



## 1. Setting the scene

Hassiena Marriott from BRIDGE welcomed participants. As there were new attendees, she noted that BRIDGE is involved in teacher development in a number of ways: through other BRIDGE CoPs (e.g. the BRIDGE Teacher Development CoP, the South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition) and projects (e.g. the Tutuwa School Leadership Programme, and the Project for Early Childhood Care and Education [PIECCE]).

### Participant update

- Carisma Nel (North West University) joined the meeting via Zoom. She is currently project leader for WIL in the DHET and EU-supported Primary Teacher Education Project (PrimTEd) programme.
- Annelize du Plessis (University of Pretoria) is in the Department of Educational Psychology and works with the Teaching Practice office.
- Marius Pienaar (University of Pretoria) is an education consultant to the UP Faculty of Education.
- Memoona Mahomed (University of Johannesburg) runs WIL/ TP in the Faculty of Education, in relation to all placements and lecturer allocations.
- Francis Faller (University of the Witwatersrand) is in a short term, part-time position helping coordinate Teaching Experience. Wits intends to appoint a permanent academic coordinator next year.
- Hassiena Marriott is the Project Manager for Teacher Development at BRIDGE.
- Melissa King is the Knowledge Manager for the ITE CoP.
- Nkhensani Baloyi is an intern at BRIDGE.
- Virginia Mashiane is an intern at JET Education Services, currently spending time with BRIDGE to learn about communities of practice.
- Vuyani Mkwabe is an intern at JET Education Services.

Jackie Batchelor from UJ and Henri Kriek from UNISA sent apologies.

### Check in:

One of the key purposes of this CoP is to help people connect with others outside their own institutions on areas of common interest. As a check-in, Hassiena asked CoP members to note any interactions they had since the last CoP meetings, in particular with CoP members, or with others on key topics.

- Annelize has been discussing various issues related to WIL/TP arrangements and approaches with Antoinette and Florrie from NWU, and with Henri from UNISA.
- Memoona has been in discussion with people in education at the Vaal University of Technology.
- Melissa noted that PIECCE had convened a PIECCE CoP and Knowledge Seminar in July. Universities in the PIECCE project as well as other teacher educators attended, and there was a major focus on issues related to WIL in ECCE Teacher Development. Click [here](#) to read the PIECCE CoP Report.
- Carisma noted that one of the aims of the PrimTEd project was to ensure greater collaboration between universities. She has been communicating with UJ in relation to Foundation Phase ITE, and is reaching out to University of KZN.

Collaboration relies on individuals; sometimes collaborative processes are hampered by people's lack of availability, or a change in roles. We also need to recognise that different people hold different areas of knowledge, and we should be willing to refer people to others.



## Reflection on PTEDC meeting

The Provincial Teacher Education Development Committee (PTEDC) is held with universities and teacher education providers in each province twice a year. Hassiena reported back on the Gauteng meeting, attended by DHET, DBE, Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and all the Gauteng universities, both public and private. There has been some pushback from the universities in that the forums end up being presentations giving information updates only, without in-depth discussion of major issues on specific topics. In response to this, it was suggested the next meeting have a session that can be for focused discussion. Hassiena shared the work of this CoP, which was well received. There was a request from some of the private universities to join this CoP. This resurfaced the issue of inviting private universities to join this CoP. At the last CoP meeting we had decided on keeping this CoP focused on public universities only, because (i) intellectual property policies of institutional resources differ between public and private (for profit) organisations; and (ii) student profiles between public and private differ. However, the feeling that we need to be more inclusive seems to be growing, and the following points were made:

- We need to distinguish between sharing ideas and practices in open discussion, and sharing documentary or copyrighted resources.
- Institutions such as Embury are doing very good work, and it will strengthen our understandings and support collaboration if they are brought in.
- The main problem appears to be the IP and Open Education Resource debate. This CoP needs to apply its mind to what criteria could be used in relation to sharing in a diverse CoP which includes public and private universities.

