

Examining Student Teachers' Perceptions on Mentoring During Field Experiences in Distance Learning: A Pilot Study

M.G. Ngoepe

*University of South Africa, College of Education, 7-04 AJH van der Walt Building,
P.O Box 392, UNISA 0003, South Africa
E-mail: ngoepmg@unisa.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Teachers. Practicum. Quantitative Design. Social Constructivist

ABSTRACT This paper is a pilot study that examines the perceptions of mathematics student teachers on the mentoring they received during practicum. Pre-service teachers' views about teaching – and also their ideas regarding their own teaching abilities – are highly dependent upon their mentor teachers. A question may be posed: are mentors helpful to open distance learning (ODL) student teachers? A structured questionnaire was employed to collect data, which was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. The results are discussed in the categories of responses about support with lesson preparation, being coached, teaching experience, mentor's feedback, views about the course and the subject, mathematics. *The* results on the perceptions of pre-service teachers on the mentoring they received during teaching practice were generally positive. These involved mentors helping them to identify teaching material, to prepare lessons, to provide them with useful feedback and to coach them on how to teach. The findings from this research will help to provide insights on the usefulness of the present mentoring system. It is recommended that strategies to improve and strengthen social relationships to the mentoring system in ODL contexts be planned.