to induction and mentoring has been explicitly outlined prior to the conduction of data collection, and the wording of the survey, limitations of the proposal suggest the outcome of the quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups could be used to confirm assumptions with limited opportunity to collect challenging or alternative feedback. Furthermore, the proposed approach does not address the issues highlighted in this research study and current international research regarding the need for structured mentoring design and organisation approaches to support the effective application of educative mentoring practices.

5.4 Implications

Aligning with an understanding by Hairon et al. (2020) that educative mentoring is a philosophy of learning, with clear theoretical lineage, this research identifies the structural needs of mentoring at an organisation and design level. This appeal for explicit structure to

support the implementation and application of constructivist-oriented mentoring approaches has been highlighted in recent international research (Hairon et al., 2020; Kearney, 2021; Kelly et al., 2018; Larsen et al., 2025; Shanks et al., 2022; Wexler, 2020), however to my knowledge has not previously been explored in domestic research. This research study identifies that structured mentoring has emerged as an organisational response to the ongoing need for accountability and consistency in mentoring programmes to successfully implement and apply educative mentoring approaches (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) into practice.

5.4.1 Implications for Policy

This study found evidence to suggest that in order to enhance the efficacy of either the *'Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers'* (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) or the *'Proposed Approach to Induction and Mentoring'* (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025a, 2025b), a structured mentoring framework focused on the organisational design of mentoring needs to be developed at the policy level. This national framework would provide beneficial explanations and examples of educative mentoring in practice as well as necessary hands-on support for MTs and BTs. These supports would include:

- Templates (e.g. schedules, meeting minutes, observation outlines, etc.)
- Explanations of role clarity for BT and MT
- Suggested timelines/schedules for mentoring processes and topics (e.g meetings, observations, introduction to assessments; reporting, etc.)
- Clarity surrounding certification requirements (e.g. evidence, application processes)
- Recommended support pathways for areas of concern by either BT or MT

5.4.2 Implications for Practice

Through the findings of this study, it is evident that both BTs and MTs have a vested interest in the quality of mentoring provided and have identified the areas of support and necessary changes needed to ensure this happens. This study has found evidence to suggest that in the implementation of structured mentoring approaches from a policy to a practice level:

- Mentor training and specialised professional development is required to support MTs to gain an understanding of educative mentoring practices, processes of effective mentoring with reference to support materials provided, and pathways for support if needed.
- More intentional and considered processes for MT selection to ensure the BTs' values and beliefs are being met and enhanced through their mentor pairing.
- Stronger connections between university and school communities of practice to ensure alignment of understanding about the BT's strengths and areas for development, to ensure successful and supported transitions from student-teacher to practicing teacher.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The design of this small-scale research study allowed for a snapshot into the current mentoring relationship experiences of both BTs and MTs in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although robust in its findings, this research study was not without limitations.

Participant recruitment in both Phases one and two of the study was sparse, resulting in ethical amendments and relying on various avenues and approaches of participant recruitment. In the planning stages of this research, the qualitative case studies in Phase 2 design included four participant pairs to ensure a range of experiences and deeper analysis potential; however, only two participant pairs were accessible. Although the participant data was rich and allowed a range of insights and perspectives to be analysed, a larger sample of participants would have opened the study up for a range of first- and second-year BT experiences. It could also have provided possible variety in the overall perceptions of the mentoring experiences, as both case studies in this research study had highly positive experiences.

The Phase 1 survey was conducted anonymously to support the recruitment of participants and provide a sense of safety encouraging honesty and vulnerability in responses. This was successful; however, the lack of follow-up access to participants provided barriers when wanting to further question or understand their perspectives and experiences. An opportunity for further contact would have been beneficial in the design and scope of the second phase of research.

Research literature in this field was often limited when exploring BT mentoring experiences, therefore this study also draws on references to student teacher mentoring experiences. This data was used cautiously to ensure transferability within the concepts being discussed and supported, however, highlights an area of need in academic research.

Alongside issues of comparable academic research, domestically, current research was also limited. When reviewing the literature regarding the '*Professional Learning Journeys: Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers*' (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015) inclusion of a master's thesis (Buchanan, 2019) was necessary in supporting the analysis of current domestic policy and practices.

Key to this research study was the overwhelming lack of academic research focused on the MT's growth development and needs within the mentoring relationships being explored. Although a limitation in the review of literature pertaining to this research study, the focus of this research study is well situated within the field of research and provides necessary insight and analysis into the mentor's experience and needs.

5.6 Researcher Reflexivity and Growth

At the beginning of this research project my research experience was limited, drawing mostly on snippets of research methods papers and support from my supervisors, as I further explored and pinpointed my research focus. Entering this research opportunity, I brought with me my experience as an associate teacher to multiple student teachers and my personal experiences as a BT. Having had substantially contrasting mentoring experiences from my first to second year, I wondered 'why?'. Desperate to delve further into the field of literature and explore the current mentoring landscape, I continued to ask myself, 'what influences the

range of experiences a BT and their MT have?’ and ‘what are the areas of need moving forward?’

Given my personal experiences, I came into this study with prior assumptions about what I thought I would find. Through analysis of the Phase 1 mixed methods survey, I was validated with the representation of my own experiences in these findings. However, this data also encouraged me to look beyond my assumptions as new findings became just as prominent. This recognition of various experiences and perspectives prompted me to be more reflexive in my analysis of the findings, acknowledging my predisposed noticing's, recording these in a reflexive journal, and checking myself to ensure the analysis of data represented the findings and not my own perspectives. To ensure this reflexivity, I revisited data regularly, exploring different codes combinations and themes. I decided to write up all the findings, then analytically trim based on data selection and not self-selection. This process supported me to manage my influence on the research.

Over the course of this research study, with the influence of academic research and my own experience conducting this research, a key noticing was how my thinking and perspective on mentoring practices changed. In the initial stages of this research study, I was expecting to discover a collection of negative mentoring experiences and grievances. Instead, the construction the Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings supported me to understand that regardless of the overall perspective of their mentoring experiences, BTs and MTs all experienced key challenges predominantly influenced by the lack of support and structure surrounding their mentoring experience. In particular, the case study analysis challenged my assumptions and

broadened my perspective to understand that even highly positive mentoring experiences were still bound by the same challenges. Limitations in policy have flow on effects that constrain practice and reduce mentoring effectiveness.

