AN INVESTIGATION OF BEGINNING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF MENTORING: THE CASE OF MALTA

by

TANIA ABELA CRAUS

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of

MASTER OF RESEARCH

School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences

College of Life and Environmental Sciences

University of Birmingham

December 2016

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been an increased interest in the benefits of mentoring as part of induction for newly qualified teachers (Chambers, et al., 2012). This study focuses on professional development opportunities, as well as the experiences of the induction and mentoring programmes for beginning Physical Education teachers in Malta. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 newly qualified teachers working in state, and non-state primary and secondary schools. Findings from this study show that despite the number of professional development opportunities available, these rarely match the professional needs of teachers. Due to lack of relevance, much of the opportunities have minimal impact upon improved professional practice. Conversely, when teachers choose professional development opportunities in which they want to engage in out of their own volition, the impact on professional learning is enhanced. Findings further suggest that for mentoring system to be effective, the mentor needs to take the role of critical friend. Participants argued that this made it easier for them to confide and engage in fruitful discussion with their mentor. Data suggests that for an effective mentoring programme, the mentor should be teaching the same subject as the mentee and preferably teaching in the same school.

"Your life as a teacher begins the day you realize that you are always a learner"

- *Robert John Meehan*

DEDICATION

To my loving mother who taught me invaluable lessons in life

and who is now watching over me and my family from heaven

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

CTP   Council for the Teaching Profession

DQSE   Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education

EC   European Commission

EO   Education Officer

HOD   Head of Department

INSET   In-service Education and Training

IPES   Institute for Physical Education and Sport

LOF   Learning Outcomes Framework

MUT   Malta Union of Teachers

NQT   Newly Qualified Teacher

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development

PD   Professional Development

PE   Physical Education

PHE   Physical and Health Education

PLS   Professional Learning Sessions

PMPDP   Professional Management and Professional Development Plan

QAD   Quality Assurance Department

SDP   School Development Plan

SMT   Senior Management Team

TALIS   Teaching and Learning International Survey

TP   Teaching Practice

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers has long been recognised as a powerful tool to improve the quality of teaching in schools (Desimone, 2009). In this context, mentoring is perceived to be a valuable support mechanism especially for teachers early in their careers and during the induction period (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988; Vonk, 1993; Kennedy, 2005; McCaughtry, et al., 2005). Research shows that well designed and structured mentoring systems can have a positive impact on beginning teachers' effectiveness (Chambers, 2012), as new teachers report reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence and self-esteem, more opportunities to grow and develop their skills, and improved self-reflection and problem-solving capacities (McIntyre & Hagger, 1996; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Lindgren, 2005; Chambers, 2012). It has been also reported that the provision of effective induction and mentoring programmes is paramount in addressing problems regarding teachers' drop-out rate (Chambers, 2012).

Empirical research, exploring teachers' engagement in and experiences of mentoring systems, suggests that a large percentage (60%) of teachers in Europe (OECD, 2009) receive no formal mentoring or initial induction assistance. Significant variation in the mentoring opportunities available to new teachers across Europe was also identified with significant limitations in policy developments and programme availability. It is for these reasons that considerations about how to best support beginning teachers have begun to resurface on the international stage.

Looking at the finer details of the TALIS report (OECD, 2009), one of the countries that appeared to 'underperform' in relation to the available mentoring opportunities was

Malta. Perhaps in response to these findings, in September 2013, the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) in Malta issued an induction handbook for newly qualified teachers in order to satisfy the requirements of the Maltese Education Act Amendments 2006. These amendments make it imperative for NQTs to receive adequate support and supervision in their first two years of teaching. Very little research is available on the manner in which this policy has been implemented and how it is affecting beginning teachers' early career trajectory and experiences of CPD. The case for research is also particularly interesting from the perspective of PE teachers, who will be the focus of this study. PE is an interesting context in which to explore beginning teachers' experiences of mentoring as it is commonly understood as a unique and challenging educational setting within schools (Hardman & Marshall, 2005). This creates a good research opportunity to explore the effectiveness of this new policy from the perspective of PE teachers. It also helps in providing a good insight of potential improvement of the current system.

After an extensive review of literature, gaps in the literature regarding the nature, quality and effectiveness of the existing professional development provision for new teachers, as well as the implementation and impact of the recently introduced mentoring system as part of teacher induction programme in Malta were identified.

During the first few years in post, teachers experience fundamental changes in the way they perceive themselves, their job and their learners (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). As a consequence of this, it is essential that teachers engage in professional learning during these formative years (Kennedy, 2005; McCaughtry, 2005; Timperley, et al., 2007). Therefore the first research objective is to identify the range of opportunities for professional learning and development in which PE teachers in Malta

engage in, in relation to and beyond the new policy framework, which aims at generating substantive improvements in Malta's overall CPD provision for teachers.

The broad intention of the new policy framework is to facilitate and support beginning teachers in the early years and to enable them to transition effectively into 'fully fledged teachers'. The second research objective is to explore participants' personal experiences of the new mentoring system. The data to be gathered under this objective will enable the researcher to assess whether the purposes of the new policy framework are being met in relation to beginning teachers' actual and practical needs, and will therefore serve as an initial basis for understanding the effectiveness of the mentoring system.

By analysing the experiences of the beginning PE teachers, strengths and weaknesses of the current induction and mentoring provisions can be identified and areas of improvement can be suggested to policymakers interested in improving the mentoring system and induction programme for beginning teachers.

In summary, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What forms of professional development do PE teachers in Malta value?
2. What are the perceptions of beginning PE teachers regarding the induction programme and mentoring as part of Continuous Professional Development?
3. Based on the experiences of beginning teachers in Malta, in what ways can the existing mentoring system be improved?

In order to answer the research questions, this dissertation is organised into the following chapters:

The review of literature presented in chapter 2 seeks to provide a clear understanding of the available literature and the theoretical framework that supports the research objectives.

The first part of the chapter gives an account of the different tools and opportunities that contribute to the professional development of teachers. This is followed by a review of the features that contribute to an effective induction service for beginning teachers and the impact of the mentoring system as part of induction programmes. The CPD structures, the induction programme and the mentoring system as part of the Maltese educational system are also presented. This helps the reader to understand the contextual framework of this study as well as the broader issues that impact the effectiveness of teacher education, training and professional development.

The third chapter gives a clear explanation of the research methodology adopted in this study. It also provides the rationale behind the choice of methods and data collection tool used to gather data that helped to answer the research questions. The chapter includes a detailed account of the procedures utilised to identify and recruit participants for this study as well as the data gathering process and the techniques used to analyse data. The measures taken to enhance the quality of the study, along with the limitations encountered during the course of the study are discussed.

Chapter 4 reports findings from 13 semi-structured, open-ended interviews with beginning Maltese PE teachers. The data collected was transcribed, thematically analysed and reported in this chapter. The findings are presented in a way that gives insights about the nature and quality of existing CPD opportunities for beginning PE teachers. Teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of the current induction programme and the mentoring opportunities for beginning PE teachers in Malta are also explored.

The fifth chapter examines the meaning of the findings from this study in relation to existing knowledge and literature about CPD, induction and mentoring for beginning teachers. Recommendations are made about the ways in which CPD and support structures

for beginning teachers can be improved to enhance the impact and effectiveness of the current provision within the Maltese educational system.

The concluding chapter highlights the main findings of the study and its implications for teacher education and CPD providers. Recommendations for further research in the area are also made in the final chapter.

The overall aim of this study is to contribute to literature in two ways. The first is to provide a better understanding of the teacher's views and perceptions of effective CPD. The second is to provide recommendations on how CPD providers and education authorities in Malta can (i) adjust and improve the existing CPD structures to better reflect the needs of teachers and (ii) improve the support and effectiveness of the current induction programme and mentoring services to beginning teachers.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In both policy (OECD, 2009; European Commission, 2008) and research (Borko, 2004; Timperley, et al., 2007; Desimone, 2009), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is perceived to be an essential component to raise students achievement in schools. By participating in different types of CPD, teachers are expected to develop new understandings (impact on knowledge), improve the quality of their teaching (impact on practice), and subsequently support pupil learning more effectively (impact on pupil achievement) (Yoon, et al., 2009). It is therefore crucial that teachers are provided with the right opportunities to further their knowledge. CPD is perceived as a form of investment in human capital (Costa, et al., 2014); but to ensure that it is worthwhile and cost-effective, research is needed to inform and shape CPD policy (i.e. setting the philosophy about the purpose, nature and structure of CPD) and practice (i.e., ensuring effective delivery).

In recent years, educational policies and initiatives in the European Union (European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2005), as is the case internationally (Jaquith, et al., 2010; Hairon & Dimmock, 2012) have demonstrated a clear focus on CPD. It is acknowledged that teachers need appropriate, tailored and continuous support from their induction to retirement (European Commision Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). Having opportunities to engage in CPD is teachers' professional right, and as such they need to be 'given the right tools' to improve their teaching and to develop their skills in accordance with current technological trends (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015) and amidst ongoing changes in legislation, developments in pedagogical theory, and an increasingly diverse student population. The European Commission (EC, 2013, p.42) describes teaching as a complex profession that:

Requires complex and dynamic combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes; their acquisition and development is a career-long endeavour that requires a reflexive, purposeful practice and high quality feedback. (p.42)

Although teachers are expected to undertake professional development, research conducted in various national contexts (e.g., O'Sullivan & Deglau, 2006; Makopoulou & Armour, 2011) and different subject areas (e.g., Van Driel & Berry, 2012; Foster, et al., 2013) suggest that most of the professional development opportunities are ineffective. In fact, Makopoulou & Armour (2011) suggest that for professional development to be meaningful, it should be based on systematic needs analysis. A second important point is that providers should be aware of teachers' learning processes. Teachers tend to measure their success according to students' attainment. Therefore it is important that professional development is based on practical and innovative ideas that can be easily applied in real classroom settings. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities (OECD 2009).

2.1. What Contributes to Effective Professional Development?

In recent years, an increasing number of studies measure CPD quality in terms of the extent to which its anticipated outcomes for both teachers and pupils have been achieved or not (e.g., Gernsten, et al., 2010). Another body of literature seeks to capture the perceptions and experiences of CPD participants as a significant indicator of its quality. Relying principally on case studies or self-report surveys, researchers have begun to articulate the features of effective CPD and to identify the limitations in the ways CPD is organised and

delivered (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010; Armour & Makopoulou, 2012).

Effective professional development is on-going, includes continuous training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Consequently the ultimate value of professional development is to be 'active, practical, situated, collaborative, continuing/continuous, capacity-building, reflective and innovative, ensuring that teachers become autonomous learners' (Makopoulou & Armour, 2011, p. 418). Hiebert (1999) argues that:

Fruitful opportunities to learn new teaching methods share several core features: (a) ongoing (measured in years) collaboration of teachers for purposes of planning with (b) the explicit goal of improving students' achievement of clear learning goals, (c) anchored by attention to students' thinking, the curriculum, and pedagogy, with (d) access to alternative ideas and methods and opportunities to observe these in action and to reflect on the reasons for their effectiveness. (p.15)

There is growing interest in developing schools as learning organisations, and in ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically. Collinson, et al. (2009) argue that continuous learning can only happen when teachers are given the chance to participate in conversations with colleagues. This will give space to acquire new knowledge while challenging their perceptions and ideas. Furthermore, professional growth should incorporate collaboration, reflection and contribution towards one's own learning, the learning of their colleagues and the improvement of the school (Collinson, et al., 2009). Loucks-Horsley, et al. (2010) argue that for change to happen, the learning experiences provided to teachers need to be similar to the learning experiences teachers are requested to provide to their students. Teachers have to be given enough time to implement innovative practices. Change takes time and at times teachers struggle to keep up with new requirements.

Therefore to help them avoid going back to former practices they ought to be given the necessary support. This, according to Loucks-Horsley, et al. (2010) will ensure that teachers commit themselves to improving and changing their practices. The international literature places particular emphasis on the opportunities afforded to participants for active engagement in the learning process as this is considered a critical programme design feature (Garet, et al., 2001).

Garet, et al., (2001) suggest that the three main factors that contribute to measuring the effectiveness of the provision of professional development are (i) collective participation, (ii) duration and (iii) type of activity. These three factors are discussed below.

2.1.1 Collective Participation

Collaboration between teachers has many times been mentioned as one of the factors that improves professional development (Garet, et al., 2001; Collinson, et al., 2009; Attard, 2016). A positive influence upon teacher's practice and eventually student attainment has been recorded when teachers worked collectively and discussed professional issues, reflected together and supported each other, collaboratively challenged existing knowledge and assimilated new understandings (Hiebert, 1999; Wei, et al., 2010; Attard, 2012). Collaboration can take various forms, from discussing lesson planning to observations and co-teaching. It is important to note that as Attard (2016) argues, logistically speaking, teachers working in the same school have better opportunities to analyse, critically reflect, discuss and apply change while those who teach the same students may discuss students' needs across subjects. Furthermore, Garet, et al. (2001) argues that engaging in such type of professional development promotes 'shared professional culture, in which teachers in a

school or teachers who teach the same grade or subject develop a common understanding of instructional goals, methods, problems and solutions', (p.922).

2.1.2 Duration

Duration is a key factor in providing valuable professional development (Garet, et al., 2001; Yoon, et al., 2007; Desimone, 2009; Antoniou, 2016; Attard, 2016). Research suggests that one-off, sporadic courses do not necessarily result in long-lasting change, ultimately resulting as being ineffective (Garet, et al., 2001; Makopoulou & Armour, 2011; Antoniou, 2016). Longitudinal and sustainable professional development offer opportunities for prolonged and ongoing in-depth analysis ensuing direct impact on practice (Antoniou, 2016). Desimone (2009) contends that 'intellectual and pedagogical change requires professional development activities to be of sufficient duration, including both span of time over which the activity is spread and the number of hours spent in the activity' (p.184). The longer the duration of the activity, the more time is afforded to teachers for in-depth analysis of pedagogical approaches, professional beliefs and one's own philosophy of teaching. Over time, critical change can be implemented, analysed and discussed (Garet, et al., 2001). Yet, researchers do not agree upon the number of hours required for professional development to be effective. For example, Yoon, et al., (2007) suggest at least 14 hours of contact time, while Desimone (2009) argues that more than 20 hours are needed to leave an impact on students' attainment. The European Commission (2005) contends that some forms of professional development activities are not easily measurable. While courses, workshops and conferences can be easily measured in hours, other activities such as mentoring, peer-observation, self-reflection rely on approximation. However, the duration of the professional development on its own does not guarantee success (Holland, 2005).

2.1.3 Type of Activity

Professional development can be achieved by the possibility of engaging in many different activities. In the TALIS report (2009), the Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development (OECD) defines professional development as 'activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher' (p.49). The definition implies that professional development can occur in different forms catering for diverse teachers' needs.

2.1.3.1 Transmission Type Models

Garet, et al. (2001) argue that the most commonly available activities are the most criticised in research. All traditional activities share the idea of Kennedy's (2005) transmission model of professional development. The idea behind the transmission model is that teachers are considered as *recipients* where experts in the field *deposit* or *transmit* their knowledge to teachers. Teachers are not engaged in the delivery of the activity and take on a passive role. One characteristic of a traditional professional development activity is the out-of-context factor (Garet, et al., 2001; Kennedy, 2005; Antoniou, 2016; Attard, 2016). These events are organised outside of the school environment and many often lack connection to what is happening in the classroom (Kennedy, 2005). Furthermore, the duration of the activity, results in insufficient time for hands-on activities and lack of in-depth content, which are both necessary for effective change to professional practice (Garet, et al., 2001; Loucks-Horsley, 2010). Such types of professional development activities are criticised by Kennedy (2005) as they reduce the opportunity for teachers to become autonomous learners and proactive in satisfying their own needs. However, she identifies such activities as effective when providers need to control the agenda. In Malta, teachers have experienced a number of

reforms and restructures in a short period of time, including the implementation of mainstream schooling, shift to a co-educational set-up, and also the recent introduction of the Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF). These transformations have amplified the need to train and appraise teachers about these changes, with Professional Learning Sessions (PLS) being the perfect opportunity for delivering such information. Traditional forms of professional development include workshops, INSET courses, school development seminars and conferences (Garet, et al. 2001; Kennedy 2005; European Commission, 2015).

Workshops

Workshops involve a leader or an expert in the field who delivers sessions to participants. Generally, workshops are delivered outside of the classroom at a scheduled time, usually after school hours (Garet, et al., 2001). Collaboration between participants largely depends on the structure and the organisation of such workshops.

INSET courses

Short courses where information is delivered to teachers also known as INSET (or PLS in Malta) is the most common type of professional development used by educational authorities worldwide (Garet, et al., 2001; Goodall, et al., 2005; Attard, 2016). It reaches a large number of teachers in a short period of time, making it very cost-effective. Additionally, it satisfies policy requirements that request provision of professional development for teachers. However, topics and content of such courses are usually predetermined by providers with little consideration to teachers' needs. Teachers are then expected to apply the acquired knowledge to their professional practice (Edwards & Thomas, 2010). This transmission model of professional development sees teachers as technicians - content is provided to the teacher by an expert, leaving no space for teachers to be autonomous professional learners (Kennedy, 2005; Attard, 2016).