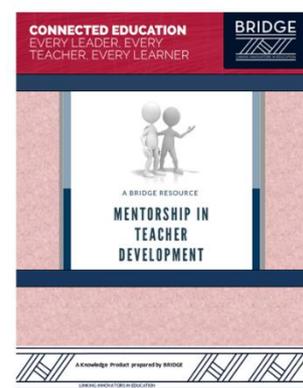
In the North West Province there is only NWU, and the PTEDC meeting they have had this year focused on the new induction and mentoring programme to be introduced (see below).



## Mentorship in Teacher Development: A BRIDGE Resource

Melissa shared a resource on Mentorship that BRIDGE produced in 2017. This resource drew on several years' worth of inputs on mentorship across a number of CoPs. Mentorship has been a cross-cutting theme in all of BRIDGE's focus areas, including school leadership, teacher development, ECD and learner support. The resource distils debates and discussions on a number of topics, such as:

- Different Mentorship Models and their target groups and features
- Factors to consider when designing a mentorship programme
- Lessons learned about implementing mentoring programmes
- Characteristics of successful mentors
- Training mentors



BRIDGE Mentorship Resource, 2017



It also includes links to presentations given, and other resources on mentorship shared in these CoPs. Melissa took the CoP through the contents of the resource, highlighting points of interest that could be taken up by this CoP. While the policy context described needs to be updated, this resource includes rich learnings from

those who have been involved in mentoring programmes for different user groups, at different levels and in different contexts. This CoP could use this resource to help frame future discussions.



## Mentorship Round Robin

Each participant was asked to share the main features of any mentorship programme at their institutions.

### UJ: Memoona

- UJ has developed a self-study, self-paced online programme for mentoring in the Senior and FET phases. It is an Open Education Resource (OER) available to all teachers and anyone else. It is aimed at assisting mentor teachers at schools.
- In schools where UJ students are placed for WIL/TP, the mentor teacher is usually identified by the principal. This teacher has access to all the materials and is part of the team that goes through the whole course. Some of the material is based on case studies and reflections from student teachers.
- UJ is also developing a short learning programme focused on mentorship, based on the Funda UJabule teaching school model. They aim to start with PGCE Foundation and Senior Primary phase students in 2021. The rationale for targeting PGCE students is that, while they may have the content knowledge, they need more input on pedagogical training, given the short period they have in which to acquire teaching competencies. The programme will be credit-bearing and result in SACE CPTD points.

### UP: Annelize

- Through Enterprises at UP, mentor teachers can do a short course and gain CPTD points. This course has a fee attached to it.
- UP is also developing a programme which focuses on mentoring competence for lecturers at UP. Students have noted that mentor lecturers are not properly trained, and don't give adequate feedback or support. The aim of this programme is to empower mentor lecturers to move from a 'supervision' approach to a mentoring one. UP belongs to a community of practice (funded by DHET) consisting of 7 universities (UP, Rhodes, CPUT, NW, Wits AROS and UNISA) who are using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to developing an 'intervention' process to train mentor lecturers. Once this intervention is implemented, they will look at empowering the mentor teachers, then finally the students in WIL. The aim is to move from a supervision model to a mentoring and coaching model. The intervention guidelines will be available to other universities.
- The collaborative CoP has met once, with each partner being allocated a specific task or area of interest (e.g. mentoring theory, WIL debates). The output will be a framework that each institution can adapt for their own context, to improve the quality of their lecturers' mentoring interactions with students.

### NWU: Carisma

NW has gone through a number of iterations in developing its approach to mentoring.

- Initially the university provided an accredited mentoring course (with a fee) open to teachers. The first lesson learned was that teachers don't want to pay for professional development of this nature, as they don't see mentoring as part of their job description.
- They were in the process of developing a short course but stopped this due to developments in relation to a collaborative approach with government. The Mentoring office at NWU has been amalgamated into the WIL office.