5.7 Conclusion and Future Research

This research study provides an exploration into current BT mentoring relationships. With a focus on identifying the experiences and challenges faced by both BTs and MTs , the purpose of this research was on identifying key trends in data and possible implications to support the ongoing growth, consistency and quality of mentoring provided in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This inquiry not only focused on the needs of the BT's growth and successful transition into their new community of practice, but also on the growth and development of MTs. The research analysed the support currently in place for MTs to effectively meet the needs of their BTs and provide quality mentoring.

This study contributes to the field of mentoring research by providing a key focus on the perspectives and experiences of MTs, an area currently under-researched in international academic studies and leaving questions unanswered in domestic research. The data extends understanding of the inconsistencies in BT experiences by examining the policy frameworks and practical approaches MTs draw upon. Overall, this thesis argues that effective implementation of educative mentoring practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), situated within a constructivist learning framework, necessitates a structured mentoring design.

The existing and proposed mentoring and induction programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand provide broad guidance, yet my study has shown challenges remain in interpreting these policies into effective mentoring practices. To address these gaps, further research could examine the development and implementation of a structured mentoring approach, to focus on the organisation, universal understanding, and successful application of educative mentoring practices. A conceptually grounded design would require careful piloting and reviewing to produce policy, and the supporting frameworks necessary to ensure current challenges of BTs and MTs are resolved. The implications of these additions would have significant benefits to the practical application of mentoring practices and procedures within the BT and MT relationships and experience. Further practical implications from my study including training and support, considered mentor selection, and stronger dialogue between universities and school communities of practice would contribute to higher consistency in the quality of mentoring provided nationally. The philosophy of educative mentoring alone is not enough without the combination of structured mentoring. Policy is nothing without structural support to put it into practice.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Phase 1 Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher Experience Data Collection Survey

Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher Experience Data Collection

Kia ora and thank you for taking part in this University of Waikato Masters Thesis research questionnaire. The **focus** of this research is to explore the question *How can the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures?*

My name is Marnie Heng and I am currently completing my Master of Education at Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education at the University of Waikato. Like you, I am a local primary school teacher. Over my seven years in the classroom, I have my own mentoring experiences both as a beginning teacher and working with pre-service teachers transitioning to become beginning teachers. Throughout this experience I have often wondered what more our education mentoring programmes could be doing to support our colleagues both beginning and their mentors, over those crucial first two years.

For my masters research I have been working to develop and grow my understanding of beginning teacher induction and mentoring approaches both locally in Aotearoa New Zealand and Internationally. The goal of this study is to explore the experiences and challenges faced by both new educators and their mentors in order to identify improvements to increase the effectiveness and support these programmes provide. Your insights would be invaluable in helping us understand these experiences and inform future improvements.

The data collected from this questionnaire will be analysed to identify trends and themes which will inform the focus of future qualitative study around the topic later in the year. When completing this questionnaire **please do not** include any names of colleagues, students, parents or schools as it is your own obligation to protect the privacy of other participants and schools of participants. All responses are anonymous and your data will be securely stored within the University of Waikato for 5 years. After the 5 years, the data will be digitally archived and continue to be securely stored.

Eligibility TO PARTICIPATE IN this research study is specific to best meet the data collection needs of the study. You are eligible to participate in the questionnaire if you are:

- Working in a primary context (Years 1-8) in a state or state integrated contributing or full primary school.
- A teaching staff member who has completed their first and/or second year of provisional teaching in the past 8 years (2017 - 2024).
- A teaching staff member who has been involved as a mentor teacher to a beginning teacher in the past 8 years (2017-2024).

Completion and submission of this questionnaire is considered digital acceptance of **informed consent** to participate in this stage of the research study. You are consenting

to:

- Answering the questions accurately and honestly
- Having the information you provide in the questionnaire be analysed and used to inform future areas of study about beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences.
- Data being included in my thesis and other publications or presentations related to this research.

While every effort will be made to protect anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

At the end of the questionnaire there is an option for you to reach out and contact the researcher if you are interested in participating in the qualitative data collection stage of the research study this year.

Researcher - Marnie Heng
 Master of Education in Human Development Student
 Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
 mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

Supervisor - Sally Peters
 Head of Education
 Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
 sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [02/05/2025]. Approval number: FEDU008/25

1. Which **region** of Aotearoa New Zealand are you teaching in?

Please use this link if you are unsure.

<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/know-your-region>

*

 Dropdown

Mark only one oval.

- Northland Region
- Auckland Region
- Waikato Region
- Bay of Plenty Region
- Gisborne Region
- Hawke's Bay Region
- Taranaki Region
- Manawatu-Wanganui Region
- Wellington Region
- Tasman Region
- Nelson Region
- Marlborough Region
- West Coast Region
- Canterbury Region
- Otago Region
- Southland Region
- Chatham Islands County

2. What type of school are you working in? *

Mark only one oval.

- English Medium Mainstream School
- Māori Immersion Unit within an English Medium Mainstream School
- Pasifika Immersion Unit within an English Medium Mainstream School
- Kura Kaupapa
- Religious School

3. Select the role which you will complete the form as. If you have been both a Beginning Teacher and a Mentor Teacher between 2017 - 2024 please select the perspective you would like to complete the survey from. *

 Dropdown

If both options apply to you, you are welcome to submit a separate form after from the other perspective or just choose one which you feel most drawn to sharing experiences from.

Mark only one oval.

- Beginning Teacher *Skip to question 4*
- Mentor Teacher *Skip to question 22*

Questionnaire Path - Beginning Teacher Perspective

4. I was a beginning teacher in.. (Tick as many boxes as apply) *

Check all that apply.

- 2024
- 2023
- 2022
- 2021
- 2020
- 2019
- 2018
- 2017

Response Section

Throughout this section please answer questions as you see fit. If the question does not apply to you add NA. Please add as much or as little information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Reminder - When completing this questionnaire please do not include any names of colleagues, students, parents or schools as it is your own obligation to protect the privacy of other participants and schools of participants.

Thank you for sharing your experiences!