Research shows that this type of professional development is failing (Rose & Reynolds, 2006; Timperley, et al., 2007; Makopoulou & Armour 2011). Day (1999) argues that such method of training is in ineffective for teachers as it fails to 'connect with the essential moral purposes that are at the heart of their professionalism' (p.49). It is widely recognised that effective professional development should be a continuous process and preferably job-embedded. It is therefore unsurprising that short, superficial and out-of-context courses are predominantly seen as unproductive (Yoon, et al. 2007; Hunzicker, 2011; Makopoulou & Armour, 2011; Attard, 2016).

In the Maltese context, the Ministry of Education and Employment is the main provider of formal professional development opportunities for teachers on the island. A number of PLSs for teachers are issued each year (Bezzina, 2002; Bezzina & Stanyer, 2004; Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010). On many occasions, the topics and areas chosen are set according to new policies or documents which the Directorate deems important. Topics can also be chosen by Education Officers, employed within the Directorate, which in most cases are subject related and focus on content and/or pedagogical approaches (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010). The 2010 Agreement between the government and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) requires teachers to attend at least one INSET course each scholastic year. Some teachers may be called to attend a particular course without having the opportunity to choose. Those who are not called for a specific course may voluntarily apply for a course of their liking and such choice will be based upon their own professional judgement.

School Development Plan

In an attempt to make professional development more tangible and related to everyday school needs, schools in Malta are organising school-based meetings. The 2010 Agreement encourages schools to organise at least two school development plan (SDP) meetings per term, making up a total of 6 meetings per scholastic year. The subject and content of these

meetings are determined by the senior management team (SMT); sometimes upon consultation with teachers. This initiative from schools in organising such meetings can help to address challenges specific to that particular school. However, if the said topic is not what the teacher deems as immediately relevant to his/her specific needs, the effectiveness of such meetings is drastically diminished (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010).

2.1.3.2 Transformative Type Models

As opposed to more traditional forms of professional development, recent trends are pointing towards an ongoing increase in reform type professional development (Garet, et al., 2001). As the name implies, such type of professional development promotes change in ideas, perceptions and practices. Kennedy (2005) refers to such types of provision as transformative models. Reform type of professional development allows transformation to happen over a sustained period of time, so teachers are allowed time to implement new knowledge, observe and analyse its impact and alter their professional practices (Garet, et al., 2001; Kennedy, 2005; Antoniou, 2016; Attard, 2016). Transformative models usually occur in situ and teachers take an active role in their own professional learning (Attard, 2016). Analysis, reflection and communication are key factors for professional change; therefore, collaboration between colleagues is a crucial part of these activities. Learning communities, peer-observation, reflection and mentoring are a few examples of transformative types of professional development.

Learning Communities

In an attempt to move towards a transformative model of professional development, learning communities are on the rise. In a learning community, a number of professionals who are knowledgeable in a specific area (Wenger, 2001), work together and discuss upon their

professional practice with the aim of improving their practice (Attard, 2016). Learning communities are considered priceless and essential for teachers (Attard & Armour 2005; Zellermayer & Tabak 2006; Attard 2007; Attard, 2016). When participating in such communities, new knowledge, understandings and perceptions could be acquired as a result of collective reflection and analysis of professional practice through discussions and peer questioning (Attard, 2012; Minnett, 2003). Attard (2016) argues that such questions and the discussions that arise enable teachers to seek different opinions from their colleagues, while challenging their viewpoints and beliefs about their professional practice. Additionally, learning communities are seen as relevant to teachers as teachers are empowered to discuss their everyday practices at school. Contents of such learning communities should be determined by the participating members either through incidents arising from their professional practice and/or through ongoing discussion (Wenger, 2001; Attard, 2007).

In Malta, the 2007 Agreement between the government and the MUT allowed for time to be allocated for subject meetings between teachers to meet during school hours. The subject meeting takes place on a weekly-basis for a period of one lesson (approximately 40 minutes). The subject meeting is an opportunity for teachers to discuss their professional practice and arising situations during their lesson delivery. However, some meetings may also be pre-determined by the SMT. As Attard Tonna & Calleja (2012) contend, any formality in the subject meeting may 'inhibit teachers, to a large degree, from taking any spontaneous initiatives and from collaborating on common projects' (p.39).

Peer-observations

Another model of transformative professional development is when teachers observe other teachers in their professional practice (Kennedy, 2005). Peer-observation promotes professional learning through observation, reflection and discussion of one's own practice (Garet, et al. 2001; Coe, et al., 2014). According to Attard (2016), peer-observations can be

organised in two ways. The first type of peer-observation is based on a previously decided upon agenda, where teachers involved are aware of what they are focusing upon during the lesson. The second type of peer-observation relies on topics which spontaneously arise from the observation. Whatever form employed, teachers are given the opportunity to discuss their practice in depth. The feedback received will allow the teacher to gain different viewpoints to the ones already held (Garet, et al. 2001; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Reflective Analysis

Another type of transformative professional development is ongoing self-reflection. Belvis, et al. (2013) argue that 'reflective practice focuses on improving teacher performance as a result of reflection on their practice' (p.279). Therefore, because self-reflection is embedded in the classroom, it allows immediate teacher learning. By encouraging ongoing reflection, teachers constantly contemplate and evaluate students' learning and needs while changing and exploring alternative ways to satisfy those needs (Leitch & Day, 2000; Attard, 2016). Reflective analysis is the basis of all other types of transformative professional development activities. All other types require the teacher to engage in critical analysis and in-depth reflection on professional practices. However, analysis through self-reflection lacks collaboration. Thus, Attard (2016) advices teachers who engage in self-reflection, to share their gained knowledge with their colleagues to avoid isolation. After all, collaboration is a way of improving the study of one's practice (Kraft, 2002; Minnet, 2003).

Mentoring

Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship aiming to improve practice. It is based on confidentiality and professional trust (Kennedy, 2005), where both participants embark on what Rhodes & Beneicke (2002) call a 'professional friendship'. This concept promotes collegial practice and offers the opportunity for discussion of possibilities, professional values and beliefs by providing a challenging conversation over a long period of time (Garet,

et al., 2001; Attard, 2016). Mentoring typically takes a hierarchical approach, particularly involving newly qualified teachers; initiating them into the profession by providing a more experienced colleague to guide them as regards skills and knowledge acquisition. Kennedy (2005) argues that this hierarchical view of mentoring can also be seen as a transmission model of professional development where the experienced is providing the beginner with the necessary information, however this largely depends on the participants' view of their role in the mentor-mentee relationship. Further information about the mentoring process is found in section 2.2.1 in this chapter.

When reflecting upon the above mentioned types of professional development, it is important to observe that the duration and collective participation of each type varies largely, creating a spectrum. As Kennedy (2005) suggests, transmission models of professional development can be seen as transformative if the necessary measures are taken to ensure that teachers are provided with adequate tools that promote change. On the other hand, transformative models can have transmission effects if the necessary structures are not in place.

2.2 Professional Development for Beginning Teachers

It is now widely recognised that support in the initial years of teaching are crucial for the professional growth of teachers (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). Research emphasises the significance of professional support for beginning teachers (McIntyre, Hagger, & Wilkin, 1994; Timperley, et al., 2007; Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2013). When novice teachers enter the profession, they are 'shocked'

(Maaranen & Jyrhämä, 2016) with the reality of school life. They have to adjust to the culture of the school, adapt to the needs of students, and learn to collaborate with colleagues while concentrating on their role as teachers (Lindgren, 2005; Bezzina, 2008). Scholars such as Fallon & Brown, (2002) and Lindgren, (2005) argue that there is a substantial difference between the support given to student-teachers and the professional support given to novice teachers. Lindgren, (2005) contends that 'there is a need for bridges to be built between being a student-teacher and being a teacher' (p.252). This will help to reduce the shock and stress from novice teachers who are initiating their career. Internationally, structured induction programs have been developed in order to assist in the transition from the role of student-teachers to permanent teachers in schools (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2013; Department for Education and Skills, 2013; Department for Education, 2015). 'Induction is the process of initiating beginning teachers into their new role as both a teacher and a member of the school organization' (Beijaard, et al., 2010). Therefore a formal induction programme assists teachers in integrating into the system and gradually become effective knowledgeable professionals.

2.2.1 Mentoring as Part of Induction Programmes

As part of the induction system, there has been an increased emphasis on the role and value of mentoring throughout the initial years of the novice teacher. Research evidence indicates that if teachers are involved in some form of mentoring in their initial years, they are more likely to become effective practitioners (Everston & Smithey 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Chambers, et al., 2012). When teachers enter the teaching profession, they have to keep up with the daily routine of the school, dealing with students and parents as well as keeping in line with the school culture and ethos; added to the diminished support when

compared to their pre-service years. All these needs, together with high self-expectations can be overwhelming for novice teachers (Stanulis, et al., 2002; Lindgren, 2005). Mentoring programmes, in other words, can bridge the attrition gap, thereby reducing the drop-out rates of novice teachers (Kajs, 2002).

To date, there have been numerous attempts to define the concept of mentoring. Yet, consensus exists that mentoring can be defined in hierarchical terms, which is to say that the mentor leads the mentee along a number of predefined stages of increased role responsibility and complexity, and is completed when the mentee is ready to carry on independently in the teaching profession. Implicitly, of course, this view holds that the mentor possesses all the knowledge due to the number of years in the profession. Mentoring therefore is suggested to be a relationship between two people, an experienced professional (the mentor) and a novice practitioner (the mentee) (Bezzina, 2008). Consequently, the skilful mentor assists the novice teacher by providing the tools to familiarise with the school culture, ethos and values while also enabling professional growth to surmount the hurdle of the initial years of teaching. Hence, this notion of mentoring indicates that it is solely the mentee who profits from the process (Hayes, 2001; Billett, 2003; Price & Chen, 2003; Fowler & O'Gorman, 2005; McCormack & West, 2006; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). For example, Byington (2010) defines the role of the mentor as:

> *An individual, usually older, always more experienced, who helps guide another individual's development. The mentor's role is to guide, to give advice, and to support the mentee. A mentor can help a person (mentee) improve his or her abilities and skills through observation, assessment, modelling, and by providing guidance (p.1).*

Gehrke (1988) describes the mentoring relationship as a gift exchange which occurs in three phases. This definition suggests that the mentee embarks on a journey, where in the initial phase the mentor grants the mentee with the gift of creativity. It is a phase where the mentee discovers new perspectives and understandings through long conversations. This leads to the next phase, where the mentor instils a sense of determination and helps the mentee to realise his/her potential. This is when the mentee explores new viewpoints and challenges pre-existing believes. Moving on from this phase, the mentor enters the final stage – the mentee possesses the tools to analyse and improve professional practice while engaging in ongoing professional development, even without the help of a mentor. However Gehrke (1988) argues that for the journey to be successful, the mentee needs to acknowledge and accept the mentor's desire to help.

Non-hierarchical perspectives, such as those suggested by Chambers, et al. (2012) and Patton, et al. (2005) for example, view mentoring as a process during which a professional relationship is established and developed between two people. Vonk (1993) describes mentoring as an active work relationship between an established advanced educator and a novice teacher, intended to support mutual career development. When mentors collaborate with beginning teachers, they become exposed to new ideas and resources which abet change in own practice (Lai, 2005). Chambers, et al., (2012) suggests that the mentor needs to understand the academic knowledge, abilities and the learning process of the mentee in order to provide valuable and specifically relevant support. They also argue that the mentor and the mentee are both learners. While the mentor provides knowledge through experience, the mentee offers new perspectives, viewpoints and beliefs. Such a view on mentoring, according to Patton, et al. (2005) places the mentor and mentee as 'co-learners'. Lindgren (2005) argues that through the interaction, communication and cooperation with the mentee, the mentors, unintentionally acquire new knowledge. Hence, the mentoring process can also be seen as a

method of professional development for experienced teachers if both parties are comfortable enough to talk freely and openly. She also argues that this type of relationship is hard to establish but once a bond is built between the mentor and the mentee, it will result in a journey of discovery for both. However in view of Gehrke (1988) definition of mentoring, this synergistic effect can only take place if both partners engage in a supportive relationship.

Zachary (2012) clearly defines the role and relationship of the mentor and the mentee. The mentee embarks on a process of professional development by discussing, challenging, and sharing ideas and resources. The mentor encourages and supports the mentee's ability of taking responsibility for their own learning. This professional relationship enables the mentee to gradually become self-sufficient and take full ownership of their own professional growth. Both partners should share accountability to achieve and succeed in their pre-determined goals. Lindgren (2005) contends that it is vital that the mentor and the mentee work to achieve such set goals, and that these need to be specific, well-defined and focus on the development of the mentee's needs.

Research on mentoring outcomes suggests a number of benefits for the mentee. Such benefits include the creation of a safe and protected learning environment; an increased ability to communicate, change perceptions, and ask challenging questions; the facilitation to ask for professional help; improved self-reflection and flexibility in adapting and changing teaching strategies (Awaya, et al., 2003; Lindgren, 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). However, there is comparatively little evidence when it comes to the types of benefits which accrue to the mentor. Patton, et al. (2005) make reference to a study by Hawk back in 1986 which focused on the advantages of mentoring to the mentor. A significant number of mentor-teachers affirmed that mentoring novice teachers helped in their professional growth, mainly in their classroom teaching skills, awareness of importance of communication between teachers and their position in a supervising role.

2.2.2 The Induction Process and Mentoring in Malta

Bezzina (2008) contend that there is a gap between pre-service teacher education at the University of Malta (which is the sole provider of pre-service teacher education in Malta) and the continuous professional development of teachers. He argues that various local researchers (Astarita & Pirotta, 1999; Lia & Mifsud, 2000, Bezzina & Stanyer, 2004) have highlighted the lack of support for NQTs and the absence of a good structure to facilitate professional growth, teacher collaboration and peer-observation. The initial years of teaching are indisputably the most important for the development of teachers. The increasing international recognition that both induction and mentoring programmes can be effective in supporting transitioning into the initial years of teaching has been emphasised above. Likewise, Malta has initiated its induction and mentoring programme for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) very recently.

In 2006, following modifications to the Education Act, the Maltese education system has undergone some transformations. The 2006 amendments brought with them a detailed description of the process that teachers need to go through in order to gain official entrance into the teaching profession and gain a *Teacher's Warrant*. The Act states that for a person to qualify for such warrant, one should have 'received adequate experience in the practice of the teaching profession under supervision in a licenced school... for an aggregate period of at least two scholastic years' (Cap. 327, part III. Para. 24, 2e, p.15). This focus on teacher professionalism gained through professional practice led to the requirement of this being monitored and guided by an authorised body. Therefore, the Act also introduced the Council for the Teaching Profession (CTP), whose role is to regulate and administer the teaching profession in Malta. Such body is responsible for the organisation and management of the initial and continuous development of the entire teaching profession. As part of the 2010 agreement between the government and the MUT, all teachers entering the teaching

profession are entitled to an induction programme during the first two years of teaching, with mentoring being an integral part of the Maltese induction programme.

The Head of School together with the Senior Management Team (SMT) are accountable for the induction and mentoring of teaching staff (Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta, 2010). The SMT are to submit an assessment report to the Director General of Education at the end of the probationary period. The teacher's warrant can only be issued upon a favourable report (Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta, 2010). Following this agreement in 2007 the first 3-day induction programme for NQTs was held. The programme has continued on a yearly basis up to the latest cohort of NQTs in 2016. In September 2013, the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) issued a handbook focusing on the *'Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers'*. The handbook offers guidance for NQTs by providing a good insight of the process and procedures in the first two years of teaching. The handbook distinguishes between mentoring and appraisal where the former refers to the first year of teaching. Here, support and reassurance are provided to NQTs mainly by an assigned mentor. In the second year of teaching, the appraisal phase, a formative assessment takes place following a series of supervisions and observations from superiors.

Conclusion

With the aforementioned changes, there has been an increase in the provision of mentoring sessions with NQTs in Malta. Yet, initial results from the TALIS report (OECD, 2009) indicate that more than 60% of teachers in schools receive no mentoring sessions or

initial induction services. Additionally, at a local level, the field of mentoring vis-à-vis PE teachers is under-researched. When considering that in order to be able to provide a better service as well as increased learning opportunities for teachers, empirical research needs to be conducted. This should also help stakeholders in understanding the impact of mentoring on NQTs (more specifically NQTs specialised in the teaching of PE) and how this process affects their teaching career. Being a relatively new concept in the Maltese educational system, the effectiveness and efficiency together with the impact of the induction and mentoring programme in the development and support of beginning teachers lacks evidence. The methodology used to conduct this research is clearly outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to provide detailed explanation and justification of the research procedures, methods and approaches (research design, sampling, data collection tool, analysis, ethics and quality assurances) employed. The primary objective of the present study was to examine newly qualified PE teachers' views and experiences of CPD and their perceptions about the effectiveness of the current induction programme and the mentoring experiences in Malta. Since the main priority was to gather detailed evidence of PE teachers' perceptions, qualitative methodology - with semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool - was the most appropriate approach to answer the following research questions:

1. What forms of professional development do PE teachers in Malta value?

2. What are the perceptions of beginning PE teachers regarding the induction programme and mentoring as part of Continuous Professional Development?