- SACE professional teaching standards have set out mentoring roles for teachers in relation to both preservice and in-service practices. DBE is working on an Induction programme for teachers which contains a mentoring element, and in which provinces and districts collaborate. In NW this programme is in the field testing phase, with the assistance of NWU. Mentors will now be identified in the schools and be trained by provincial and district officials. The aim is to ensure that there is one trained mentor in every school. Currently districts have identified principals at particular schools for training. In addition, documentation giving guidelines for orientation has been developed and distributed.
- NWU's view is that if the district is going to take responsibility, it is important to share the idea that induction is not just a once-off but a developmental continuum in the career of teachers. NWU is assisting with defining roles and responsibilities of mentors at various levels, including mentor teachers, and trying to get them into communities of practice to support each other. NWU's assistance will initially be workshop-based.
- For their own student teachers, NWU has established a google platform which mentors and students can use to communicate with each other while on WIL/TP. This contains resources and videos etc. that they can draw on while they are in school. NWU is busy populating and developing this platform.
- In sum, NWU's view is that rather than duplicating mentorship interventions, they would rather support government efforts, and add in a component relevant to pre-service student teachers.

Discussion points in response to these inputs:

- Lecturers have to fulfil their roles in relation to the three pillars of every HEI: research, teaching and learning, and community engagement. Will they see mentoring as an additional role and burden?
- Relationships with students have primarily been located in the teaching and learning role, and framed in terms of supervision and assessment rather than mentoring. But we need to build in advocacy for mentoring as a richer role than just 'supervision'; when you see that your feedback to a student has been developmentally effective, this should be a motivating factor for lecturers.
- Noted that we can't talk about mentoring in relation to WIL/TP without looking at all the other elements of WIL.
- We must however also be aware of current HEI realities. Funding is linked to a ranking system for lecturers, which in turn is research-driven. Many lecturers prioritise research over teaching and learning. We need advocacy for mentoring.
- Are we trying to transfer a model that worked in teacher training colleges to a research-driven context linked to universities? What are the ways this can be addressed? Wits, for example, has had to engage a large number of sessional tutors, and getting them up to speed is a huge task. We have to take realities and resource into account, and do a review of what is feasible.
- At the PTEDC meeting it was noted that schools often don't want students coming in for WIL/TP as they see it as an additional burden that needs to be managed. Teachers don't see it as their role and feel that supervising students takes time (especially in a discipline that is not your own). This should be explicitly addressed in initial teacher education, so that the students who later become practising teachers know that mentoring others is part of their role.
- How does one incorporate the EQ element into mentorship programmes? The NW WIL component now has an academic curriculum of its own which includes this, through a semester 1 professional orientation programme which speaks to teacher identity and emotional development. This was also

discussed in depth in relation to the UJ model focusing on ‘graduate attributes’ at the last ITE CoP (see Meeting Highlights of 16-07-2019).

- Education is unique in that most other professions (e.g. engineer, accounting) have to do an internship **after** graduation, overseen by a professional body. Workplace-based learning should be seen as an addition to undergraduate studies, through which new learning happens. Through WIL/TP, HEIs are essentially playing the role of a professional body. In response, it was noted that SACE is starting to play a more active role – students have to do the induction year before they can register with SACE as professional teachers.



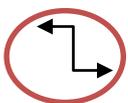
## Challenges in designing and implementing mentorship programmes

**Note:** mentorship programmes could refer to one-on-one mentoring, team mentoring, peer mentoring and so on, and could also refer to different levels of mentoring in terms of target audiences. While design and implementation are two different activities, implementation enablers and barriers need to be taken into account in the design stage.