12. Please share about any **positive** mentoring experiences you had as a beginning teacher.

13. Please share about any **negative** mentoring experiences you had as a beginning teacher.

14. Please share about any **interesting** mentoring experiences you had as a beginning teacher.

15. What **challenges** arose throughout the mentoring experience you had as a beginning teacher.

16. What **factors influenced or supported** the mentoring experience you had as a beginning teacher.

17. What **opportunities** do you feel would have benefited you personally throughout the mentoring experience?

18. What resources or experiences do you feel **were beneficial** to you or your mentor teacher during the mentoring experience?

19. What opportunities, resources or experiences do you feel **would have benefited** you or your mentor teacher throughout the mentoring experience?

20. Are there any other comments about your mentoring experience you would like to add?

21. Select **Complete** to move to the final submission section

Mark only one oval.

Complete *Skip to section 5 (Final Section)*

Skip to section 5 (Final Section)

Questionnaire Path - Mentor Teacher Perspective

22. I was a Mentor Teacher in... (Tick as many boxes as apply) *

Check all that apply.

- 2024
 2023
 2022
 2021
 2020
 2019
 2018
 2017

23. As a Mentor Teacher, how many Beginning Teachers have you mentored throughout your career?

The Mentoring Experience - Linear Scale

Please use the scale 1-5 to represent your experience.

When discussing the mentoring experience, this refers to anything you experienced as a mentor teacher to a beginning teacher in their first or second year as a provisional teacher. If you have had a mix of positive and negative experiences either pick the experience you feel needs to be shared most OR please feel free to submit this form a second time to share the other perspective.

24. Please rate your overall mentoring experience

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very poor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Excellent

25. Please rate your professional relationship with your beginning teacher during the mentoring experience

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very poor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Excellent

26. Please rate how supported you felt as a mentor during the mentoring experience

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not supported at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Incredibly well supported

31. Do you have any comments about the process in which you were selected for the role of mentor teacher?

32. Please rate yourself on the scale about *How often you have considered leaving the teaching profession throughout your teaching career* from 0% never to 100% ready to leave.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	
○	○	○	○	○	
0% Never					100% Ready to leave

33. How many years have you been teaching for?

Response Section

Throughout this section please answer questions as you see fit. If the question does not apply to you add NA. Please add as much or as little information as you feel comfortable with sharing.

Reminder - When completing this questionnaire please do not include any names of colleagues, students, parents or schools as it is your own obligation to protect the privacy of other participants and schools of participants.

Thank you for sharing your experiences!

34. Please share about any **positive** mentoring experiences you had as a Mentor Teacher

35. Please share about any **negative** mentoring experiences you had as a Mentor Teacher

36. Please share about any **interesting** mentoring experiences you had as a Mentor Teacher

37. What **challenges** arose throughout the mentoring experience you had as a Mentor Teacher?

38. What **factors influenced or supported** the mentoring experience you had as a Mentor Teacher?

39. What **opportunities** do you feel would have benefited you personally throughout the mentoring experience?

40. What resources or experiences do you feel **were beneficial** to you or your beginning teacher during the mentoring experience?

41. What opportunities, resources or experiences do you feel **would have benefited** you or your beginning teacher throughout the mentoring experience?

42. Are there any other comments about your mentoring experience you would like to add?

43. Select **Complete** to move to the final submission section

Mark only one oval.

Complete *Skip to section 5 (Final Section)*

Skip to section 5 (Final Section)

Final Section

Submission of questionnaire and informed consent

Thank you for taking the time and care to complete this questionnaire. Your support and sharing of your experiences is much appreciated.

As previously stated, completion and submission of this questionnaire is considered digital acceptance of **informed consent** to participate in this stage of the research study. By clicking submit you are consenting to:

- Answering the questions accurately and honestly
- Having the information you provide in the questionnaire be analysed and used to inform future areas of study about beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences.
- Data being included in my thesis and other publications or presentations related to this research.

While every effort will be made to protect anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

After clicking submit there will be information to make contact with the researcher if you are interested in participating in the qualitative data collection stage of the research study throughout the year. There is a breakdown of what the involvement and time commitment being a participant in that stage of the research study would entail. Participants for this second stage can only be from the Waikato and Auckland regions to meet the travel requirements of the researcher.

Confirmation message

Thank you, your response has been recorded. Your experiences and input into this research are crucial to ensure we have gathered diverse insights on the topic strengthening the findings of this research.

Inquiry of interest for participation in the qualitative research data collection.

Eligibility - I am looking for pair duos of mentor teachers and their beginning teachers currently in their first or second year of the beginning teachers provisional years. Duos need to be within the Auckland or Waikato region.

The research study will include 2x pre and post questionnaires designed to gather hopes and expectations for the mentor/mentee partnership, concerns, analysis of experiences in the mentoring experience, analysis of access to resources etc. The research study will also require the participant to engage in two interviews with the researcher in the middle of the year (Beginning Term 3) as a progress report. The first interview will be alone with the researcher and the second interview alongside their mentor/mentee with the researcher.

If you and your mentor or mentee for 2025 are interested in being a participant in the research study please email the researcher below by Friday 30 May 2025 at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

*Researcher - Marnie Heng
Master of Education in Human Development Student
Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz*

*Supervisor - Sally Peters
Head of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz*

Appendix B

Phase 2 Beginning Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Beginning Teacher Interview Questions

Section 1 - General Feelings

1. 1 – 10 rating – Overall how comfortable do you feel in your mentoring relationship? What experiences led you to this rating?
2. 1 – 10 rating – How do you feel about your growth as a teacher this year? What experiences led you to this rating?
3. 1 – 10 rating – How confident do you feel as a teacher in your abilities to competently complete and execute your expected teaching roles? What experiences led you to this rating?
4. How would you define the terms induction and mentoring. How do you feel these apply to your experiences.

Section 2 – Influences and Challenges

5. What elements of your mentoring experience do you feel are positive influences?
6. What elements of your mentoring experience do you feel are negative influences?
7. What challenges have you faced as a beginning teacher?
 - How did your mentoring relationship support or not support these challenges?
8. Do you feel that as a BT you have support/ a support network within your school to help you achieve? Please elaborate
9. Do you have any external support? If so, what?