3. Based on the experiences of beginning teachers in Malta, in what ways can the existing mentoring system be improved?

3.1 Research Design – Qualitative Research

In this section, an overview of the research design is provided followed by a detailed account of the methods and instruments used to conduct this study.

3.1.1 Research Paradigms and Methodology

There are a number of research paradigms that can inform and underpin educational research in the context of social sciences, ranging from a positivist to a constructivist approach. It is important to acknowledge that there is a substantial body of research seeking to measure elements (e.g., frequency of presence and quality) of teaching behaviours (e.g., use of questioning and feedback, clarity of instruction etc.) by developing, validating, and employing observation tools. This work frequently reflects positivist paradigm which seeks to make objective meaning from hypothesis and theory testing (Taylor & Medina, 2013). However, there are claims that human behaviour in social contexts, such as teaching, is very complex to be captured by measures that seek to isolate specific behaviours from the broader context in which they take place (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Furthermore, the purpose of the present study was to examine teachers' perspectives of their CPD experiences rather that evaluate the quality of implementation of the CPD experiences using researchers' criteria as is often the case in observational studies.

Human meaning-making processes are dynamic and constantly evolving. In this regard, constructivist and interpretative approach was the most appropriate paradigm and methodology approach. In a constructivist approach, the reality of the phenomena depends on the social and experiential situation of humans while an interpretative approach is concerned with the meaning-making of the situations as experienced by the research participants (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Thus an interpretative researcher seeks to understand the values, thoughts and feelings of others (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The aim of this qualitative research is to examine, unpack and understand research participants' logical reasoning, experiences and thoughts, as described and 'lived' by them in their unique circumstances (Lindgren, 2005). Once researchers have access to participants' thoughts and experiences, their primary purpose is to then provide an in-depth and accurate description and explanation of these experiences

(Lichtman, 2013), while trusting that each individual's experience cannot be generalised and is unique in nature (Cohen et. al 2011).

3.1.2 Methods and Sampling – Case Study

In order to explore the research questions set, this study was conducted within the case study framework (Stake, 2005). A case study analyses a particular issue within a specific context and provides a 'unique example of real people in real situations' (p.289) giving the readers a good insight of the issues under investigation as experienced by the research participants (Cohen, et al., 2011). Case study research involves a deep analysis and description of particular individuals or a group of people (Cohen, et al., 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). According to Woodside (2010) description, understanding, control and prediction are core elements for case study research while the ultimate objective is to gain a deep understanding of the behaviour, knowledge, thinking and interactions of the case under investigation. Woodside (2010) argues that case study research is a medium to access the 'sensemaking' processes of the individual, including '(1) focusing on what they perceive; (2) framing what they perceive; (3) interpreting what they have done, including how they solve problems and the results of their enactments'(p.6). In order to gain a thorough understanding, Woodside (2010) suggests triangulation of data. Triangulation of data is a way of establishing validity and enhancing credibility of a study (Guion, 2002; Lichtman, 2010). Guion (2002) identifies five different types of research triangulation:

i. Data triangulation – gathering data from a number of sources;

ii. Investigator triangulation – a number of researchers investigating and evaluating the same study;

iii.   Theory triangulation – people from different fields of study interpreting the same data;

iv.   Methodological triangulation – using different methods (qualitative and/or quantitative) of data collection;

v.   Environmental triangulation – collecting data in different days of the week, time of the year and time of the day.

Of particular interest to this study is the data triangulation. In order to gather an in-depth knowledge of the participants' views, opinion and experience, teachers teaching in all sectors (state schools, church schools and independent schools) within the Maltese educational system were invited to take part in this study. This could ensure that the data would represent all newly qualified Maltese PE teachers in all sectors. Therefore this research adopts a collective case study approach (Stake, 1995 in Creswell, 2007). In collective case study, the researcher investigates a number of cases who share common characteristics to explore one particular phenomenon (Shkedi, 2005). Yin (2014) identifies three types of case study research design, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Each of these is used according to the type of research questions posed for a study.

> *An exploratory case study… is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study (not necessarily a case study)… A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An explanatory case study presents data bearing on case-effect relationships – explaining how events happened. (Yin, 2003 p.5)*

It is clear that this study falls under explanatory, collective case study research. The 'cases' are individual newly qualified PE teachers in Malta, with the newly implemented induction and mentoring programmes as the phenomenon under investigation. Fourteen case study teachers from nine state schools, three church schools and one independent school were

selected to explore their CPD and mentoring experience. The selection criteria for participants are discussed in the following section 3.2.

3.2 Setting and Participants

Since the study focused on the first two years in the teaching profession, and teachers had to reflect and evaluate retrospectively about their experiences, a very small number of teachers were eligible to participate in the study. In order to overcome this limitation, the whole population of the eligible participants was taken. However, purposive sampling was employed to select the study participants. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify participants according particular characteristics that satisfy the need of the research (Cohen, et al., 2011). To be eligible for this study, participants had to meet the following criteria: they had to be teaching full time in a secondary school in Malta and they were in their second or third year in teaching. The approximate population size of beginning PE teachers (in the first three years in the profession) was 35. Teachers who were employed in September 2015 (21 potential participants) and therefore were in their first year of teaching, were excluded from the research as they would be unable to have clear and retrospective views of the CPD opportunities available to them. Thus, all the remaining 14 teachers, having between two to three years of teaching experience were eligible to take part in this research. The teachers identified were both male and female with an age range of 22 to 27 years. The 14 potential participants were working in the two different sectors of education provision in Malta, 9 in the state sector (government-owned schools) and 5 in the non-state sector (church schools and independent schools). Out of a total of 14 potential participants, one refused to take part in this study, all other 13 teachers contributed to this study.

3.2.1 Recruiting Participants

In a small country like Malta where there is only one Teacher Education Institution (the same in which the researcher was educated), PE teachers are all well known to each other. The participants of this research, therefore, were already known and directly accessible to the researcher. Participants were approached individually by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and a formal request was made via phone call and/or by personal email to take part in the study. An Information Sheet about the study was given to each participant (see appendix 2). Participants were advised that they are under no obligation to take part in the research and that they will not be disadvantaged in any way should they choose not to take part. They were advised that this study is being undertaken independently of any quality assurance measures and that no information and/or personally identifiable data will be made available to the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. They were also reassured that all data collected will be treated in strict confidence, that their identities and/or information will be anonymised, that they will have the opportunity to withdraw at any time, and that they will not be required to explain their reasons for withdrawing.

After reading the Information Sheet, and after having decided whether or not they want to participate in the research, the teachers in question were invited to sign a Consent Form (see Appendix 1). Participants were expected to take part in the study during their own free time, outside of school working hours. Hence, no data collection was undertaken on school premises and therefore no further permission from any Head Teachers of any individual schools were necessary.

3.3 Instrumentation – Data Collection Tool

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary and only data collection tool for this research. Being a PE teacher who just finished the process of induction herself, the researcher was interested in understanding the experiences of other beginning teachers. Since the researcher wanted to get a good insight with a retrospective analysis and reflection of the teachers' experiences during their induction years, observations of mentor-mentee visits as a data collection tool was eliminated. Another factor that contributed to this decision was that being a full time teacher and having the same working hours as the participants, the researcher could not conduct in-field research and any research activity had to be conducted after school hours. Therefore, possible qualitative methods such as observations of mentor-mentee visits and meetings were not logistically possible.

Focus-groups were not appropriate for this study as the main objectives were to analyse each individual's experiences according to the different environment (primary or secondary level, state or non-state sector), and the specific support structure provided to them (choice, subject-knowledge of mentor). The researcher wanted to create a comfortable, confidential environment where participants could talk openly and freely without being influenced by other teachers' opinions and views while also ensuring anonymity (Hennink, et al., 2011). Interviews were therefore considered as the best data collection tool. Cohen, et al. (2011) explain how interviews are an excellent medium to access knowledge directly from the experienced participants:

> *Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees - to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the*

> *interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of*
> *life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable (p.409).*

Semi-structured interviews allow for a focused dialogue to occur between the researcher and the interviewee about the issues under investigation; but they also expect and enable researchers to pursue emergent issues and themes. In other words, the semi-structured format allows for pre-planned questions to be altered as the interview progresses (Ennis & Chen, 2012), and based on the responses offered by the participants. The interviewer needs to be responsive to the participant's arguments and be able to quickly adapt the pre-planned structure of questions (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

3.3.1 Developing the Interview Questions

Setting the interview questions is a crucial phase in the study. The researcher must ask the right questions to elicit valuable data from the participant. Hence, an interview protocol was developed, keeping in mind that each question seeks to elicit valuable information that satisfies the research objectives (Cohen et. al 2011). The process of developing the interview protocol was extensive and grounded in the existing research and with the aim of building new knowledge upon what was already known from existing research. After an extensive review of international literature related to the subject, it was evident that fundamental question remained relating to new teachers' CPD experiences (Jacob & Fergurson, 2012). Consequently, interview questions focused on the nature, quality and effectiveness of the existing professional development provision for new teachers, as well as the implementation and impact of the recently introduced mentoring system as part of teacher induction programme in Malta, still needed to be explored.

The interview protocol was divided in three sections, each with the intention to satisfy the research objectives of the study. The first section of the interview comprised of questions related to the available professional development opportunities for novice PE teachers (e.g. what professional development opportunities have been made available to you since starting your new role?). Then, the conversation shifted to the support structures during the induction period (e.g. did you have an induction meeting?), including seeking to understand their views and experiences of the mentoring system (e.g. did you find having a mentor useful?). The third section of the interview included questions related to pre-service teacher education and the way forward of the current induction programme (How would you compare your learning during teaching practice in pre-service education and your learning as an NQT?).

It is important to note that through own experience and informal conversations with other NQTs, there were clear indications that some NQTs had the opportunity to have a mentor during their induction years; whilst others did not. Hence, to ensure that the diverse experiences of these teachers were captured adequately, two different interview protocols were developed. The interview protocol for mentored teachers sought to elicit information about the experiences and views of the available CPD opportunities, the support structures during the induction process and the mentoring system (see Appendix 3). On the other hand, the mentoring system with teachers who had no mentor was not discussed, due to the fact that they lacked the necessary experience to provide data regarding the topic (see Appendix 4).

3.3.2 The Interview Process

Once the participants were chosen, the researcher personally contacted each one of them through telephony or email to set a date for the interview. The thirteen interviews were

carried between February and March 2016. All interviews were carried out outside of the school premises, during participants' free time and at a place convenient to them.

Since the interviewer and the interviewee were previously acquainted, a certain degree of formality during the interview was necessary. Seidman (2013, p.99) argues that the "interviewing relationship needs to be controlled. Too much or too little rapport can lead to distortion of what the participant reconstructs in the interview". Therefore, the interviews started by formally explaining the right to withdraw to the participants. This set the pace for the interviewer and interviewee to engage in formal conversation. Being a PE teacher who underwent the same process of induction as the participants, the researcher refrained from mentioning any of her own experiences with the participants. This reduced the possibility of distorting the information given from participants (Seidman 2013). Interviews were recorded to allow better interaction between the participant and the researcher, creating a better atmosphere for conversation to take place (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Seidman, 2013). As Seidman (2013) contends, recording the data allows for double-checking and verification if something in the transcript is not clear. This minimised misinterpretations during data analysis.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

The next step after data collection was to transcribe the interview data. All thirteen audio-recorded open-ended interviews were transcribed by the researcher herself. Each interview took approximately 20 minutes and provided the researcher with a total of 58 pages of interview transcription. The transcripts provided the researcher with valuable data through

the different experiences and perspectives of the participants. Having the data at hand, the researcher started to develop a good overview of the participants' profile (Table 1). The researcher then re-read the transcripts and identified different categories and themes within the interviews.

Name of Participant	Years of Experience	1st Year of teaching		2nd year of teaching	
		Sector	Teaching Level	Sector	Teaching Level
James	2	State	Primary	State	Primary
Hannah	2	Church	Primary	Church	Primary
Brian	2	State	Primary	State	Secondary
Daniel	2	State	Primary	State	Secondary
Chloe	3	State	Primary	State	Primary
Liam	3	State	Primary	State	Primary
Marco	3	State	Primary	Church	Secondary
George	3	State	Primary	State	Primary
Faith	3	State	Primary	State	Primary
Eve	3	State	Secondary	Church	Secondary
Keith	3	Church	Primary	Church	Primary
Amy	3	Church	Primary & Secondary	Church	Primary & Secondary
Ian	3	Independent	Secondary	Independent	Secondary & Post-Secondary

Table 1: Participants' Profile

3.4.1 Coding the Data

In this section a detailed account of how the data was analysed is provided. The process of data analysis involved a number of steps.

1. After conducting each interview, the researcher immediately transcribed the audio-recorded conversations. This ensured that the researcher gained a better insight and understanding of the different perspective and experiences of the participants as well as to become responsive to their comments.

2. The second step in data analysis included multiple reading of the data. This also involved writing phrases or codes and memos next to the data. The process of coding allows the researcher to give meaning to pieces of data (Punch, 2009). Such method is known to qualitative researchers as open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Punch, 2009; Saldaña, 2009; Kolb, 2012). A code is a simple word or phrase that captures and summarises a sentence or paragraph (Saldaña, 2009). For example a statement such as "the mentor was a PE teacher", was coded as "mentor qualities – subject specific". In this way any other phrases related to the mentor's content knowledge or the mentor providing subject specific assistance were coded likewise. Glaser (1978) defines memos as "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationship as they strike the analyst while coding…it can be a sentence, a paragraph or a few pages…it exhausts the analyst momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.72). This process helped the researcher to formulate connections between pieces of data. Table 3 is an example of the process of open coding and memos with data collected from Faith.

3. The next step involved the constant comparison and evaluation of data. This led to axial coding, where data was grouped together, constructing new connections between categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kolb, 2012). Different codes such as

'subject specialisation', 'mentoring visits', 'discussions with mentor', 'mentor as point of reference'. These codes were categorised under the heading 'mentoring visits, observations and meetings' as all of these factors determined the type of relationship between the mentor and the mentee and the experience of the mentoring process as perceived by the mentee (i.e. the participants). Through this process, other categories such as 'benefits and effectiveness of mentoring system' and 'teacher's life without a mentor' emerged, including which allowed the researcher to move on the next step of data analysis. The results of this part of the analysis are presented in Chapter 4 – Findings.

4. Axial coding was followed by selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) where the main themes related to the research objectives emerged. In this part of data analysis, the aim was to bring together common issues that emerged across the data that are directly related to the research questions and objectives. The results of this exercise are offered in the fifth chapter – Discussion.

I never attended any seminars. Basically the only reason is that the administration finds it difficult to send me for a seminar outside of school for a whole day because they wouldn't want the students to miss their PE lessons.	• Restriction to attend CPD • SMT not cooperative when it comes to PE-CPD
Q. Do you think that there are enough opportunities for PE teachers' professional development? I believe that if you really want to, there are enough opportunities. It has to come from within, you have to want to learn, you have to seek opportunities. No one is going to tell you "go to that course you might need it in the future". You have to be ambitious enough to make decision for your future.	• Availability of CPD • Ownership of own learning
My mentor knew the subject inside out, he used to give me tips and guidelines how to improve certain aspects of the lesson or how to deal with misbehaviour or class control. I used to look forward for the visits, I learned a lot from him. I was lucky that my mentor was subject specialised and had many years of experience.	• Discussing different aspects of the lessons • Mentoring as a positive experience • Mentor qualities – subject specific and experienced *Faith's experience indicates that there is a relationship between the mentor's subject specialisation and the positive/negative experience of mentoring* *Does this come from the fact that Faith and her mentor could discuss the lesson from different dimension ie. planning, logistics, class control etc.?*

Table 3: Coding and Memo Writing

3.5 Quality in Qualitative Research

When conducting research, a number of measures are taken to ensure that the data presented is of good quality. The quality of the research is analysed within the paradigm context. For example in the positivist researcher, concepts such as validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity are considered as important criteria to ensure quality (Healy & Perry, 2000). Walby & Luscombe (2016, p.4) contend that 'validity assumes researchers are trying to measure something by correlating variables that can be measured through'; Cohen, et al. (2011, p.199) argue that reliability 'is concerned with precision and accuracy…For research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out in a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found'; Generalisability means 'extending the research results, conclusions, or other accounts that are based on the study of particular individuals, setting, times or institutions, to other individuals, setting, times or institutions than those directly studied' (Morse, 2015, p. 1213). According to Markula & Silk (2011), when validity, reliability and generalisability are observed, objectivity is achieved.