- Nkhensani noted that BRIDGE’s Principals Upfront event held the previous day had also focused on mentorship. Some of the key challenges identified in this forum included the following:
  - Difficulties in implementing mentorship, and unrealistic expectations of mentors who have not had any training.
  - Cultural diversity, in terms of potential mismatches between mentor and mentee.
  - Lack of monitoring and evaluation to check whether or not mentees have actually benefited.
- There was some debate on the issue of matching mentors and mentees. Certainly teachers hold assumptions about student teachers that come into their school. For example, a teacher who is a Wits graduate favours Wits education students, and may look down on others. There could also be issues relating to homophobia or xenophobia, for example. At the same time, it is very limiting to take a view that mentors and mentees must ‘match’ in terms of race, language or cultural identity, as this will not encourage acceptance of diversity, and neither does it reflect the realities of a diverse classroom that the student teacher will have to deal with. Matching should have more to do with attitudes rather than identity; mentors need to have an open-minded approach and a growth mind-set, to engage with any kind of mentee.
- The point above relates to debates about criteria for selection of mentors, and whether only those who volunteer because they want to be a mentor should be appointed. But in many cases HEIs have no say in who the principal appoints, and these appointees may not be volunteers, or have the appropriate attitude to be a mentor. Selection of teacher mentors often has more to do with availability and logistics than anything else. This again suggests that some understanding of the mentor role as part of a teacher’s professional identity needs to be built into ITE.
- In relation to the PrimTEd project, provincial steering committees are responsible for training the trainers, such as subject advisors or other identified officials, who will then train teacher mentors. Some concerns were expressed about district officials/ subject advisors taking on an additional role in relation to training teacher mentors, given that they sometimes have difficulty carrying out their current responsibilities. For example, subject advisors are supposed to be helping principals with using Data Driven Dashboards for analysing their schools’ performance and for reporting but they are not

managing to do this. Many district officials are overworked and/or don't have the required skills, or qualities as mentors, or, in some cases, adequate teaching experience. However, we need to understand that we have to start somewhere within the system. UNISA and NWU are also responsible for distance education students, and have to rely on local officials to liaise with these students.

- NWU sees their institutional role as adding value and quality in DBE initiatives. We need to acknowledge that there is a lack of capacity in relation to teacher support in general, so there has to be collaboration between institutions, districts and provinces. We can't overburden schools with expectation around mentoring and teacher support.
- Hassiena noted that in the Khanyisa Inanda project they have taken a two tiered approach: whatever instructional practice training is done with student teachers/ interns, is also done with in-service teachers. This closes the gap between teachers and students, helps teachers take on innovative ideas, and then also helps them when they have to assess the students.
- In relation to challenges around M&E, the following was noted:
  - When implementing WIL and getting mentor teachers to observe and assess students, you need to be clear on what it is that you want to monitor and evaluate. The current shift is to consider the impact on learners.
  - NWU is developing new observation rubrics that can gather evidence of learning impact, based on a clinical model of 'learning rounds', checking that learners can reflect and ask critical questions.
  - In the South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition, the peer review process also includes checking whether teachers can engage constructively with the question/ answer/ feedback process between teachers and learners.
  - UJ has built in various reflective processes; for example, there is an institutional document which asks students to reflect on what they have learned from their WIL and mentee process; answers are discussed and used by lecturers to reflect on UJ's own programme development.
- Finally, it was noted that mentoring has to happen at every level in the institution, as senior lecturers also have to mentor novice lecturers. Advocacy for and modelling of mentoring has to start at the top level in every institution.



## Check out

Each CoP member gave one key takeaway:

- Memoona was struck by the fact that the concept of mentorship has universal features, but also needs to be contextualised in ways unique to each institution, serving the needs of the learners, student teachers and lecturers.
- Annelize found the notion of the different levels of target audiences for mentoring of interest.
- Carisma stressed the importance of collaboration, and ways in which sharing makes life easier and stimulates thinking. She referred to the work of John Henning and Pamela Bean from the university of Monmouth in the US, who take a developmental approach to mentoring. They also stress the differences between mentoring, for example, a first year student, to mentoring a professional who has been practising for some years.

- Hassiena noted that she has been a mentor herself and has done mentorship training, but it is still not easy to set up an entire mentoring programme.
- Virginia said that mentoring needs to be seen as an ongoing iterative process, not just an event.
- Vuyani found the debate on demographics and pairing interesting. In the E Cape where he comes from this is hardly ever an issue as the community is fairly homogenous, but he has been exposed to a lot new thinking in diverse Gauteng.
- Marius felt that most stakeholders are reaching common understandings around the importance of mentoring, but the difficulty is to action these.
- Melissa noted the importance of the examples of collaboration given, such as the CoP described by UP to develop an intervention for lecturers, and the collaborative processes between province, district and NW.
- Annelize thought that different methodologies for different levels of target audiences are an interesting area of research.

## PARTICIPANTS

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