Section 3 – Structure of Mentoring Time

10. Does your mentor teacher teach at the same level as you?
 - What are your thoughts on this?
11. How is your PRT release time (either 0.2 or 0.1 release) used or split?
 - What are your thoughts on the allocation of this time?
12. Please discuss your mentor and BT meetings schedule?
13. What do observations in your mentoring relationship look like? (observations of you, you are observing your mentor, you observing other staff).
14. Is there an approach to mentoring or mentoring program you recognise or feel your mentor is using?
 - How does this approach work for you?

Section 4 – Goals and Progress

15. What are some goals you have moving forward in your mentoring relationship/experience?
 - Do you feel supported to achieve these goals?
16. Do you know what is required of you for teaching certification at the end of your 2nd year?
 - Do you feel on track to meet these requirements?
17. What do you feel would benefit your mentor and/or mentoring experience or relationship?

Section 5 – Problem Solving

18. When you have a problem or question, do you feel comfortable discussing this with your mentor? - Why or why not?
19. If you are struggling with a situation in your classroom (behaviour, planning, parents, workload, teaching), how would you bring this up with your mentor and how would they support you?
20. Do you feel that you and your mentor are a team who collaborate on planning and challenges together?
21. Have you received any PD specifically for BTs? What are your thoughts on these?
22. Finally, what PD do you feel would best support you as a BT? What do you feel you do not have enough access to that you need to support your teaching?

Appendix C

Phase 2 Mentor Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Mentor Teacher Interview Questions

Section 1 – General Feelings

1. 1 – 10 rating – Overall how comfortable do you feel in your mentoring relationship? What experiences led you to this rating?
2. 1 – 10 rating – How do you feel about your growth as a mentor this year? What experiences led you to this rating?
3. 1 – 10 rating – How confident do you feel as a mentor in your abilities to competently complete and execute your expected mentoring roles? What experiences led you to this rating?
4. How would you define the terms induction and mentoring. How do you feel these apply to your experiences.
5. What was the process in which you were selected for the role of mentor teacher?
6. Is there a PRT leader or supervisor at your school?

Section 2 – Influences and Challenges

7. What elements of your mentoring experience do you feel are positive influences?
8. What elements of your mentoring experience do you feel are negative influences?
9. What challenges have you faced as a mentor teacher?
 - How did your mentoring relationship support or not support these challenges?
10. Do you feel that as a mentor you have support/ a support network within your school to help you achieve? Please elaborate
11. Do you have any external support? If so, what?
12. What training or support did/do you receive from your school (internal or external) as a mentor teacher?
13. Did you receive any resources to support you as a mentor teacher?
14. What support and or resources would you like to see available to you?

Section 3 – Structure of Mentoring Time

15. How is your PRTs release time (either 0.2 or 0.1 release) used or split?
 - What are your thoughts on the allocation of this time?
16. Please discuss your mentor and BT meetings schedule?
17. What do observations in your mentoring relationship look like? (observations of your BT, your BT observing you, your BT observing other staff).
18. What mentoring approach or mentoring program are you using?
 - How does this approach work for you?

Section 4 – Goals and Progress

19. What are some goals you have moving forward in your mentoring relationship/experience?
 - Do you feel supported to achieve these goals?
20. Do you feel your BT knows what is required of you for teaching certification at the end of their 2nd year?
 - Do you feel they are on track to meet these requirements?
21. What do you feel would benefit you as a mentor and/or your mentoring experience or relationship?

Section 5 - Problem Solving

22. When your BT has a problem or question, how do you approach this?
23. If they are struggling with a situation in their classroom (behaviour, planning, parents, workload, teaching), how would you support them?
24. Do you feel that you and your BT are a team who collaborate on planning and challenges together?
25. Do you see any reciprocal growth from mentoring your BT? How has this experience benefited your own teaching and learning?
26. What are your general thoughts on mentoring in Aotearoa New Zealand nationally, locally and/or on a school level?

Appendix D

Phase 2 Information Sheet Questionnaire

Information Sheet - Research Study on Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher Experiences

Kia ora kaiako mā,

Thank you for your interest to participate in this University of Waikato Masters Thesis research. The **focus** of this research is to explore the question *How can the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures?*

This initial information sheet is used to help me as the researcher collect necessary information on participants that may not be covered in the interview or questionnaire phase but is vital for gaining a well rounded picture of the participants for our data analysis.

All names, personal, participant pair and school will either be coded or pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy and anonymity. Your data from this form, the interview and the questionnaire will be securely stored within the University of Waikato for 5 years. After the 5 years, the data will be digitally archived and continue to be securely stored. While every effort will be made to protect anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

If I have too many potential participant pairs, pairs will be selected based on the criteria outlined in the ethics application to provide the best range of data for the study. This will include a range of first and second year beginning teachers, mentor teacher experience, year levels being taught, socio-economic ranging of the schools, rural and urban schools, and geographic locations.

If you or your participant pair (beginning teacher or mentor teacher) have any questions please feel free to contact me, the researcher Marnie Heng, on mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz or my supervisor as listed below.

Thank you for your interest to participate. Selected participants will be emailed and an interview date will be set.

Researcher - Marnie Heng
Master of Education in Human Development Student
Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

Supervisor - Sally Peters
Head of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25

** Indicates required question*

1. Email *

2. Name *

3. Please Select One *

Mark only one oval.

- Beginning Teacher - First Year (PRT/BT)
- Beginning Teacher - Second Year (PRT/BT)
- Mentor Teacher (MT)

4. Participant Pair Name (your mentor or beginning teacher name) *

5. School Name *

6. Location of School *

7. Typer of School/Classroom you are teaching in *

Mark only one oval.

- English Medium Mainstream School
- Māori Immersion Unit in an English Medium Mainstream School
- Pasifika Unit in an English Medium Mainstream School
- Kura Kaupapa
- Religious School

8. Year Level Teaching *

9. Beginning Teachers - Is this your first/only mentor teacher? If not, please explain.

10. Mentor Teachers - How many years have you been teaching?

11. Mentor Teachers - How many beginning teachers have you mentored?

12. How are you feeling about this mentoring experience so far? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Terrible Amazing

13. Are there any key comments you would like to make about your mentoring experience at this time? More in-depth questions will be asked in the interview.