In qualitative research, researchers suggest different standards than the once used in quantitative research to measure truth and quality (Tracy, 2010; Mays & Pope, 2000). Walby & Luscombe (2016) referring to Guba's (1981) work, argue that terms such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability should replace validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity to measure quality in qualitative research (Walby & Luscombe, 2016; Morse, 2015; Tracy, 2010; Healy & Perry, 2000).

3.5.1 Ensuring Quality in this Study

This thesis has adopted a number of measures to enhance quality and trustworthiness. Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that 'a qualitative study can be evaluated accurately only if its procedures are sufficiently explicit… so that readers can assess their appropriateness' (p.249). The strategies adopted in this study are explained hereunder:

Credibility

Credibility is the assurance that the study is measuring what was actually intended to measure (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important criteria in order to gain trustworthiness. Researchers such as Morse (2000) and Shenton (2004) outline a number of ways how credibility can be guaranteed. Of particular interest to this study are:

i. Triangulation – This study adopted data triangulation where data was gathered from a number of sources who experienced the phenomena under investigation in different settings (explained earlier in this chapter, section 3.1.2).

ii. The development of early familiarisation with the area of study – Before conducting the research, the researcher engaged in a thorough analysis of the current policies and documents which inform the current Maltese educational system, the professional development available to Maltese PE teachers and the structures of the current mentoring system. Apart from the analysis of local documents and literature, international policies, documents and literature were reviewed (chapter 2).

iii. Adoption of methods well established in qualitative research – The justification of the research methods used to collect the data in this study is explained in detailed in this chapter (section 3.1)

iv.   Background of the investigator – The researcher's background and her position within the study is explained in detailed in section 3.5.3 in this chapter.

Dependability

Dependability is the process of carefully documenting the process, methods and procedures used to gather, interpret and discuss data (Morse, 2000; Seale, 2002; Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a process of 'auditing' where the auditors or researchers keep track of the different processes involved in the research. The key purpose of this methodology chapter is to identify, explain and justify the methods employed throughout this study.

Transferability

Seale (2002) contends that transferability can be achieved by providing a detailed and rich descriptions and quotations from the participants of the study. This provides the readers with sufficient information to be able to judge the findings of the study. Chapter 4 of this study presents the data findings and offers thick and rich descriptions and quotes in order to ensure that the research conveys the participants' views and experiences.

Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that 'as far as possible the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher' (Shenton, 2004, p.72). Researchers such as Morse, (2000), Seale (2002) and Shenton (2004) argue that confirmability can be achieved after ensuring credibility, dependability and transferability.

3.5.2 Subjectivity

In qualitative research, the notion of subjectivity is often seen as an integral part of the quality of the study (Holstein & Gubrium, 2016). Subjectivity is the parallel research concern of objectivity in positivist research. Objectivity means that the 'data is free from biases and is relatively value neutral' (Holloway & Galvin, 2017, p.307). In qualitative research this is very difficult to achieve. Instead, researchers try to make explicit their position within the study and acknowledge their experiences and beliefs, thus making it visible to the reader for examination (Holstein & Gubrium, 2016; Holloway & Galvin, 2017). The criterion of fidelity is important in research where subjective meanings and interpretations of lives experiences are at stake. Blumenfeld-jones (1995) argues that fidelity is based on interpretations of the lived-experiences of people and includes the construction of meaning of the lived experiences.

3.5.3 Researcher's Position within the Study

The researcher's interest in exploring and investigating the objectives of the study stemmed out from her experiences. The researcher graduated from the University of Malta in 2013 and was immediately employed with a non-state school in Malta. Therefore, the researcher entered into an educational system that had established structures to support beginning teachers. However, through conversations with fellow colleagues and friends, it was evident that the support given to beginning teachers was not consistent in all sectors of education. This created an interest in the field of teacher induction programmes and professional development for beginning teachers.

The researcher's positive and negative experiences during her teaching years had an impact on this study. However, this personal engagement was acknowledged while designing,

collecting and analysing data. In different sections in this chapter, reference is made to these experiences and how these affected certain decisions, however actions taken to lessen the impact of own experiences on this study were also discussed.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This researched is based on the premise that participants involved in this study are treated with respect. In this regard, qqualitative studies such as this study carry a number of ethical issues and precautions that must be taken into considerations (Sanjari, et al., 2014). At the planning stage of this study, the research design and questions were approved by the research ethics committee and all ethical guidelines were adhered.

3.6.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Participants were informed thruthfully and enitrely about the purpose of this study both from the information letter as well as verbally before the interviews. Since participants were known to each other, each participant was approached individually by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. One-to-one interviews, in a preferred location chosen by participants were carried out. No reference to the other participants was made during the course of data collection. Pseudonyms were used for participants so that they will not be identifiable in any publishable results. The pseudonyms were kept separate from the participants' codes and names in a password protected laptop. No hard-copies of the data or transcripts were printed.

In addition, participants were advised that they have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason and that they will not be required to explain their reasons for withdrawing. The right to withdraw from the study was explained to participants in the Information Sheet and Consent Form. Details of withdrawal were also reinforced verbally by the researcher before and after the interview.

To ensure confidentiality, only the researcher of this study had access to the data collected. Interviews were audio-recorded using a password-protected digital recording device. Once each interview was completed, these digital recordings (DSS files) were used to transcribe the interviews verbatim into a Word document. Once transcribed, the data was transferred into a secure folder, and stored on a password-protected laptop and external hard-dive. Once transferred, the digital recording was deleted from the recording device. This ensured a secure storage of research participants' data. Interview transcripts were only stored electronically as verbatim transcripts in these secure files on a password-protected laptop and external hard-dive. No hard copies of the data were made. Once the study is completed, this electronic data will be passed over to the supervisor who will store it securely for a period of ten years in accordance with regulation 3.3 of the University's Code of Practice for research 2015-2016.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a clear justification of the research methodology employed to conduct this study was made. It also gave the rationale behind the choice of methods and tools used to answer the research objectives. The procedures for developing the interview protocols, selecting and recruiting participants as well as the methods adopted to analyse the data were discussed. The following chapter reports the findings from the data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings from the interviews conducted with 13 beginning Physical Education (PE) teachers in Malta. The findings in this chapter are presented under three different themes with the aim of answering the research questions set for this study. The first theme – Professional Development Opportunities for Beginning Teachers - gives insights about the nature and quality of existing professional development (PD) opportunities for beginning PE teachers. This includes the availability, accessibility and relevance of the different types of PD opportunities. The induction process for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is discussed in the second theme. Teachers' experiences and perceptions about the effectiveness of the current induction programme as well as the teachers' journey from pre-service to in-service are explored within this theme. In the third theme issues related to the mentoring system as part of the induction programme are presented. This section includes the different views and opinions of NQTs' mentoring experiences together with a good insight into the lives of teachers who did not have a mentor during their induction phase.

4.1 Professional Development Opportunities for Beginning Teachers

4.1.1 Patterns and Frequency of Participation

Beginning teachers who participated in this study identified a number of different professional development opportunities which were made available to them in their initial

years of teaching. This included out-of-school opportunities, designed and delivered by different providers and organisations. For example, most teachers reported attending a range of out-of-school CPD opportunities, including the annual Professional Learning Sessions (PLS), day-long seminars, courses, or conferences. In-school CPD opportunities were also mentioned such as School Development Plans (SDP) and subject-specific departmental meetings on a regular basis. The patterns of CPD participation were not identical for all teachers as opportunities varied depending on the type of school in which they worked and the extent to which policy requirements (compulsory attendance) were adhered to. Given this variation and the complexity of the data, the Table 3 illustrates patterns of CPD participation. The first column (context) indicates where CPD takes place (i.e. out-of-school or school-based opportunities). The second column (presence) indicates whether attendance was compulsory, voluntary or compulsory for some and voluntary for others (compulsory/voluntary). The third column (type) represents the different types of CPD in which teachers engaged in (e.g. PLS, courses and subject meetings) while the fourth column provides the number of teachers that engaged in that type of CPD out of the 13 participants.

Context	Presence	Type	Number of Teachers
Out-of-school	Compulsory/ Voluntary	PLS	8
Out-of-school	Voluntary	Seminars & Conferences	10
Out-of-school	Voluntary	Organised courses	8
School-based	Compulsory	SDP	13
School-based	Compulsory/ Voluntary	Subject Meetings	5
School-based/ Out-of-school	Compulsory	Meetings with EO/HOD	6
School-based/ Out-of-school	Voluntary	Research	8

Table 3: Patterns of CPD Participation

Although all teachers acknowledged that attending PLSs was compulsory, only eight reported attending this opportunity since they started teaching. Out of the eight, five said that they attended because they were required to do so by the local education authority (Institute for Education); whilst three clarified that they pursued it out of their own volition. All teachers were requested to attend once except for one participant who had two compulsory sessions. The remaining five teachers reporting non-attendance clarified that since it was not a requirement, they did not feel the need to go: "I was not called to attend, not that I didn't want to go, but they did not ask me to go" (Faith). All these teachers also stated that they were asked to attend for the next PLS. PLSs are open to all teachers and does not pose any restrictions, providing access to ample opportunities for PE teachers. However, evidence also suggested that although widely available to all teachers, the majority only attend if they are requested to do so. The current system gives underlying messages and mentally conditions the teachers to attend only if they are asked. On the other hand the three teachers who attended voluntary PLSs all come from the church school sector, and PLS for teachers in church schools are always on voluntary basis, even though the same courses may be compulsory for state schools teachers. This allows church school teachers to take ownership of their own professional development and encourages them to attend courses that are relevant to their needs.

Most participants also reported attending seminars and conferences organised by the University of Malta (Institute for PE and Sport) and by the Institute for Education on a regular basis. Teachers reported that during seminars and conferences, a wide range of topics (such as: innovative ways of teaching, facing the social domain in PE lessons and adapting PE lessons for all abilities) are available for discussion and therefore they can engage in discussions about a topic that is relevant to their professional needs: "I always find an area or topic of interest and by being given the freedom to choose, I obviously attend discussions

47

which are of interest to me, therefore they [seminars and conferences] are always relevant to my needs" (Marco). This was not however the case for two teachers who explained that they find it very difficult to attend seminars and conferences during school hours. Both Faith and Daniel explained that the schools in which they teach do not allow them to be exempted to participate in such CPD. The senior management team (SMT) in Faith's school refuse to make the necessary timetable changes, while Daniel's school does not permit all the PE teachers (5 in the school) to attend CPD at the same time. Despite the positive experiences from the majority of participants in this study, some teachers are deprived from experiencing such PD opportunity. The SMTs do not acknowledge the importance of attending CPD, do not recognise that CPD can leave a positive impact on students' learning through improved teaching practices. Unfortunately the notion that teachers are skiving from their duties prevails.

Six of the participants (n=6) reported attending sport-specific courses. Teachers most of the time attend courses that are specific to one sport. Football, Badminton, Rugby, Gymnastics and Swimming are amongst the common courses attended. Three teachers mentioned attending other courses such as online schools communication system, ethics course and first aid course, organised either by the Institute for Education or the University of Malta. According to participants, attending courses of their own choice increases interest in participation and they believe that the CPD will leave a greater impact on their practice. Daniel explained that out of the available CPD opportunities, courses are most relevant to his professional needs: "When I choose my own courses, I am more interested and enthusiastic to attend because I feel that I am going to gain more of what I need, something that is specific and can be applied in my lessons". This was also sustained by Chloe who decided to enrol to a course regarding the online communication system, and explained that although it was not compulsory to join she felt the necessity to inform herself about how the system works. The

remaining five teachers did not attend any courses. They explained that because courses are held either after school hours or on weekends, they cannot attend due to family responsibilities, part-time work or sport related commitments. Teachers engaged in courses mostly subject-specific, because they felt the need to update and increase their knowledge about certain topics and areas. This shows that even beginning teachers need refresher courses every now and then throughout their career. Such type of PD is an excellent medium to improve subject knowledge and enhance teaching practices amongst novice and more experienced PE teachers.

Whilst pursuing out-of-school CPD varied between participants, school-based CPD, and sessions focusing on the School Development Plan (SDP), was an integral part of their CPD experiences. Evidence suggests that there is no one unified way these sessions are organised or how frequently they are delivered. In most cases, teachers reported attending SDP sessions once a term (n=11) after the end of the school day (2 to 3 hours). However one-day long sessions were also reported by two participants. Usually the sessions take the format of a talk from the SMT but participants who have day-long sessions mentioned also discussions about school policies in small groups with one of the teachers chairing the group. Although all teachers in this study attended SDP sessions at school, not all teachers believe that this type of CPD is effective for their professional learning. Issues related to relevance and content of SDPs will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Teachers also mentioned opportunities to participate in transformative or 'reform' types of professional development. Subject-meetings at school are common practice amongst secondary Maltese schools. In fact all the five teachers teaching in secondary schools reported having weekly meetings with colleagues. In most schools, weekly meetings form part of the teaching load, are listed on the teacher's timetable and therefore are compulsory. Daniel explained the importance of subject meetings: "since we are a large group of PE

teachers in the school, it is imperative that we know what the other PE teachers are doing, we do speak between lessons but that is not enough to discuss a sports day or a tournament". SMT are sometimes present for meetings and request minutes of meeting. Conversely, two participants teaching in the non-state sector reported that subject meetings in their schools do not occur on a regular basis but teachers use the allocated time only when they feel the need to discuss matters with their colleagues. However both teachers explained that discussions continuously take place throughout the week and between lessons.

Primary PE teachers in Malta are peripatetic, with many of them having to give lessons in more than one school. Being a solitary teacher in multiple schools makes the life of PE teachers somewhat difficult. Interviewees mentioned isolation, lack of belongingness and lack of professional discussion with other colleagues as everyday struggles. In an attempt to improve the situation, the PE Education Officer (EO) organises weekly curriculum time meetings with all primary state PE teachers (non-state teachers are not invited to attend the meetings). Teachers in this study explained that to attend these on-going PD sessions, they are exempted from schools every Friday afternoon. The sessions are held outside of schools and usually at the Institute for Education premises. Five of the participants in this study took part in these meetings. During curriculum time, PE teachers discuss together their experiences and give suggestions to each other. Marco, who is now teaching in a church secondary school recalled his first year as peripatetic primary teacher in a state school and said that "it was very useful for us primary teachers because we had no one to refer to at school, we used to discuss things even with much more experienced PE teachers and that helped a lot".

Amy, a PE teacher teaching in the non-state sector, mentioned that apart from having weekly meetings with her colleagues, every term, the PE Head of Department (HOD) within the Secretariat of Catholic Education conducts visits to her school and together they discuss

PE related issues. George also appreciated the fact that from time to time the EO makes school visit to observe his PE lesson and give constructive feedback about the lesson. He stated that having someone who can give advice and listen to his problems was a relief. Two PE teachers in the non-state primary sector reported no formal meetings or discussions with EO or HODs despite being the only teachers in their schools. Both teachers stated that being alone in a school, without guidance, support and no point of reference increases the sense of isolation and loneliness. To overcome this hindrance, they found comfort in other PE teachers who were fellow students during pre-service education.

This research show that whether through subject-meeting, curriculum time with colleagues, casual conversations between lessons or informal encounters with other PE teachers, teachers feel the need to engage in professional dialogue to discuss and improve their practices. Therefore, curriculum time and opportunities for professional dialogue should be made available to all PE teachers, regardless in which sector and level they teach in.

Another type of professional development in which teachers engage in is the sporadic search of subject content knowledge and pedagogical ideas. More than half of the participants explained that this kind of research helps them to improve as they get better understanding of various problematic aspects encountered in practice, such as students asking difficult questions and students not managing to learn certain skills. This takes place mostly during lesson planning. Hannah mentioned how she uses social media to share ideas with local and foreign teachers: "I subscribed to YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest and I add a lot of foreign teachers and join PE organisations, we share videos and lesson plans and sometimes when I feel stuck or need some new ideas I log in". Even George said that sometimes he uses social media, but in a different way than Hannah. He said that while browsing in social media, he encounters articles which instigate further research. He explained that when reading articles, sometimes he can relate to his experiences at school. Results from this study show that

teachers engage in research when they encounter a problem during their practice, therefore they try to search for immediate solutions and explanations. Giving and providing answers does not help the teacher to improve practice. The education system, starting from initial teacher training (ITT), to induction and in-service training should provide the teachers with the necessary tools to engage in critical analysis of their professional practice.

Participants in this study mentioned numerous opportunities of PD which are available to them such as PLSs, SDPs, courses and subject meetings. The availability and the accessibility of the existing opportunities is analysed in the next section.

4.1.2 Availability and Accessibility of Professional Development

When asked if there are enough CPD opportunities to improve their professional practice, PE teachers had different opinions. Five participants agreed that the opportunities exist but not all teachers are making the effort to identify and participate in them:

Unfortunately many teachers complain that nothing is being offered, but they do nothing about it. They do not pursue or seek opportunities and they always remain a step back. That is the barrier, if we want to improve, we need to start from ourselves, if I want to progress in my teaching practices, I must be the one to chase the opportunities.   (Daniel)

Participants argued that despite the availability of professional development, teachers should take responsibility of their own learning and seek opportunities themselves. Faith talked about the importance of 'being ambitious' and identifying the 'appropriate moments' to pursue the right CPD according to current professional needs in order to progress in their career. Other teachers (n=4) believed that external CPD such as conferences, seminars or courses need to be organised more frequently, as although there are opportunities and structures in place for the provision of PD, there is not enough. Four of the participants

criticised the lack of provision of professional development for PE teachers. Marco stated that although other experienced PE teachers sustain that there has been an improvement, he still thinks that there is not enough. Eve strongly affirms that the opportunities are quite limited and in order to advance and improve, one must seek overseas tuition, making the opportunities less reachable. Despite mentioning that a variety of opportunities are available for the professional development of teachers, teachers feel that there is a deficit in the frequency of opportunities. This might be a barrier for teachers who wish and seek to improve but find no opportunities that are suitable for their needs.

4.1.3 Relevance to the Teacher's Context: Giving them more of what they eed

Teachers in this study explained that although a wide variety of CPD opportunities are available to them, the effectiveness and impact on professional practice depends on the relevance and applicability of the CPD to the teacher's context and current professional needs.

4.1.3.1 Content and Context of CPD

There was consensus amongst participants who attended PLS that such CPD, targeting a large number of teachers from various contexts, can only be effective if the content is relevant to participants' needs. This however was not the case for all the teachers. Faith, for example, was required to attend PLS during her first year of teaching. However, in her view, this CPD opportunity was not targeted appropriately and overlooked the needs of primary school PE teachers:

I was called to go for the session, so I had to go. It was all non-sense for me.

They discussed about the new PHE syllabus but I did not understand anything

because it was the first time that it was being implemented in the secondary

schools and I was a primary teacher, so it was extremely irrelevant to me. I

would have preferred to go to sessions of my choice.   (Faith)

According to Faith, the narrow focus of this CPD opportunity as well as the failure to target CPD appropriately with an underlying lack of choice, led to her professional learning needs being unaddressed.

Another teacher also reported that, in some cases, the information about the content of PLS is very brief or inadequate. This led Hannah to attend a PLS which she thought was about children's health and physical activity, however, she was very disappointed that the session was nothing close to what she expected. In fact it gave a deep explanation of and ways to prevent diseases amongst children. She argued that the title was somewhat misleading and it only tackled a small part of 'children's health' without mentioning other important factors that contribute to healthy living. Despite evident disappointment about the lack of proper information given, Hannah stated that "although it was not related to the school and couldn't take something back to my class, it was still interesting for my [personal] knowledge but not relevant to my professional learning".

Teachers also suggested that the content of the CPD opportunity needs to be easily applicable to their own contexts. There was agreement that this is possible when teachers have opportunities to discuss issues/concerns they have in relation to their practices and when their individual contexts (e.g., resources, school culture) are taken into account.

Amy suggested that during such CPD, providers should seek to provide time for discussion between small groups with the same areas of interest. This issue was also raised

by Liam who believes that talks during the seminars and conferences are not useful as they try to address general issues which do not necessarily meet his needs and prefers when seminars take the form of discussion within small groups of the same interest. In fact Hannah, who regularly attends seminars and conferences, recalled one seminar which she attended and highlighted the importance of engaging in discussion with teachers who teach in similar contexts:

> *The meeting was for PE primary teachers in church schools and the EO was present. We shared ideas and discussed problems, it was very fruitful as we were all coming from the same sector, in the same boat, and so we could really understand and relate to each other.*   (Hannah)

Chloe and Eve described their experience of SDP sessions as peripatetic teachers. Since peripatetic teachers usually teach in more than one school, they get to choose the school in which they wish to attend SDP meetings. Normally, they join the SDP meetings that are held in their home school (the school that they have most lessons in). This implies that peripatetic teachers are not satisfying their profession learning needs according to the different schools but it is assumed that the teacher shares the professional needs in one school with the professional needs in the other regardless of the different environment and students' background.

Teachers' perception about the SDP meeting is also affected by the choice of topics discussed. Amy valued the fact that the SMT ask for the teachers' suggestions when it comes to choosing topics for SDPs. She explained that "this makes these meetings more relevant to us [teachers] as we are actually discussing about what we want and need to improve in the school". Brian explained that sometimes the SMT asks for their suggestions but more often than not, the SMT's agenda become a priority in the meetings. By addressing the teachers' needs, these meetings would be much more beneficial and effective for their professional

development. Ian praised the format of the SDP sessions in his schools because teachers get to discuss subject related matters with SMT, however he showed his frustration because of the fact that teachers' views and suggestions are never acted upon, and therefore "since nothing is done, SDPs are not beneficial, everyone here [at school] is of the same opinion, these meetings are useless and inept". This issue was also raised by Hannah who said that after spending time on discussing matters with her colleagues, no actions were ever taken and so teachers in her school are very demotivated about SDP sessions.

PE teachers also questioned the relevance of the SDPs to their professional practice. Five primary PE teachers revealed that since the majority of the teachers in their schools are class teachers, they mostly discuss academic subjects such as Mathematics, Maltese and English. The topics discussed during SDP meetings in primary schools include homework, examinations, teaching strategies and books used. Since none of these topics make reference to PE, PE teachers feel marginalised. "They tend to forget that I am part of the school" (Amy), "they never ask me anything about PE" (James), "I was totally left out and out of place" (Faith), "I always felt that I do not belong to those schools….I always felt out of place" (Eve), "I feel I am excluded because of such discussions" (Liam); are some of the expressions used by primary PE teachers to describe their SDP experience. James explained that the SMT are aware that the meetings are not relevant to PE teachers, in fact he recalled one instance when the head of school gave him permission to leave.

4.1.3.2 Voluntary and/or Compulsory Participation

Most of the PE teachers interviewed reached a consensus when it comes to attendance for professional development opportunities. Most of the arguments made are that teachers prefer to attend a course of their choice, which satisfies their needs rather than attending a

compulsory course which might have a lesser impact than a personally chosen course. Brian sums up this argument by stating that:

> *I prefer to join in something that applies to my necessities, it is useless to attend something that I already know or that does not relate to my subject. It should be compulsory to attend professional development opportunities throughout the year but not compulsory to attend SDPs or a particular course or a particular PLS.*   (Brian)

Three participants argued that most of the compulsory courses are vague in topic and discussion, therefore being a somewhat different subject than any other subject taught in a classroom environment, compulsory opportunities such as SDPs fail to meet the needs of PE teachers. Therefore what was on offer was not relevant for their current professional needs. Compulsory opportunities that are imposed on teachers might not be relevant and does not give the professional support that meets the current needs of the teachers. On the other hand by giving the reigns to teachers to engage in a professional opportunity that applies to their context and professional needs, helps to improve practice. In fact, teachers in this study affirmed that voluntary attended PD opportunities are much more effective for their professional development than compulsory opportunities such as PLSs and SDPs. This shows that to be effective, CPD providers should give teachers the freedom to choose the activity to attend, and then make sure that its content is carefully thought out to ensure that the diverse needs of teachers attending are met.

In this section, the different types of professional development opportunities in which teachers engaged in were identified. An analysis of the availability and relevance of the mentioned opportunities were subsequently presented. The next section delves into the experiences of NQTs' experiences of the induction process during their first years of teaching.

4.2 The Induction Programme

The agreement made in 2010 between the government and the MUT in fulfilling the Education Act requirements, clearly states that all teachers are "expected to follow an induction process" (Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta, 2010, p.25). In this regard, the cohort of teachers under investigation should have received the adequate induction services. However, this research shows that not all education sectors offer an induction programme to beginning teachers.

All state school PE teachers affirmed that they attended an induction course, exactly three days before commencing their career in September. From the data collected, it is evident that the effectiveness of the induction course depends on the aptitude and perception of the teacher. Faith explained that the way the course was delivered and the content, particularly the meetings with the principals and EO, helped her to get a better picture of what is expected from her. George and James explained how attending this course helped them to familiarise themselves and set their way into their career. James, who is in his second year of teaching explained that coming from a church school background, both as a student and also in his pre-service teaching experience, the induction course helped him to become aware of the schooling system employed in state schools.

> *I came from a background of a church sector and even during my teaching practice, I was always placed in a church school so I had no idea whatsoever about the state sector. They explained the college system and how the different schools in the same college work. I think I am blessed that I had the opportunity to attend as otherwise I would have definitely been lost in the system.* (James)

On the other hand, Daniel believed that the induction course could have been delivered in a two-hour meeting. He explained that some information given is easily accessible online and he considers the three-day course as a "waste of time". Conversely, Ian, who was offered a two-hour induction meeting before teaching PE in an independent school, explained that "the meeting helped but two hours are not enough to familiarise yourself with all the new things coming your way".

As opposed to the state sector, teachers in the church and private sectors do not always have a formal compulsory induction course. Amy, employed in a church school contends that although she was given the opportunity to attend an induction meeting for teachers in church school, she did not attend as it was not compulsory. This shows that being an optional opportunity, sometimes beginning teachers fail to realise the importance of such professional development, "I did have an induction course but it was not compulsory, in fact I did not go. Even my head of school did not ask me to attend". The induction programme for teachers in non-state sectors usually only consists of having a short meeting with the head of school. Ian, a male PE teacher in the private sector explained,

> *I don't know if it should be called an induction course but I had a 2 hour meeting with the head of school. It was between the head of school and us, the teachers who were going to start teaching in the school. He explained some of the school procedures but that was it, we did not have a crash course as it should be.* (Ian)

Kevin, employed in a church school explained how he did not have a formal induction course but a meeting with the Rector. However, as opposed to Ian, no other beginning teachers in the school were present for the meeting,

> *I was aware that there were new teachers in the school like me but we did not have a meeting together. I think it would have been more of benefit if it was a*

formal meeting with the other new teachers as well as we would have helped
each other and even shared some information.   (Kevin)

The abovementioned non-state school teachers Amy, Ian and Kevin all have 2 years of teaching experience, while Hannah, with one year of teaching experience in a church school is the only one who attended a compulsory induction course at the beginning of her career.

Yes we had an induction meeting which was particularly for NQTs in church
schools. They gave us general information such as the general rules for
teaching in a church school; they explained some excerpts from the education
law, salary and leave.   (Hannah)

This suggests that as from September 2014, beginning teachers in church schools started attending a compulsory induction course, while Ian, explained that lately his school is also organising a structured induction course for beginning teachers. Although it is evident that non-state schools are working on providing induction services, the implementation of such services are way behindhand of state schools, giving NQTs in state schools a better start in their career.

The induction programme, particularly the induction course before commencing the teaching career, serves to minimise the gap between in-service and pre-service education. The experiences and views of teachers' transition from initial teacher training to full time-teachers in a school are presented in the next section.

4.2.1 From Pre-Service to In-Service: The Journey

The Faculty of Education in collaboration with the Institute for Physical Education and Sport (IPES) within the University of Malta is the only teacher education institution for PE teachers on the island. Teaching Practice (TP) is an integral part of pre-service education.

The duration varies between 3 weeks and 8 weeks placement in a school. Apart from the feedback given immediately after a TP visit, each week, tutors from the IPES voluntarily organise tutorial meetings for small groups of student-teachers.

Teachers who were mentored during their first year of teaching were asked to compare the feedback given by tutors during teaching practice with feedback given from their respective mentors as part of their induction phase. All teachers agreed that the feedback received from the tutors is more effective for their professional learning, "the feedback received from tutor is subject related, specific and constructive, perfect combination for professional development" (Eve). The main reason that contributes to feedback effectiveness, as highlighted by all participants, is that tutors are subject-specific experienced professionals who can provide in-depth feedback, while on the other hand, the feedback from mentors, who hardly have any content knowledge is very superficial:

> *The tutors know what they are looking for, they know the subject inside out, and they know if you are prepared or not. They also know the tricks of trade when it comes to classroom control and management. A mentor who has no knowledge about your subject can hardly understand the dynamics of a PE lesson.*   (George)

Overall, even though during TP student-teachers are under examination conditions, and stress is always a factor, they prefer feedback from tutors because it includes subject specific advice and therefore, "holistic feedback" (James).

When discussing the pre-service experience of teachers, all teachers mentioned the significance and effectiveness of the weekly tutorials during TP. Sharing ideas, listening to each other's experiences and suggesting possibilities to improve practice were some of the mentioned benefits by participants, "I used to look forward to tutorials. We used to reflect and discuss together and come up with solutions. The fact that the tutor was there helped as

well because as he used to guide us when we felt that there were no solutions to our problem"
(Ian).

Teachers agreed in their statements that meetings similar to the tutorial meetings organised by university should be organised during the first year of teaching in order to assist and help teachers to develop. All teachers affirmed that if similar meetings were organised during their induction phase, they would have voluntarily attended. Eve and Ian suggested that instead of SDP sessions at school, teachers should have subject specific meetings while Daniel and George suggested that the mentoring sessions should be replaced with learning communities. Marco mentioned that something similar is already being organised with primary peripatetic PE teachers in state schools, who have weekly curriculum time with the EO, however he suggested that it should be expanded to include secondary teachers as well as teachers who teach in the non-state sector. Teachers affirmed that for such professional development to be effective, it needs to be:

- Subject specific
- Directed by an experienced professional
- In small groups of teachers
- Not compulsory

An integral part of the induction phase of teachers is the mentoring system. The mentoring system is considered as a tool to help NQTs settle more easily in their respective schools. The following section presents findings related to teachers' experiences of the mentoring system.

4.3 Mentoring as Part of Induction: The Viewpoint of Novice Teachers

In the attempt to provide the best possible assistance for beginning teachers during their induction years, the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta (2010, p.25) guaranteed that all new teaching staff "shall be supported, encouraged and guided by a process of mentoring". From this study, it was revealed that not all beginning PE teachers received mentoring services. 9 out of the 13 participating teachers were assigned a mentor, during their first year in the teaching profession. It is interesting to note that the 4 PE teachers, who were not assigned a mentor, started their career in a non-state school, while the others were all employed within the state sector.

4.3.1 Understanding the Role of the Mentor

All teachers who were assigned to a mentor were introduced to the concept of mentoring during the induction course. Interviewees were asked about their perception of the role of the mentor as described during the induction course, prior to their first encounter with the mentor. Being a totally new concept to them, NQTs formed different opinions of the role of the mentor. Chloe explained that although she was given some information about the process, the role of the mentor was not clearly explained and she felt lost.

> *I was aware that I was going to have a mentor but I was not quite sure of what it entails. I did not know what this person is going to talk about or what he or she was going to observe. I did not know what I was into until I was actually in it.* (Chloe)

Daniel and James, both in their second year of teaching had a hierarchical view of the mentor, "my first thought was that I am going to have a person, similar to a tutor during the teaching

practice, who will assess me and give me feedback" (Daniel), "I imagined a person sitting there, observing every move and correcting me during the lessons" (James). On the other hand, Marco explained that according to how it was described to him, "the mentor is not someone who will examine you but a person to help you with any problems encountered such as classroom management or school culture". Brian and Eve consider the mentor as a critical friend. Eve gave a clear description of her perception,

> *I believe that the mentor is a person whom you should feel comfortable to talk*
> *to if you have a problem, a person whom you trust and confide in. The mentor*
> *is there to listen to me and help me in any matter that may arise as it is not*
> *easy to be new to the school system. I thought that she will also be the link*
> *between me and the head of school.*   (Eve)

The various opinions of NQTs about the role of the mentor suggest that there should be a clearer description of what the mentoring process entails. NQTs should be aware of the roles of the mentor but should also be informed about their role as mentees as to avoid any misconceptions. Having a clearer vision of the roles in the mentoring system will help both the mentee and the mentor to understand the standpoint of each other. Daniel explained that it was during his first meeting with the mentor that he got to know the actual process of mentoring:

> *The assistant head, who was the Induction Coordinator at my school, called*
> *me in her office and there was this person who told me that she was going to be*
> *my mentor. She explained the process of mentoring, similar to what we were*
> *told during the induction meeting but more in detail. In fact it was there that I*
> *got to know that she was going to visit me during the lessons and we had to do*
> *meetings to discuss certain issues and problems encountered.*   (Daniel)

4.3.2 Matchmaking in Mentoring

The process of assigning the mentee to a mentor was described by the interviewees. All nine teachers said that it was the SMT who communicated the name of the mentor. Three mentees were contacted by the mentees themselves while the rest were given the contact information of the mentor and had to set up a meeting date with the mentor.

None of the mentees were given the opportunity to choose their mentor, however two NQTs were given the possibility to change their mentors should any problems arise along the year. When asked if they would have preferred to choose their mentor, all mentored NQTs except for one, affirmed that they would have preferred to choose their mentor and would opt for a mentor who is a PE teacher. Only Faith said that she did not mind not having a say in choosing her mentor, but it is probably because she is the only teacher who had an experienced PE teacher as her mentor.