14. Which location would you like to complete your interview? *

Mark only one oval.

- Your classroom or somewhere within your school
- Local library or University. Researcher will arrange for a private meeting room location in your area
- Online, via Zoom

15. Which weeks/dates are you available for an in person interview with the research. *

Mark only one oval.

- 28th July - 3rd August - Term 3 Week 3
- 4th - 10th August - Term 3 Week 4
- 11th - 17th August - Term 3 Week 5

16. Please elaborate on times and specific days that best suit you or you definitely cannot make from the selection above. I know your time is precious and when I email with set dates I want to make this process as quick as possible to organise with you.

Appendix E

Phase 2 Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher – Mentoring Experience Summary
Questionnaire

Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher - Mentoring Experience Summary Questionnaire

Kia ora kaiako mā,

Thank you taking the time to complete this final collection of your thoughts, experiences and overall reflections. I recognise this questionnaire is quite detailed, and I truly value the time and insight you're contributing. Your input has been critical in supporting my understanding of *How the experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors can reveal key areas of need in education mentoring procedures*.

The only people seeing this feedback are myself as the researcher and my supervisors. The data will be collected from here and used in my analysis of the overall data content and writing of my thesis. All names, personal, participant pair and school will either be coded or pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy and anonymity. Your data from this questionnaire will be securely stored within the University of Waikato for 5 years. After the 5 years, the data will be digitally archived and continue to be securely stored. While every effort will be made to protect anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

Autosave is enabled if you are logged in through Google and are on a stable internet connection. This means that you should be able to work through the questionnaire over a few days if needed. If you could have the questionnaire completed within 2 weeks, by 23 November that would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me via email on the information below. If there are any questions you would like to discuss further there is the option for a follow up interview, or if I feel the need to gain a deeper understanding of your response I may reach out to you. Again, thank you for your contribution to this Master's thesis.

Ngā mihi,
Researcher - Marnie Heng
Master of Education in Human Development Student
Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

14. What experiences led you to this rating?

15. In what ways do you feel your induction and mentoring experiences supported or did not support you? Please elaborate.

2 - Influences and Challenges

16. What 2-3 (if possible) key elements of your mentoring experiences do you feel continue to be positive influences for you?

17. What 2-3 (if possible) key elements of your mentoring experiences do you feel continue to be negative influences for you?

18. What 2-3 key challenges have you faced as a beginning teacher? How did your mentoring relationship support or not support these challenges?

19. Has your support network changed over the year? Please elaborate.

3 - Structure of Mentoring Time

20. Has your PRT release time (either 0.2 or 0.1 release) continued to be used the same way since your interview? Has it been consistent - please explain.

21. Have there been any key changes to your mentor and BT meetings schedule?

22. How do you feel about your opportunities to observe and be observed this year?

23. How has your mentor's approach or program of mentoring aligned or not aligned with your learning needs?

4 - Goals and Progress

24. In the interview you discussed some goals you had moving forward in your mentoring relationship/experience. Can you discuss how these have gone and if you feel you have achieved or not achieved these?

25. Do you understand what is required of you for completing your teaching certification at the end of your 2nd year? Do you feel on track to meet these requirements?

5 - Growth and Reflection

26. How do you feel about having tricky conversations with your mentor teacher and/or other staff? How has your confidence with this grown or developed?

27. How do you feel about your support to deal with everyday classroom situations (behaviour, planning, parents, workload, teaching)? Do you feel that you know where to go for support when needed and that it will be provided? Please explain.

28. How would you describe how you and your mentor collaborate on planning, problem solving and challenges together?

29. Have you received any PD specifically for BT's this year and if so what was it? What were your thoughts on these?

30. Are there any other comments you would like to make about your mentoring experience or being a beginning teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand?

31. Please rate yourself on the scale about *How often you have considered leaving the teaching profession throughout your teaching career* from 0% never to 100% ready to leave.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

0% never 100% ready to leave

32. What experiences led you to this rating?

Skip to section 4 (Final Submission)

Mentor Teacher Questionnaire

33. Name *

34. Beginning Teacher Name *

1 - General Feelings

35. Overall, how comfortable do you feel in your mentoring relationship now?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Terrible Amazing

36. What experiences led you to this rating?

37. Please rate your professional relationship with your beginning teacher this year.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very poor Excellent

38. What experiences led you to this rating?

39. How do you feel about your growth as a mentor this year?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Terrible Amazing

40. What experiences led you to this rating?

41. As a mentor teacher, do you feel you had the time, resources, support to be a successful mentor?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Definitely not Definitely

42. What experiences led you to this rating?

43. How confident do you feel as a mentor in your abilities to competently complete and execute your expected mentoring roles? Were you able to commit to the role of mentor teacher to the best of your abilities to ensure the success of you beginning teacher this year?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very poor Excellent

44. What experiences led you to this rating?

45. In what ways do you feel the induction and mentoring provided by you and your school supported the growth of your BT overall? Are there any key changes that need to be made?

2 - Influences and Challenges

46. What 2-3 (if possible) key elements of your mentoring experience do you feel continue to be positive influences for you?

47. What 2-3 (if possible) key elements of your mentoring experience do you feel continue to be negative influences for you?

48. What 2-3 key challenges have you faced as a mentor teacher?

49. What support and or resources would you like to see available to you as a mentor teacher?

50. What support have you had with these challenges?

51. Has your support network as a mentor teacher changed over the year? Please elaborate.

52. Have you received any training or PD from your school (internal or external) as a mentor teacher this year? If so, what was it and how did you find these?

53. Has your PRT's release time (either 0.2 or 0.1 release) continued to be used the same way since your interview? Has it been consistent - please explain.

54. Have there been any key changes to your mentor and BT meetings schedule?

55. How do you feel about your opportunities to observe your BT, for them to observe you and observe others this year?

56. How do you feel your mentoring approach or program of mentoring aligned with your BT's learning needs?

57. In the interview you discussed some goals you had moving forward in your mentoring relationship/experience. Can you discuss how these have gone and if you feel you have achieved or not achieved these?

58. Do you feel your BT understands what is required of them to complete their teaching certification at the end of their 2nd year? Do you feel they are on track to meet these requirements?