The mentors who were assigned to the interviewed beginning PE teachers were coming from different teaching areas. Four PE teachers teaching in the primary sector had a primary class teacher from the same school as their mentor. Chloe and Marco, also teaching in the primary sector, had a mentor which had a peripatetic role, and therefore the mentor was not always present at school. Brian, teaching in the secondary sector, had an Art teacher as his mentor, who taught in the same school as the mentee, while Eve, also a secondary school teacher, had a mentor who was not a resident teacher and hence travelled from one school to another. Liam explained that having the mentor in the same school helped as sometimes he would go to her class and ask her about certain issues. Brian also suggested that visits from his mentor were easier to set since his mentor taught in his same school. On the other hand, George who had his mentor teaching in the same school said that although they were teaching in the same school, it was still not easy for them to find time to meet and discuss. He

explained that "with my load of PE lessons, and with her hectic day in the classroom, it was very difficult for us to find a slot for the visit and the meeting. In fact, the two visits took place during the PE lessons with her class, but it was difficult then to find time for the meeting, discussion and to fill in the PMPDP". The three teachers, who had a mentor which was not based at their school, explained that despite their hectic timetables they managed to find a slot where an observation and a meeting can take place.

4.3.3 Visits, Observations and Meetings

The number of observations and meetings carried out varied amongst participants. Five of the research participant reported three visits from their mentor, George had only two visits, while Brian and James had four visits.

All visits for teachers who had two or three visits in their first year of teaching included an observation followed by a meeting to discuss the observed lesson. The discussions that took place were very similar amongst participants, with the main themes being classroom management, students' behaviour and discipline, "we discussed classroom management, and students' behaviour, my relationship with students and the element of fun during the lessons" (Eve); "we used to talk about class management, behaviour, my questioning techniques, time management and flow of the lessons" (Liam). Daniel and Liam explained that after the observation, the mentor and the mentee used to set objectives and goals that the mentee had to work upon in the following weeks,

> *After each observation, we used to discuss the lesson, what were the strengths, what I need to improve upon. Then according to our discussion we used to set goals and objectives together.*   (Daniel)

All teachers said that despite the fact that their mentor was not a PE teacher, the topics discussed were very helpful for their professional development "at first I thought that it was going to be very difficult to discuss matters with a person who has no knowledge about my subject, but then she used to help me in other areas and she gave me useful tips that were still relevant to me" (Chloe). In fact even Faith, the only teacher who had a PE teacher as her mentor, explained that most of the time, they discussed some issues related to the lesson plan and then focus on other issues, "we used to talk about everything, not just the PE lessons, for example he used to ask about my relationship with the SMT, if I feel that I belong to the school and how I am integrating with the rest of my colleagues".

However, Daniel explained that being new to teaching in the primary sector, he needed help when it comes to lesson content and adaptations, something which his mentor could not assist him with, "the mentor was hopeless in PE content, I was finding it hard to adapt my lessons to such young students and she could not help me with the matter". George described the mentor's lack of knowledge about the subject as a "barrier" to his professional development.

Teachers who were supposed to have four visits from their mentor shared quite a different story from the other interviewees. Brian, who had an Art teacher who was in his retiring age, only had one proper visit, the first visit. He explained that for the rest of the three visits, the mentor, who by the time retired, just showed up, asked him to sign the papers and left after 5 minutes without observing or discussing anything with the mentee. Same happened to James who had two formal visits, which included observation and discussion and another two visits where the mentor asked the mentee to sign the relevant papers and left, "to be honest I had two visits where she gave me feedback after the lesson, but then the other two, she asked me to sign the papers, told me that I am doing good without observing the

lesson, and that's it". This data shows that having more visits does not necessarily mean that it is more useful.

Only two of the interviewed teachers said that they observed another teacher's lesson during their first year of teaching. Faith observed her mentor giving out a lesson and then discussed strategies related to classroom management and behaviour. Liam did not observe his mentor delivering the lesson since she was not a PE teacher, however he observed another PE teacher's lesson. No reflection or discussion took place afterwards. Chloe and Daniel said that they were given the option to observe their mentor's lesson but they never actually decided on a date and hence it just never took place. James explained that his mentor never asked him to visit, and even if she did he did not feel comfortable to discuss the lesson delivered by the mentor "as if I am going to teach her anything. She has more than 20 years of teaching experience, who am I to tell her what she did good and what she did wrong". This shows that the mentee considered his mentor as the person who possesses all the knowledge and he has nothing to offer back to the mentor.

4.3.4 Benefits and Effectiveness of Mentoring Sessions

When asked about the benefits of having a mentor, teacher mentioned different advantages. Some of the benefits which were mentioned by interviewees were:

- Improved classroom management
- Improved classroom control
- Dealing with challenging behaviour
- Better integration in the school environment
- Help to familiarise oneself with school structure

Only two PE teachers, Brain and Daniel said that they felt that they had gained nothing out of having a mentor. This is possibly because both teachers did not follow the normal mentoring procedure and their mentoring sessions did not include a continuous dialogue with the mentors. Eve, who during her first year of teaching was placed in a very challenging school, described her mentor as a "saviour", who helped her to get through and adapt to the environment of the school:

> *I had a horrible first week in a very difficult school. She encouraged me and helped me realise that the fact that these students are actually participating in my lesson was already a huge thing. She used to call me every week to see how I was doing and we used to talk for a long time. She was my saviour, she helped me to overcome that hurdle.* (Eve)

Chloe and Faith shared the same notion, that a mentor in the first year of teaching is crucial. They both explained the huge gap between the support given during the pre-service teaching experience at University and the support in the beginning weeks of their career. Chloe described how the mentor was bridging that gap, "I felt that finally there is someone who cares and who is interested in how I was feeling. We built a good relationship, I felt comfortable to talk and she listened and discussed. Today I miss those conversations, I miss that person whom I can talk to". George also valued the fact of having a "critical friend" whom he could discuss and reflect with. He explained that through their visits, they managed to build a good relationship and they discussed various topics:

> *I had some previous experiencing of teaching and coaching and so I did not find it that hard to adapt. But having a critical friend at school made it easier. We built a very good relationship and she sometimes told me that she was using some of my teaching ideas with her students. I learned a lot from her but it was reciprocal as she sometimes asked me to give her ideas of exercises which she could use with her students, and it made me feel good. I did not feel that she was my superior.* (George)

Despite mentioning a number of benefits gained from having a mentor, all mentored interviewees explained that if the mentor was a PE teacher, its effectiveness would have been increased "If she was a PE teacher she could have helped me more, especially when it comes to subject related issues" (George); "I don't think that she was that effective in my case, maybe because she did not know anything about the subject" (James); "She helped me in matters such as class management and behaviour but not actually when I had difficulties related to the subject. She did not have the necessary subject content knowledge" (Marco). On the other hand, Faith, who had a PE teacher as her mentor explained that:

> *I needed his support. The fact that he taught my same subject meant that he knew the tricks of the trade. He used to ask for my opinion about certain exercises and sometimes he helped me realise that there are other, easier ways to teach the same concept. I learnt a lot from him, he gave me tips about the lesson that were obviously a result from his long years of experience. I could have kept on working with him for a longer time.* (Faith)

Brian, Daniel and Marco said that in order to overcome the barrier of mentor's lack of subject content knowledge, they used to turn on their counter colleagues for support. Brian explained that "my school colleague was more of a mentor to me than the assigned mentor. I used to discuss lessons with her. We were more on the same wavelength and she knew the subject, the school and the students. She was an excellent mentor to me". Daniel on the other hand explained that he kept on meeting with his mentor only because it was a requirement to fill in the PMPDP and to gain the teacher's warrant as otherwise he would have not met his mentor anymore. He explained that the fact that his mentor was not knowledgeable about the subject was hindering his professional development. He added that his fellow PE teachers at school were more valuable to his development.

In spite of the different experiences of the mentoring sessions, there was a consensus amongst participants. During the first year of in-service, all NQTs should have a mentor "to

help you integrate in the school, and to guide you into the school system and environment"

(Liam). Unfortunately, this was not the case amongst all participants in this study.

4.3.5 Teachers' Life without a Mentor

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, four newly qualified PE teachers did not receive

any mentoring sessions as part of their induction programme. The four teachers initiated their

career in a non-state sector.

Although the four teachers did not receive any mentoring sessions, they all were

aware of the concept of mentoring. However, when asked about the reasons for not

requesting a mentor, Amy, Hannah and Ian explained that they were not aware that it is their

lawful right to receive the adequate guidance and support during their first years of teaching,

"No one ever told me that I was supposed to have a mentor, and so I couldn't ask for one"

(Amy); "I never thought of asking for a mentor, I believed that it is a procedure which only

applies to state school teachers. I've never heard anyone teaching in a church school saying

that they had a mentor so I thought that it just happens in government schools" (Hannah); "If

I knew back then that I was supposed to have a mentor, I would have definitely asked for one.

I needed support and help because I felt lost" (Ian). On the other hand, Kevin explained that

he was aware that he was supposed to have a mentor, as other teachers in the secondary

section in his same school and other PE teachers in state schools had one. However, being a

novice teacher, he did not feel comfortable to question authority.

The feeling of loneliness amongst the four participants was very evident. Amy

explained that often, during her first year of teaching, she felt the need to talk and discuss

matters with someone. She explained that:

> *At the beginning I was confused. I was put in a total different environment than I was expecting. Although I had pre-service training at university, the experience was much more different than the one pictured at university. I missed that contact time that we had with tutors and the other student-teachers, where we discussed different incidents or talked about possible ways of teaching.*   (Amy)

Amy, Ian and Kevin said that having another PE teacher at school helped them a lot. They both explained that since they had an experienced PE teacher, who is familiar with the school environment, helped them to adjust quicker to the school climate. Amy described how the other PE teacher used to help her out when it comes to planning for long-term and preparing for sports day. Ian explained how he immediately managed to build a good rapport with his colleague who had more than 25 years of experience, and although unofficially, she was his mentor, "she was always there for me right from the beginning. I used to rely on her and she always gave me the answers I needed". Ian and his fellow colleague at school engaged in peer observations and through their subsequent discussions, they both embarked on a journey of professional development.

On the other hand, Hannah explained that before she entered the school, no PE lessons were scheduled for students and hence, she had the responsibility to build a completely new PE programme, a huge responsibility for a novice teacher. Therefore, being the only PE teacher in the school, she could not speak and discuss with anyone. However, she found comfort in ex-colleagues from university, "we used to meet and we still meet today and discuss about instances that happen during the lessons or how to deal with certain misbehaviour. We also share lesson plans and ideas through our chat group and even those who did not end up teaching, they still share ideas that they encounter on social media".

Learning about school procedures, routine and culture was also hard for teachers who had no mentor. Most of the time, they had to learn through their own mistakes, with no one to

guide them through. Kevin explained how he had to take stock of his own learning, "I made mistakes, they let me know and I learnt through trial and error". However even though mistakes were a result of lack of information given to her, Hannah still did not find support from the SMT, "I was yelled at because I did not know what I was supposed to do, then I asked other teachers at school and they explained, but still being scolded for not knowing something is not nice, however, now I know because I learnt through an unpleasant experience".

During the induction phase, NQTs need someone who can guide them through the first hurdles. It was clearly stated by all participants who experienced their induction phase without a mentor, that they needed a helping hand, especially during their first year of teaching.

> *The fact that no one is there to help you, to back you up, is hard. You have to learn on your own, from your mistakes. You fall, you stand up and continue moving forward. But to have long term professional development, you need someone with you because from time to time you get bored and it feels as if you hit a brick wall without the viewpoint of others. You want and need to move forward, but you just cannot.*   (Kevin)

4.3.6 Other factors that improved Professional Development

Being a novice teacher in a school is a learning process. Both teachers who were mentored and those who did not, explained that much of their development during their initial years of teaching was a product of learning through experience. A number of areas in which teachers improved their practice were identified.

Maintaining classroom discipline was not an easy task for Brian, Eve and George. Brian, who started teaching in a secondary co-ed school, explained that in order to build a

good rapport and gain the respect of students, sometimes he had to put his strict rules aside and listen to his students' pleas. He continued by adding that there was a point during his first year of teaching when he realised that at times, students' misbehaviour might be a ripple effect of problems encountered in the home setting. Hence, he worked on maintaining discipline in class by being more lenient and gaining respect. On the other hand, Eve, who used to teach in a very difficult secondary co-ed school learnt to apply the concept of discipline with a smile in order to gain trust and respect from her students. Balancing discipline and fun was also an issue for George, a primary PE teacher. Having his pre-service training in secondary schools with older students, balancing the element of fun and discipline with young students was tough. James said that the fact that he managed to build a good relationship with his students helped to improve his classroom management. Liam described how during his first year of teaching, he worked on improving classroom management and time on task. Learning to ask for help (Eve), learning to use different teaching styles (Hannah) and learning to adapt exercise for students with different abilities (James and Kevin) were also improved.

4.3.7 The Second Year of Teaching

According to the local government documentation (Ministry of Education, Employment and the Familiy, Malta, 2010), backed up by the Education Act, during the second year in the teaching profession, teachers should undergo the process of appraisal, which includes filling the PMPDP to assess teachers' course of professional development in order to gain teachers' warrant. Although none of the participants had a mentor in their second year of teaching, some had visits either form the head of school or the PE EO.

Amy, Hannah, Ian and Kevin, all teaching in a non-state sector had no supervision or appraisal visits from their superiors during the second year of teaching. Eve and Marco, who both received mentoring sessions in a state school during the first year of teaching, joined a non-state school in their second year, and as a result the process of appraisal and supervision were discontinued. Chloe, Faith, George and Liam, all in their third year of teaching, and therefore completed their induction phase, were the only PE teachers who fulfilled the process of appraisals as stipulated in the local government documentation. Daniel is the only PE teacher in his second year of teaching that had an appraisal visit from his head of school, although the visit only included an observation of the last 5 minutes of the lesson. Brian and James, both in their second year of teaching explained that to-date no visits from any superiors were conducted.

Apart from the alarming fact that more than half of the participating NQTs did not receive the adequate supervision during their second year of teaching, two of the four teachers who had the appraisal visits contended that they had to fill in their own PMPDP as the head of school lacked subject content knowledge:

> *When the EO came to visit, he did not fill in the PMPDP, so the head of school was then in charge to do so. However, he had no idea of the subject. He asked me to fill it up myself and then he just went through it, agreed with my comments and signed. Actually I could have written anything in it.*   (Faith)

George explained that when the EO went to visit, he felt that he could finally receive constructive criticism about the subject. He further explained that during the two years of induction phase, the only time that he could critically analyse his lesson was with the EO, because he has thorough knowledge of the subject while both the head of school and the mentor lacked subject content knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter reported the findings and issues raised by participants of this study. The data collected from semi-structured interviews analyses first-hand experience of beginning PE teachers' opportunities of professional development. Beginning teachers identified gaps in the current induction programme as well as the mentoring system. Effective strategies that help the professional development of beginning PE teachers were also highlighted. In the following chapter, findings from this study will be discussed in relation to literature and ways to improve the current professional development strategies will be presented.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, the findings related to the available Professional Development (PD) opportunities for beginning PE teachers and the mentoring system as part of the induction programme were presented. These can be summarised as follows: opinions and views about the available opportunities of PD for newly qualified PE teachers; PE teachers' opinions regarding the induction meeting as part of the induction process; and the experience and views of the mentoring system or other support structures provided in the first two years of teaching. In this chapter, the findings will be discussed in relation to the available literature about PD and mentoring for beginning teachers.

Overall, the findings from this research are in line and consistent with the international literature related to teachers' PD. Beginning PE teachers in the Maltese context agree that ongoing professional development is important for their career development and is necessary to improve their professional practice. Teachers identify voluntarily chosen opportunities that satisfy their needs as well as the needs of their students as most effective. Teachers also acknowledged the significance of a good transition from pre-service to in-service. How these findings are coherent with international literature are discussed in this chapter. Findings from this study resulted in the identification of gaps when it comes to a consistent induction programme and support structure for all beginning PE teachers in Malta. This chapter also presents suggestions and ideas for stakeholders to improve the current service provided based on the issues mentioned above and in the light of the recent policy documentation regarding the induction of teachers.

5.1 Professional Development for Beginning Teachers

5.1.1 Patterns of CPD Participation

As is very much the norm across international contexts in Europe, beginning teachers interviewed identified a number of different professional development opportunities which were made available to them in their initial years of teaching. Compulsory activities such as professional learning sessions (PLS) and school development plans (SDP), as well as voluntary chosen activities for example seminars, courses and research were mentioned by participants. The PLS and SDP are the most common types of PD activities available to teachers. All teachers mentioned attending SDP meeting at some point during their in-service years while 8 out of 13 participants mentioned that they have attended one or more PLS in their first years of teaching. Voluntary chosen courses are also popular amongst beginning teachers, most of which are traditional types, seminars, conferences and sport-specific courses. Reform types of CPD (Garet, et al., 2001), such as subject-meetings at school, research, and learning communities, were also mentioned but are less popular than traditional forms.

5.1.2 Traditional types of CPD

In most cases, teachers' CPD experiences appeared to be dominated by traditional types of CPD which are usually transmission-oriented. This finding is not surprising as a large body of research suggests that such traditional CPD approaches appear to dominate teachers and PE teachers' experiences (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2006; Armour, 2010; Blandford, 2000). As explained in the review of literature, in transmission types of professional development, teachers take a passive role in their learning and knowledge is

78

transmitted from the expert to the apprentice (Kennedy, 2005). In most transmission-oriented CPD, the providers aim at addressing policies and educational agendas and provide the information to teachers. Kiely & Davis (2010) argued that such transmission form of professional development is very effective when it comes to introducing new policies.

PE teachers who in their few years of teaching experience attended one or more of these sessions argued that when traditional PD shift towards a transmission model of PD, the sessions, although short in time, can still be effective. Teachers mentioned that when they were given the opportunity to engage in discussions and sharing of experiences with their colleagues, the impact on their PD was amplified. Findings form this study suggest that when CPD session are teacher-centred, encourage teachers to engage in professional dialogue and engage teachers in reflection on their own practice, traditional forms of CPD can still be effective.

5.1.3 Tailored Provision and its Applicability into Practice

There was consensus that CPD is effective and has an impact on teachers' practices when the content of the experience is relevant to their questions and needs. Teachers talked about the importance of the CPD content to be applicable in their teaching environment in school. Concerns were raised about inapplicable or irrelevant CPD experiences (such as SDP sessions that focus on academic subjects and PLS concerning policies that do not apply to the sector in which teachers teach in) and how these teachers appeared to be disengaged. In sharp contrast, when teachers were presented with material that they could easily relate to and apply in their classrooms, they reported being enthusiastic and open to learn. This finding is not surprising. There is a substantial body of CPD literature suggesting that learning needs to be relevant to have an impact on teacher professional development and therefore positive

outcomes on student learning (Armour & Yelling, 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Elliot & Campbell, 2013).

The variation in response implies that PD opportunities should be regulated in a way that it is accustomed to the individual teacher's needs. Literature suggests that the recent trends of PD are attempting to link formal teacher evaluation (which usually occurs during the sessions) to the PD opportunities provided, making the sessions more relevant to the teacher (Desimone & Garet, 2015). By tailoring PD opportunities, teachers become more interested in their own learning and this will result in improved classroom practices. Bubb & Earley (2013), referring to their earlier work (2010) contend that moulding and differentiating PD sessions in a way that meets the needs of the teachers and their students will enhance their overall performance, making the sessions more effective. The implications for those responsible for designing and delivering structured CPD opportunities, such as PLS, seminars and conferences, are that before organising such activities, a careful consideration of teachers' diverse backgrounds should be taken into account.

5.1.4 CPD Schedule and Time

5.1.4.1 Schedule of CPD

Guskey & Yoon (2009), referring to a study of a comprehensive analysis of professional development in 2007, argue that for professional development to be effective, it needs to be "well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both" (p.497). Such professional development must also include a long-term structured follow-up after the sessions. The review of the study also shows that the most effective types of professional development last for more than 30 hours of contact time. Teachers in this study criticised the timing of PLS. Both sessions are held in a time when

teachers cannot immediately apply their knowledge into practice as they are detached from their classroom context. This is because teachers are either going on summer holidays, therefore have to wait until the next scholastic year to implement theory into practice or at the beginning of the scholastic year when teachers might have other needs which require immediate attention. Teachers prefer if CPD sessions are held throughout the year, which focus on their needs and their students' needs. Job-embedded types of PD refer to practices that are held in the school environment, are part of the teachers' workday and represent the context in which the teacher works (Croft, et al., 2010).

Goodall, et al. (2005), argue that although it would be ideal to deliver such sessions during school-time, schools are concerned that CPD, takes teachers away from their classroom. This was also noted by the participants from this study who argued about the unjust decision from the SMT to allow only one teacher with the least lessons on that day to attend CPD. Research shows that unlike traditional forms of PD that takes place out of the school context, well-planned in-context PD sessions leave a positive impact on the teachers' performance and students' learning (Hargreaves, 1994; Harland & Kinder, 1997; Craft, 2000; Goodall, et al., 2005; Harris, et al., 2006). On-going, job-embedded types of PD development are therefore considered as most effective.

5.1.4.2 Duration of CPD

Another issue raised by Maltese teachers in relation to the PD sessions is the length of CPD. The duration of PLS is 15 hours of contact time with CPD providers which is usually spread evenly on three days; SDP sessions are approximately 3 hours long and take place once in every school term; conferences and seminars vary in length but usually it is one day long (during school hours). When teachers consider the topic being discussed as useful to their professional practice, they argue that they are not given enough time to understand, reflect and implement theory into practice. Literature shows that teachers who engage in

long-term PD opportunities are associated with high achieving schools, while those who opt for short courses are linked to lower attaining schools (Garet, et al., 2001; Yoon, et al., 2007; Desimone, 2009; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The insufficient analysis and continuing follow-up of such courses has been widely criticised in literature (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Yan & He, 2015). This is because, as opposed to long-term PD, follow-up of short courses rarely takes place resulting in little influence on the teachers' professional practices (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). However, in order for teacher to engage in long-term PD, the course or sessions in which they attend should be chosen by the teachers themselves according to the relevance and significance to their context

5.1.5 Voluntary as Opposed to Compulsory CPD

In Malta, teachers are expected to regularly attend CPD. From time to time, teachers in the state sector are called to attend compulsory sessions, and when not requested to attend, they may opt to join sessions of their choice. On the other hand, teachers in non-state sectors are invited to attend on voluntary basis. SDP sessions in schools are also compulsory in all education sectors. Teachers participating in this study argue that compulsory CPD, more often than not does not satisfy their wants and needs and tend to distract themselves from the benefits of such course. However, results from this study show that when teachers attend sessions of their own choice, they adopt a positive attitude towards their own learning, and it is much more likely that teachers apply learned knowledge in their classroom (McMillan, et al., 2016). Teachers prefer when they take ownership of their own learning. Providers need to shift to a supportive structure where teachers take responsibility of their own professional development that stimulates their learning and satisfies their needs rather than providing compulsory courses to 'renovate' teachers' techniques (Owen, 2014).

5.1.6 Transformative Types of CPD

Although less popular, transformative types of CPD were also mentioned by participants. Teachers took an inquiry approach towards their practice whenever they encountered a situation that needed further deliberation, such as lesson planning or adaptations. Sporadic research activity on specific topic or area helped teachers in improving their practice. Most of the time teachers turn to these types of PD tools to gain immediate answers from questions which arise from their own practice, for example students asking questions or teachers encounter a new situation in their classroom. Teachers feel the need and are eager to improve in order to assist and provide better education to their students.

Social media was also mentioned as an excellent tool to discuss and share knowledge with other people interested in the same areas of interest. Teachers used Twitter and Facebook to communicate with other PE teachers and ask questions about their classroom practices. Research shows that the interaction of face-to-face interview allows better discussion as opposed to virtual learning communities (McConnell, et al., 2013). However, virtual learning communities, such as online discussions and collaboration are an excellent medium for teachers who find it difficult to meet other teachers during school hours or who do not have same subject teachers in their school.

PE departmental meetings at school are also considered by participants as a source of effective collaboration between teachers. During this time teachers usually talk about logistical and organisational issues related to sport events as well as other everyday issues of the school. During the meetings, teachers do not seek to engage in discussions related to the development of goals and targets to improve their teaching practices, resulting in a lack of long-term vision for professional development. Teachers who have the opportunity of a weekly subject-meeting should work together to evaluate their subject's position within the

school environment, analyse their needs and the needs of their students and come up with a strategic plan to fulfil the demands of their professional practice.

5.2 Induction Programme for Newly Qualified Teachers

The first few years of teaching are decisive for a teachers' career. Therefore, the Maltese Educational Act promised to give support to beginning teachers. In view of this law, the Agreement between the government and the MUT of 2010, states that all government school teachers in Malta should embark on a journey of induction. In contrast the Agreement between the Church Authorities and MUT of 2011, does not confirm adherence to the Education Act in regard to induction services.

The majority of participants in this study (9 out of 13) received induction services. The programme consists of a three-day induction course prior commencement of the first year of teaching, mentoring sessions during the first year of teaching and appraisal visits from the Education Officer (EO) or Head of School during the second year of teaching. However, the induction programme for teachers who started their profession in a state-school and transferred to a non-state school in their second year of teaching was terminated upon transferring (2 participants in this study). 4 teachers who initiated their career immediately in the non-state sectors received none of the services mentioned above. Education entities in Malta should seek to enforce this law in every sector, considering the widely recognised benefits of induction programmes (Bleach, 2012; Bubb, 2013; Maaranen & Jyrhämä, 2016).

5.2.1 From Pre-service to In-service. Bridging the Gap

Transitioning from a student at university to a full-time teacher in a school brings with it increased responsibilities. Typically, during their initial teacher training (ITT), student-teachers are responsible for a small number of classes for a short period of time (usually between 3 and 8 weeks). The amount of work involved to plan, implement and evaluate is just a taster compared to a full-time job, where a teacher has full lesson load, for a whole scholastic year. Participants in this study shared an understanding of the importance of teaching and viewed their role as having a significant impact on students' lives (Bubb, 2013). Similar to Bubb's (2013) views, they acknowledged the importance of quick and effective transition to provide the best possible service for their students. Teachers in this study believed that the induction course was very helpful in bridging the gap from ITT into full time teaching and in 'setting the pace' into this challenging new phase in their lives. During their ITT, teachers are given the necessary tools to help them in their future career, however, little is said vis-à-vis the educational system in Malta. The initial induction course helped teachers to gain awareness of their teaching environment. Having the opportunity to meet College Principals, who are responsible for a number of schools, enabled them to develop a clear understanding of how the educational system works.

Despite the positive comments about the positive impact of the induction course, teachers lamented about the fact that although the concept of mentoring and appraisals were mentioned, they did not explain what the actual process of mentoring entails. Teachers expected a deep portrayal of the roles of the mentor and mentee and what are the expectations by the end of the induction programme. This means that although the course was successful in terms of information given to bridge the gap between ITT and in-service, it failed to provide a thorough understanding about an integral part of the induction programme – the mentoring system. As beginners, teachers needed more knowledge on what is really expected

from them to satisfy policy requirements and during the two years of induction and how the system will help them in their professional practice.

The induction programme is considered to be the first step of career-long CPD. The fact that the induction course is based solely on providing information rather than giving the necessary tools for teachers to work on their professional development implies that right from the start teachers are being driven into transmission types of CPD. The concept of 'banking education' presented by Paulo Freire (1996) almost half a decade ago is still being implemented today in the Maltese education systems where teacher are seen as recipients of information rather than individuals who can build knowledge on previous experiences. In fact participants in this study recall being told by providers and experienced teachers to totally scrap what they have learnt during their ITT and start building their knowledge from scratch through the real teaching experience. It appears that induction tutors failed to ask participants about their existing understanding, conceptions and misconceptions about effective teaching. They rather preferred to advise them to forget what they already know and start from scratch. Cognitive researchers have consistently argued about the importance of prior knowledge (Kennedy, 2005; Behets & Vergauwen, 2006; Campbell & Campbell, 2009). It is argued that what practitioners already know and understand is used as a frame of reference in order to make sense of new knowledge. Therefore providers and experienced teachers should encourage NQTs to build on previously acquired knowledge and help teachers to gain the necessary skills to be able to apply that knowledge in the different contexts and circumstances present in different schools.

Although the induction course had both effective and ineffective elements, evidence suggests that those teachers who did not have the opportunity to participate in the course felt disoriented and confused during the first few weeks of teaching and struggled to become acquainted with the basic procedures of the schools. None of the teachers in church or

independent school reported an induction course but a simple meeting with the head of school. They also reported a sense of isolation and confusion throughout their first year of teaching. Findings from this study suggest that there were clear benefits to those attending the course. Although, the content and quality of the experience could be improved further, it is imperative that all new teachers regardless of which sector they choose to teach in, have equal opportunities. The Secretariat for Catholic Education (the central office of church schools) in Malta organises induction course, similar to the one organised by government entities but on voluntary basis. Therefore school administrators in church school should encourage attendance to such courses and also monitor NQTs' progress throughout the induction years. On the other hand Independent schools should invest more time in organising a structured induction programme to all beginning teachers. Non-state schools should make induction programmes a priority to help bridge the gap from a pre-service teachers into a full-time teacher.

5.2.2 Monitoring Career Progress of Beginning Teachers

During the first and second years of teaching, teachers need to fill in the PMPDP booklet. This is a portfolio to monitor the progress and involvement of the beginning teacher in the school. It is filled by the mentor and NQT during the first year and by the EO or Head of School in the second year of teaching. This PMPDP determines if the teacher qualifies for a teacher's warrant or not. Although no participant reported a sense of examination, it was evident that since the PMPDP affects their warrant, teachers were very vigilant on what to discuss and choose to reveal to their mentors and appraisers. In fact some teachers who participated in this study explained that their main intention during the visits throughout the first two years of teaching was to obtain a satisfactory result in order to obtain the permanent

teacher's warrant. This hinders the effectiveness of the mentoring system as a professional development tool.

Apart from the inconsistency between the support given to teachers in government schools and that given to church and independent school teachers, there is also a variation in the process of obtaining a teachers' warrant. None of the teachers in non-state schools mentioned that they were required to fill in the PMPDP to obtain the teachers' warrant. This creates a conflict because unlike state-school teachers, teachers in church school and independent schools are not being supervised to guarantee merit in achieving the permanent warrant, when ultimately all teachers in all sectors receive their teaching permit from the same entity, the Council for the Teaching Profession within the Ministry for Education and Employment.

5.3 The Mentoring System: A support structure for beginning teachers

The mentoring system in Malta forms part of the two year induction programme for beginning teachers. 9 out of the 13 participants in this study had a mentor during their first year of teaching, one of which also had mentoring sessions in his second year of teaching upon transferring to a church school. The other 4 teachers, 3 teaching in a church school and 1 in independent school had no mentoring sessions. As explained earlier in this chapter, a detailed description of what is expected from the mentee as well as the mentor is essential to have even grounds amongst stakeholder. Issues related to the mentoring system and what contributes or hinders an effective mentoring system will be discussed.

5.3.1 Mentoring Visits, Meetings and Discussion

The Induction Handbook for NQTs (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2013) indicates a minimum of four mentoring visits, two in the first term and one in each of the remaining terms. It also suggests one formal meeting in each term and a number of informal meetings as deemed necessary by the mentor and mentee. Participants in this study recall different number of visits and meetings with their mentor, with the majority exceeding the proposed guidelines while others do not reach the minimum recommendations. Although the number of visits varied from one participant to the other, the general structure was predominantly the same. Mentors met with mentees before the lesson to discuss lesson focus, observations were then carried out followed by a meeting to evaluate and reflect on the lesson. This is a widely used structure in mentoring. Cordingley & Buckler (2012) evaluated a study conducted in England in 2008 and observed that the sessions always included an observation followed by a debriefing. Portner & Portner (2012) argue that the process of mentoring should include an observation of the lesson, reflection and evaluation, problem-solving and decision-making. The cycle initiates before the observation (pre-conference), where teachers discuss lesson goals and plan, continues through the observation of the lesson (classroom observation) and then an evaluation of the observation takes place (post-observation conference). Boreen, et al. (2009) argues that that for mentoring sessions to be effective, a systematic evaluation by the mentor and mentee is imperative. This structure of mentoring helps the mentee and mentor to set goals which help to commit themselves to improvement and help to focus on specific aims, discuss possibilities to achieve goals and evaluate from one lesson to the other the journey towards reaching set goals.

5.3.2 Factors Contributing to Effective Mentoring

Through analysis of findings from this study a number of factors that affect the quality of the mentoring systems were identified. These include mentors and mentees setting short and long-term goals; the extent of subject knowledge of the mentor; the availability and accessibility of the mentor as well as the relationship built between the mentor and the mentee. Each of these factors will be discussed in turn.

Setting Goals

For mentoring to be effective, clear goals need to be set (Zachary, 2012). Participating teachers in this study explained that during mentoring sessions, setting of goals rarely took place. Teachers argued that the observational visits and feedback were more oriented towards the delivery of the lesson as a whole rather than analysing specific objectives. Topics such as classroom management, control and dealing with behavioural issues were discussed, however no strategies or goals were set to overcome such issues. This means that there was no continuation and build-up from one visit to the other. In fact, the depth of discussions and reflections after the observations were diminished as the year passed, with some teachers reporting no discussion at all after the 2nd visit. Lindgren (2005) argues that effective mentoring requires collaborative effort from both the mentor and the mentee to achieve previously agreed upon goals. When there is a lack of established objectives, based on the needs and necessities of the mentee, monitoring improvement of the specific skills becomes harder. Setting objectives requires collaborative reflection, evaluation and discussion. These are fundamental for effective mentoring and the absence or scarcity of one or more will have a negative impact on the mentoring system as a professional development tool for NQTs.