5 - Growth and Reflection

59. How has your BT's confidence and capabilities to have tricky yet professional conversations with you and other staff members grown?

60. If your BT is struggling with a situation in their classroom (behaviour, planning, parents, workload, teaching), do you feel that they feel confident in knowing who to go to get support and that they feel it will be provided to them?

61. How would you describe how you and your BT collaborate on planning, problem solving and challenges together?

62. Do you see any reciprocal growth from mentoring your BT? How has this experience benefited your own teaching and learning?

63. Would you choose to be a mentor teacher again?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Definitely not Definitely

64. What experiences led you to this rating?

65. Please rate yourself on the scale about *How often you have considered leaving the teaching profession throughout your teaching career* from 0% never to 100% ready to leave.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

0% never 100% ready to leave

66. What experiences led you to this rating?

67. Are there any key changes you feel are necessary to better support you as a mentor teacher in the future?

Skip to section 4 (Final Submission)

Final Submission

Appendix F

Phase 1 Participant Recruitment Facebook Post

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WANTED - Masters Research Study

Invitation to participate in a 20 minute questionnaire on beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences and challenges in Aotearoa New Zealand. This survey is ANONYMOUS. You do not need to enter any identifying information and I as the researcher cannot identify who has submitted or what they have submitted. To protect the privacy of others please do not include your name, the names of colleagues or school in your responses.

See link below

Kia ora Kaiako mā,

My name is Marnie Heng and I am currently completing my Master of Education at the University of Waikato. I am looking for participants to share their experiences and challenges as either a beginning teacher or mentor teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Eligibility to participate in this research study is specific to best meet the data collection needs of the study. You are eligible to participate in the questionnaire if you are:

- Working in a primary context (Years 1-8) in a state or state integrated contributing or full primary school.
- A teaching staff member who has completed their first and/or second year of provisional teaching (beginning teacher) in the past 8 years (2017 - 2024).
- A teaching staff member who has been involved as a mentor teacher to a beginning teacher in the past 8 years (2017-2024).

Please see information about the research project and ethical approval when you click on the google forms link.

I would love to hear your thoughts. Please take a moment to share them through the questionnaire linked below. To keep things constructive and respectful, I kindly ask that discussions stay within the questionnaire responses rather than the comment section here. Thank you so much for your input!

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSfP5X34Mva.../viewform...>

The screenshot shows a Google Forms questionnaire titled "Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher Experience Data Collection". The form is set against a light blue background. The title is in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text in a smaller font, which is the same text as in the Facebook post above. The form is partially obscured by a grey bar at the bottom, which contains the text "DOCS.GOOGLE.COM" and "Beginning Teacher and Mentor Teacher Experience Data Collection". There is also a small information icon (an 'i' in a circle) in the bottom right corner of the form area.

Appendix G

Phase 2 Invitation Letter

School of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata
 The University of Waikato
 Private Bag 3105
 Hamilton, New Zealand, 3240

0800 WAIKATO
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz
www.waikato.ac.nz



Subject: Information and Consent for Participation in Research Study on Education Mentoring Programs

+64 7 838 4144
 waikato.ac.nz

Dear Participant,

Gate 1, Knighton Road
 Hamilton 3240

I hope this letter finds you well. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in the second phase of my research study aimed at identifying potential areas of change needed in education mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

Private Bag 3105
 Hamilton 3240
 New Zealand

The goal of this study is to explore the experiences and challenges faced by both new educators and their mentors in order to identify possible improvements to increase the effectiveness and support these programs provide. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable in helping me understand these experiences and inform future improvements.

In Phase 1 of the research study, a quantitative survey was conducted to gain insight on the experiences and challenges faced by beginning teachers and their mentor teachers over the past 8 years. This second phase of research aims to use the key themes identified in the first phase of research to qualitatively analyse the current mentorship experiences of a select group of beginning teachers and their mentors.

Who can participate in Phase 2? I am looking for participant pairs, made up of current beginning teacher and mentor teacher duos. Both participants need to be willing and able to commit to the involvement criteria outlined below. Beginning teachers can be in their first or second year of their provisional teaching.

What does participation involve? Participation for the participant pairs in phase two of the research data collections involves:

- Initial contact and signing of informed consent form/ in person or online. (20 minutes)
- Voice recorded, mid-point semi-structured interview with the participant individually. (60 minutes)
- Online questionnaire to gather participant's final thoughts, hopes, fears, challenges, experiences, wonderings and areas of possible improvement. (40 minutes)
- Possible follow-up interview after online questionnaire. Opportunity to further discuss any responses made in the questionnaire with the researcher. (30 minutes)

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation: Anonymity of participants will be safeguarded as the research data will be collected and stored securely. Any identifying factors, such as name and school, will be coded or pseudonyms will be used to provide anonymity of participants and their workplace. Although the identities and workplaces of participants are protected, the data shared will not remain confidential as is reported in the research project. All participants are obliged to protect the privacy of other participants when signing consent. Please note, while every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

Participation in the research study is voluntary. No participant can be forced or coerced into participating in the research study. Each participant has the right to decline to answer or withdraw

from the research study at any point. If a participant withdraws from the study, they are invited to complete an exit interview or questionnaire with the researcher (45 min max) to share any final thoughts and reason for withdrawal that could be relevant to the nature of the research study. This would be beneficial to the research, but participants can decline.

If there are too many eligible participant pairs to participate in the research study, the researcher will select the final pairings based on the criteria outlined in their ethics application. Selected participants will be notified via email if they are accepted to participate in the research study.

Informed Consent: Each participant in the research study needs to sign and submit a **consent form** to participate in the study. Participants are only able to be accepted into the research study if both members sign the consent form (beginning teacher and mentor teacher).

Participants are consenting to:

- Answering the questions accurately and honestly.
- Making themselves available for the research interview, at a location of their choosing (participant school or University Library private booking space).
- Participating in the semi-structured research interview to the best of their ability.
- Completing the questionnaire within the advised time limit.
- Respecting and protecting the privacy of the study and its participants.
- Having the information, you provide in the questionnaire and interview be analysed and used to inform future areas of study about beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences.
- Data being included in my thesis and other publications or presentations related to this research.

If you **agree** to participating in Phase Two of the research study outlined above, please **complete the consent form** and email it back to me at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

If you **agree** to participating in Phase Two of the research study outlined above, please **complete the consent form** and email it back to me at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

If you would like more information about the study or have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reply to this email to contact me directly or contact my chief supervisor Professor Sally Peters at sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz.

I look forward to your valuable input in helping shape the future of education mentoring programs.

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Yours Sincerely,
Marnie Heng
Master of Education in Human Development Student
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25

Appendix H

Phase 2 Participant Recruitment Facebook Post

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PAIRS WANTED – Qualitative Master’s Research Study

Phase 2 – Invitation to participate in a qualitative interview and short questionnaire about your beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences and challenges in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am looking for: Beginning teacher and mentor teacher pairs to interview and share their views on their current mentoring experience.

Kia ora Kaiako mā,

My name is Marnie Heng and I am currently completing my Master of Education at the University of Waikato. I am looking for participants, across the North Island, who **along with their pair** (mentor or beginning teacher) are interested in participating in an interview (July-August) and an end of year summary experience online questionnaire (November). In this research you will be sharing your experiences and challenges as either a beginning teacher or mentor teacher currently going through the mentoring experience in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Eligibility to participate in this research:

- Current first or second year teacher working in a New Zealand school/kura.
- Current mentor teacher to a first- or second-year beginning teacher (PRT).
- Located in the North Island of New Zealand.
- Working in a primary context (Years 1-8) in a state or state integrated contributing or full primary school or kura.
- Available to commit to the interview and questionnaire requirements.

Involvement requirements:

- Signing of consent form from both participants (beginning teacher and mentor teacher)
- Completion of the digital information sheet to gather basic school and general information.
- Being available and able to complete an interview between July-August (60min max). Interviews will be individual, so you will not be interviewing with your BT/MT. Researcher will come to you, or an online option is available.
- Completion of the end of year summary experience questionnaire in November (30-40min), also separate to your BT/MT.

If you and your BT/MT are interested in participating in this phase of research, please contact me via email at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz ASAP. If you or your BT/MT have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out. Nothing compares to the real-life experiences we as teachers have each day, and I would love to have you share yours with me.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Marnie Heng

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25

Appendix I

Phase 2 Participant Recruitment Principal Email

Subject: Request for Participation in Research Study on Education Mentoring Programs (Interview and Questionnaire)

Dear Greg Roebuck,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to invite staff members from your school to consider participating in the second phase of my research study, which focuses on analysing real life experiences of mentors and beginning teachers, to identify potential areas of change needed in education mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

My name is Marnie Heng, and I am currently completing my master's thesis at the University of Waikato. The goal of this study is to explore the experiences and challenges faced by both new educators and their mentors, with the aim of identifying possible improvements to enhance the effectiveness and support of these programs. I believe your school's participation would provide invaluable insights into these experiences and contribute meaningfully to the development of future mentoring practices.

If after reading the information and you are happy for your staff to be involved, please forward the email to staff who meet the criteria.

Who Can Participate?

I am seeking teacher pairs to participate in the study, specifically those who meet the following criteria:

- A mentor teacher and their beginning teacher who is in their first or second year of provisional teaching.

What Does Participation Involve?

For teacher pairs selected for phase two of the research, participation will involve the following:

1. **Initial contact and informed consent:** Participants will sign an informed consent form (either in person or online), which will take approximately 20 minutes.
2. **Semi-structured interview (individual):** Each participant will have a 60-minute max, voice-recorded interview discussing their experiences.
3. **Final questionnaire:** Participants will complete an online questionnaire sharing their final thoughts, challenges, experiences, and areas for possible improvement (40 minutes max).
4. **Possible follow-up interview** after online questionnaire. Opportunity to further discuss any responses made in the questionnaire with the researcher. (30 minutes)

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

I am committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all participants. The identities of the participants will be anonymised in the research report (using pseudonyms or coded identifiers). Although the identities and workplaces of participants are protected, the data shared will not remain confidential as it is reported in the research project. All participants are obligated to protect the privacy of other participants when signing consent.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and no participant will be forced or coerced into joining. Each participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If a participant withdraws, they will be invited to complete a brief exit interview or questionnaire to provide feedback on their reasons for leaving the study, but they have the right to decline (45 minutes maximum).

Selection Process

If there are more eligible pairs than the study can accommodate, participants will be selected based on the criteria outlined in my ethics application. Selected participants will be notified by email.

Informed Consent

To participate, each member of the teacher pair (mentor and beginning teacher) will need to sign a consent form.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could share this invitation with any potential participants within your school who meet the criteria. If you or any teachers at your school are interested in participating or have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz or contact my chief supervisor Professor Sally Peters at sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you on this important study. I will follow up with a call within the week to make an in person visit with you to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,

Marnie Heng

Master of Education in Human Development Student

The University of Waikato, School of Education

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25

Appendix J

Phase 1 Ethics Approval

Te Wānanga Toi Tangata
Division of Education
 The University of Waikato
 Private Bag 3105
 Hamilton,
 New Zealand, 3240

Division of Education Research
 Ethics
 fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz
 www.waikato.ac.nz



2/4/2025

Marnie Heng

**Division of Education Research Ethics Committee Application Approved
 FEDU008/25**

I am pleased to advise you that your ethics application for the project entitled “Bridging the Gap: An exploration into experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors in Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring programs.” was approved by Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee on April 2nd, 2025.

Please be aware that the Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee must be advised (by memo) of any changes to the details recorded in your approved ethics application. This process is outlined in the application portal, under the heading ‘Amendments for an approved application’. Send your memo to fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz. You will receive a memo of approval once the change(s) has been considered.

Kind regards

Dr Pamela Vale

Chair

Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee

Appendix K

Phase 2 Ethics Approval

Te Wānanga Toi Tangata
Division of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton,
New Zealand, 3240

Division of Education Research
Ethics
fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz
www.waikato.ac.nz



**TE WĀNANGA
TOI TANGATA**
DIVISION OF EDUCATION

3/7/2025

Marnie Heng

**Division of Education Research Ethics Committee Application Approved
FEDU026/25**

I am pleased to advise you that your ethics application for the project entitled “Bridging the Gap: An exploration into experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors in Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring programs.” was approved by Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee on July 3rd, 2025.

Please be aware that the Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee must be advised (by memo) of any changes to the details recorded in your approved ethics application. This process is outlined in the application portal, under the heading ‘Amendments for an approved application’. Send your memo to fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz. You will receive a memo of approval once the change(s) has been considered.

Kind regards



Dr Pamela Vale
Chair

Te Wānanga Toi Tangata Division of Education Research Ethics Committee

Appendix L

Phase 2 Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Bridging the Gap: An exploration into experiences and challenges faced by new educators and their mentors in Aotearoa New Zealand mentoring programs.

Name of Researcher: Marnie Heng

Institution: The University of Waikato School of Education

Contact Information

Researcher:

Marnie Heng
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

Chief Supervisor:

Sally Peters
sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz

I agree to be involved in a research project giving Marnie Heng, a Masters student from the University of Waikato, the opportunity to conduct research focusing on the experiences and challenges I face as a beginning teacher or mentor teacher. I understand the research project will require me to complete a semi-structured interview with the researcher and a questionnaire about my experiences during the mentoring experience.

I am aware that interviews will be audio recorded, and transcripts will be made available to me to review and/or make amendments. I will have two weeks from submission or interview to make these amendments. After two weeks with no review made by me, I am aware that all data collected can be analysed and used in the research study. I understand that the researcher will do their best to protect my privacy and anonymity by securely storing research data and using pseudonyms or codes in the place of my name, participant pair and workplace. I am aware that it is my responsibility to respect and protect the privacy of the research study and its participants.

As per the information email/letter, I understand that I can decline to answer and withdraw from the research study at any point. I am aware that I will be invited to complete an exit interview or questionnaire with the researcher if I withdraw from the study so that the researcher can collect data to be analysed about my withdrawal that may be relevant to the nature of the research study. I understand that I can decline if I wish to.

I understand that I am the owner of all my raw data, however the researcher, Marnie Heng, will own the analysis and any scholarly publications and/or presentations that arise from it. I am aware that there is a possibility of data I have supplied in this research study and analyses of this data being presented in scholarly publications, such as journal articles and/or presentations.

Signed _____ **Your Name (printed)** _____

School _____ **Date** _____

Please circle: I am a..

Beginning Teacher 1st Year Beginning Teacher 2nd Year Mentor Teacher

Participant Pair Name (your beginning teacher or mentor teacher): _____

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25

Appendix M

Phase 2 Participant Information Letter Explaining Informed Consent

School of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata
 The University of Waikato
 Private Bag 3105
 Hamilton, New Zealand, 3240

0800 WAIKATO
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz
www.waikato.ac.nz



Subject: Information and Consent for Participation in Research Study on Education Mentoring Programs

+64 7 838 4144
 waikato.ac.nz

Gate 1, Knighton Road
 Hamilton 3240

Private Bag 3105
 Hamilton 3240
 New Zealand

Dear Participant,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am reaching out to follow up from your interest to participate in the second phase of my research study aimed at identifying potential areas of change needed in education mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

The goal of this study is to explore the experiences and challenges faced by both new educators and their mentors in order to identify possible improvements to increase the effectiveness and support these programs provide. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable in helping me understand these experiences and inform future improvements.

Who can participate? I am looking for participant pairs, made up of current beginning teacher and mentor teacher duos. Both participants need to be willing and able to commit to the involvement criteria outlined below. Beginning teachers can be in their first or second year of their provisional teaching.

What does participation involve? Participation for the participant pairs in phase two of the research data collections involves:

- Initial contact and signing of informed consent form/ in person or online. (20 minutes)
- Voice recorded, mid-point semi-structured interview with the participant individually. (60 minutes)
- Online questionnaire to gather participants' final thoughts, hopes, fears, challenges, experiences, wonderings and areas of possible improvement. (40 minutes)
- Possible follow-up interview after online questionnaire. Opportunity to further discuss any responses made in the questionnaire with the researcher. (30 minutes)

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation: Anonymity of participants will be safeguarded as the research data will be collected and stored securely. Any identifying factors, such as name and school, will be coded or pseudonyms will be used to provide anonymity of participants and their workplace. Although the identities and workplaces of participants are protected, the data shared will not remain confidential as it is reported in the research project. All participants are obliged to protect the privacy of other participants when signing consent. Please note, while every effort will be made to protect anonymity of all participants, this cannot be guaranteed.

Participation in the research study is voluntary. No participant can be forced or coerced into participating in the research study. Each participant has the right to decline to answer or withdraw from the research study at any point. If a participant withdraws from the study they are invited to complete an exit interview or questionnaire with the researcher (45 min max) to share any final thoughts and reason for withdrawal that could be relevant to the nature of the research study. This would be beneficial to the research, but participants can decline.

If there are too many eligible participant pairs to participate in the research study, the researcher will select the final pairings based on the criteria outlined in their ethics application. Selected participants will be notified via email if they are accepted to participate in the research study.

Informed Consent: Each participant in the research study needs to sign and submit a **consent form** to participate in the study. Participants are only able to be accepted into the research study if both members sign the consent form (beginning teacher and mentor teacher).

Participants are consenting to:

- Answering the questions accurately and honestly.
- Completing both questionnaires within the advised time limit.
- Making themselves available for both research interviews, at a location of their choosing (participant school, University Library private booking space, or online option via Zoom).
- Participating in the semi-structured research interview to the best of their ability.
- Respecting and protecting the privacy of the study and its participants.
- Having the information you provide in the questionnaires and interviews be analysed and used to inform future areas of study about beginning teacher and mentor teacher experiences.
- Data being included in my thesis and other publications or presentations related to this research.

If you **agree** to participating in Phase Two of the research study outlined above, please **complete the consent form** and email it back to me at mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

If you would like more information about the study or have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reply to this email to contact me directly or contact my chief supervisor Professor Sally Peters at sally.peters@waikato.ac.nz.

I look forward to your valuable input in helping shape the future of education mentoring programs.

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Yours Sincerely,
Marnie Heng
Master of Education in Human Development Student
mh484@students.waikato.ac.nz

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on [03/07/2025]. Approval number: FEDU026/25