Mentor's Knowledge about the Subject

A very evident issue regarding the mentoring system in Malta is the mentor's content knowledge on PE. Out of the nine teachers who had a mentor, only one PE teacher had a PE teacher as a mentor, the others had a mentor coming from different backgrounds, including primary class teachers, nurture class teachers, peripatetic literacy teachers and other subject teachers. Participants in this study explained that different teaching components were discussed during the meetings with the most common being classroom strategies for improved classroom management, handling disruptive students and misbehaviour as well as type of feedback given to students. Yet, as NQTs in other countries (Wang, et al., 2004), Maltese beginning teachers felt the need to receive subject specific feedback as well. Although during ITT, teachers would have acquired a substantial amount of subject specific knowledge, the only time to put theory into practice is during the teaching practice (TP) experience. Due to the limited time in a school during TP, the maximum number of topics that can be covered is restricted. This implies that during their first in-service year, even though teachers have the necessary theory and background, they might be delivering a topic that they have never taught before. Therefore new teachers, albeit trained in the subject still need to further develop content knowledge and skills (Achinstein & Davis, 2014).

Participants in this study also argued that the setting of the PE lessons significantly differs from other subjects' lessons. Having 26 students in an open space such as the yard or gym, running, talking and shouting is common practice in PE lessons, unlike classroom based subjects where students are expected to sit-down and carefully listen to the teacher or work in a settled, calm environment. It is for these reasons that teachers in this study suggested a subject specific mentor who can give advice on subject related matters. Having a mentor who possesses the necessary experience in a classroom as well as content knowledge provides a holistic approach to feedback. Experienced PE teachers can easily relate and empathise with

the experiences of NQTs, providing better feedback and advice. Subject specific mentors can also help in sharing good practice. As explained by Faith, the only NQT who had a PE teacher as a mentor, during the visits, both teachers, despite the huge difference in the years of experience, shared ideas and discussed together different ways to modify their lessons to provide more appealing and interesting lessons to students.

An extensive body of literature support the idea of having subject specific mentors for teachers (Rockoff, 2008; Boyd, et al., 2012; Wechsler, et al., 2010; Achinstein & Davis, 2014). A number of benefits of subject-specific mentoring are highlighted in the study conducted by Achinstein & Davis (2014). These include, guiding the beginning teacher into subject-specific instruction, assisting in developing scheme of work and resources that covers the syllabus, supporting the beginning teacher in identifying ways in which students learn, and help to modify and adapt content to students' needs. However, the amount of time required for an effective development is a lot, and it is not always possible for the mentor and mentee to find slots where both are free for a number of lessons. Therefore, a school-based mentor is suggested.

School-based Mentor

Teachers who participated in this study reported difficulty in finding a suitable date and time to meet with their mentors because of their hectic timetables. Teachers who had peripatetic teachers or primary class teachers were mostly affected by this problem. Peripatetic teachers are usually assigned to more than one school, having to travel from one school to another on a daily basis with most of the free slots on their timetable used for travelling. On the other hand, primary class teachers are on duty with their students for the whole day and it is very difficult to go out of the classroom. To add up, PE teachers also have a specific timetable and finding two free slots when both the mentor and mentee are available is very challenging. Therefore, according to the findings from this research, a school-based

mentor – and as previously argued in this chapter, subject-specific – facilitates the process of setting up visits and meetings. The term 'school-based mentoring' in this study refers to the mentor and the mentee, both teaching within the same school, where mentoring sessions occur in situ, as described by Hobson & Malderez (2013). Having a school-based mentor increases accessibility to conversation and discussion and therefore, improves professional collaboration between teachers.

Building a Good Relationship with the Mentor

Mentoring as a professional development tool aims to improve practice by collaborative reflection, evaluation and dialogue. However, the success of mentoring depends on the participants' roles and type of relationship.

The relationship between the mentor and the mentee determines the extent to which participants are willing to learn from each other. Teachers in this study who did not manage to build a good rapport with their mentors described much of their experience as useless for their professional learning. In all of these cases the relationship took a hierarchical structure and beginning teachers were portrayed as the ones in need. Richter, et al., (2013) describe this type of relationship as transmission-oriented. When mentoring takes the form of a top-down relationship, with the mentor seen as the expert who needs to transmit knowledge, and the mentor as an apprentice with nothing to give back, the effectiveness of mentoring is significantly diminished. Therefore, the teachers considered the mentoring process as extra-work which needs to be done, and although mentioned, positive issues were over-shadowed by the lack of professional relationship built.

In contrast, teachers who described the mentoring process as supportive and valuable experience managed to build a secure bond with their mentors. In this case, mentees described their mentors as a 'critical friend'. Teachers explained how during their sessions,

both teachers had equal roles with the intention to learn from each other. Richter, et al., (2013) term this type of relationship as constructivist-oriented. In this type of relationship, both mentor and mentee believe in each other's potential, see each other as a source of learning, and seek to construct knowledge on previous experiences. This type of mentoring relationship is praised by researchers and is suggested to be the best form of mentoring for the professional development of beginning teachers (Carter & Francis, 2001; Wang & Odell, 2002; Richter, et al., 2013). In light of the findings from the research as well as the available literature, a transformative type of mentoring provides better outcomes; indicate improved practice and helps professional development of both teachers. Transformative mentoring is therefore considered as most effective.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings from this study were discussed in relation to literature. The most common types of professional development activities in which beginning PE teachers engaged in are pre-dominantly traditional and transmission-oriented with compulsory PLS and SDP session remain the commonest. However, the effectiveness of such professional development is questioned as more often than not, do not address the needs of the teachers. Teachers prefer to attend voluntarily chosen courses which satisfy their needs and the needs of their students. Teachers also engage in self-driven research to further their knowledge especially before starting a new topic, when planning lessons and when questions arise during their lessons. Weekly subject-meetings are considered as the closest form of professional collaboration, where teachers mostly discuss logistical issues for organisation of school events, tournaments and inter-schools league.

Teachers who attended induction course at the beginning of their career had a smoother transition from pre-service to in-service than those who did not. The induction programme is not available to all teachers in all sectors in Malta. It is recommended that all sectors organise induction programmes for beginning teachers. The induction programme should include a course at the beginning of employment, and on-going support, including mentoring and appraisals during the first two years of teaching.

In this chapter, it was argued that to enhance effectiveness a subject-oriented and school-based mentor is advised. In the primary schools setting, where the majority of PE teachers are peripatetic, it is recommended that a beginning teacher shares at least one of the schools with the mentor, an experienced PE teacher. This allows time for mentor and mentee to meet informally on a weekly basis, helps to build a professional working relationship, and allows time for professional collaboration. In the secondary schools setting, where usually more than one PE teacher is employed, an experienced PE teacher should take the role of a mentor to the beginning PE teacher. Reflection and discussion can take place daily while formal observation visits and meetings can occur effortlessly.

In Malta, much has been done in recent years to improve the quality of professional development for teachers, with the Education Act and the collective agreements between the education providers and MUT, encouraging teachers to engage in CPD. This research explored the available opportunities for professional development of beginning teachers and the perceptions of beginning teachers' first-hand experiences of the induction programme and the mentoring system. Recommendations were made to improve the provision of professional development opportunities; to provide an effective induction system and offer a successful mentoring system for NQTs.

Ultimately, it is in the interest of all stakeholders within the educational system in Malta to work towards a common goal – to provide a student-oriented educational system that enables student to reach their full potential.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

This study was set out to explore the impact and effectiveness of the recently implemented mentoring scheme through the perceptions and experiences of newly qualified physical education (PE) teachers in Malta. This study has also sought to identify trends and preferences of continuous professional development (CPD) in which teachers engaged in during their first years in the teaching profession. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What forms of professional development do PE teachers in Malta value?

2. What are the perceptions of beginning PE teachers regarding the induction programme and mentoring as part of Continuous Professional Development?

3. Based on the experiences of beginning teachers in Malta, in what ways can the existing mentoring system be improved?

6.1 Key Findings of the Study

Findings from this study show that beginning teachers acknowledge the importance of engaging in professional development opportunities and identify a number of opportunities made available to them. Formal types of professional development are much more common than informal and reform types. Most formal types of professional development follow a traditional, top-down model and these rarely meet the needs of the teachers.

Teachers in this study criticised the current system of imposing specific CPD opportunities on teachers. Compulsory attendance does not necessarily result in guaranteed professional development; to the contrary, teachers may be attending courses that are not satisfying their current professional needs. By giving teachers the responsibility to choose the CPD in which they want to engage in, they would be encouraged to reflect and critically analyse their professional practices. Hence, teachers would opt for opportunities that are relevant to their needs and requirements by taking ownership of their own learning. In fact findings from this study suggest that when teachers engage in professional development opportunities out of their own volition and according to their needs and the needs of the students, the impact on professional learning is enhanced.

Another finding related to tailored provision of CPD is the content and context within which these are organised. Teachers suggest that opportunities that target the professional development of a large number of teachers, usually do not take into consideration the diverse backgrounds and environments from which these teachers come from, resulting in lack of applicability and relevance to their own practices. Consequently, teachers prefer to engage in CPD opportunities that promote discussion and sharing of ideas amongst small groups with the same areas of interest.

Issues related to discussions were also mentioned with regards to the induction years. Findings from this study show that teachers long and seek to engage in professional discussions with colleagues. The mentoring scheme provides the perfect niche for beginning teachers to engage in conversations with more experienced teachers. However, this is not always possible as a number of participants in this study were not provided with a mentor in their initial year of teaching. Therefore, are compelled to turn to other colleagues to discuss issues related to their subject.

Findings from the study show that overall, the mentoring scheme is not effective and is not being utilised to its full potential. Although teachers mostly praised the mentors' efforts to provide the best service, the mentees criticised the fact that mentors lacked subject-specific knowledge. Thus, critical analysis and reflection on the specific topics of the subject could not take place. Results show that effective mentoring requires the mentor to be teaching the same subject of the mentee to provide deep analysis, reflection and holistic feedback of practice. It is also suggested that mentors are school-based and have the knowledge and understanding of the environment in which the mentee is teaching. This helps both participants to relate to common experiences while also building an ongoing critical friendship.

6.2 Implications of the Study

Improvements to the current professional development opportunities and mentoring scheme are paramount to increase the effectiveness on professional practice. All stakeholders within the Maltese educational system should work together towards enhancing the quality of professional development provisions. This dissertation provides suggestions, based on the findings from this study, targeted towards different stakeholders in order to implement change.

Education authorities should encourage school administrators and senior management teams (SMT) to provide and promote CPD opportunities amongst teachers, such as collaborative time for teacher interaction while also promoting participation in various CPD opportunities seen as relevant by the teacher as a professional.

CPD providers should seek to organise on-going professional development sessions that target small groups of teachers who identify similar problematic aspects of practice, which they consider as necessary to improve in order to have a positive impact on improved practice and students' learning. Similarly, providers should not opt for CPD opportunities that targets mass population (such as 3-day crash course during professional learning sessions) in order to easily satisfy policy and collective agreement requirements. CPD providers should also collaborate with initial teacher training providers to sustain and provide the necessary tools for beginning teachers to engage in critical analysis and reflection and be able to identify professional needs. This will help teachers to take ownership of their own professional learning and engage more actively and willingly in opportunities that promote professional development.

Teachers who engage in mentoring as part of the induction programme are more likely to become effective practitioners (Everston & Smithey 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Chambers, et al., 2012). Therefore policy makers should invest in giving the best possible service and support structures to beginning teachers. Although this might prove a logistical headache, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) should not be left alone in schools, but they should receive adequate support from a school-based mentor who is adequately trained and a professional in the subject-area taught by the NQT. Policy makers and service-providers should promote mentoring as an opportunity for teacher collaboration and a journey of discovery for both the mentor and the mentee.

The mentor must take the role of a 'critical friend' and value the new knowledge and ideas achieved through interactions with the novice teacher (Lai, 2005). On the other hand, the mentee should view mentoring as a learning process rather than merely something that needs to be done to obtain the teachers' warrant. Policy makers can help mentees to eliminate this notion by providing the mentoring scheme as an independent professional development

process, free from any judgment and appraisals, and not part of a two-year journey of teacher assessment as part of induction years.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Given the lack of the empirical research in the context, further studies on a local level would give better insight of the effects and impact of mentoring as part of induction and on professional development of beginning teachers. Exploring the following as research questions can facilitate the attainment of such objectives:

1. An analysis and evaluation of the perspectives of teachers across other subjects regarding the mentoring system and induction programme.
2. An analysis of the new Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Mentoring organised by the University of Malta and its impact on mentors' practices.

Concluding Comments

This study has offered an evaluative perspective about the trends of professional development opportunities in which beginning PE teachers engage in. The findings illustrate the challenges encountered by beginning PE teachers during their induction years. The effectiveness of the mentoring system as part of the induction programme of beginning teacher has been explored. Therefore, suggestions to improve the current provision of professional development as well as the mentoring system have been made. This research

provides an understanding of the implication of the CPD experiences and mentoring scheme of beginning teachers. It also provides fruitful ground for further study in the area aimed at providing an improved and effective educational service for teachers and students.

REFERENCE LIST

Achinstein, B. & Davis, E., 2014. The Subject of Mentoring: Towards a Knowledge and Practice Base for Content-focused Mentoring of New Teachers. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning ,* 22(2), pp. 104-126.

Ambrosetti, A. & Dekkers, J., 2010. The Interconnectedness of the Roles of Mentors and Mentees in Pre-service Teacher Education Mentoring Relationships. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education,* 35(6), pp. 41-55.

Antoniou, P., 2016. Characteristics of Effective Teacher Training and Professional Development Programmes . In: T. Norton, ed. *Professional Development: Recent Advances and Future Directions.* New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, pp. 121-136.

Armour, K., 2010. The Physical Education Profession and Its Professional Responsibility … or … Why '12 Weeks Paid Holiday' Will Never Be Enough. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy,* 15(1), pp. 1-13.

Armour, K. & Makopoulou, K., 2012. Great Expectations: Teacher Learning in a National Professional Development Programme. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* Volume 28, pp. 336-346.

Armour, K. & Yelling, M., 2007. Effective Professional Development for Physical Education Teachers: The role of informal, collaborative learning. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education ,* 26(2), pp. 177-200.

Asaf, M., Shachar, R., Tohar, V. & Kainan, A., 2008. From a Superteacher to a Super Teacher: The Career Development of Teacher Educators. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 9(3).

Astarita, S. & Pirotta, S., 1999. *The First Year of Teaching.* Msida: Unpublished B.ED (Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.

Attard Tonna, M. & Calleja, C., 2010. The Let Me Learn Professional Process Experience: A New Culture for Professional Learning. *Revista de Ciencies de l'Educacio,* pp. 35-54.

Attard, K. & Armour, K., 2005. Learning to Become a Learning Professional: reflections on one year of teaching. *European Journal of Teacher Education ,* 28(2), pp. 195-207.

Attard, K., 2007. Habitual Practice vs. the Struggle for Change: Can Informal Teacher Learning Promote Ongoing Change to Professional Practice?. *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 17(1-2), pp. 147-162.

Attard, K., 2012. Public Reflection within Learning Communities: An Incessant Type of Professional Development. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 35(2), pp. 199-211.

Attard, K., 2016. Teachers Perceived as Professionals or Tehnicians: A Longstanding Contemplation that Impacts the Type of Professional Development Offered and/or Sought. In: T. Norton, ed. *Professional Development: Recent Advances and Future Directions.* New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, pp. 103-119.

Awaya, A., Mcewan, H., Heyler, D., Linsky, S., Lum, D. & Wakukawa, P., 2003. Mentoring as a Journey. *Teaching and Teacher Education ,* 19(1), pp. 45-56.

Bechtel, P. A. & O'Sullivan, M., 2006. Effective Professional Development: What We Now Know. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education,* 25(4), p. 363–378.

Behets, D. & Vergauwen, L., 2006. Learning to teach in the field. In: D. Kirk, D. Macdonald & M. O'Sullivan, eds. *Handbook of Physical Education.* London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 407-424.

Beijaard, D., Buitink, J. & Kessels, C., 2010. Teacher Induction. In: P. Peterson, E. Baker & B. McGaw, eds. *International Encyclopedia of Education.* 3rd ed. Oxford: Elsevier Science & Technology Books, pp. 563-568.

Bell, A. & Mladenovic, R., 2008. The Benefits of Peer Observation of Teaching for Tutor Development. *Higher Education,* 55(6), pp. 735-752.

Belvis, E., Ineda, P., Armengol, C. & Moreno, V., 2013. Evaluation of Reflective Practice in Teacher Education. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 36(3), pp. 279-292.

Bezzina, C., 2002. Preparing a Model of Professional Development Schools in Malta. *Curriculum and Teaching,* 17(2), pp. 73-84.

Bezzina, C., 2008. *Mentoring and Induction for the Beginning Teacher: A Practical Approach to Supporting new Teachers.* Malta: Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.

Bezzina, C. & Camilleri, A., 2001. The Professional Development of Teachers in Malta. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* Volume 24(2), pp. 157-170.

Bezzina, N. & Stanyer, R., 2004. *Beginning Teacher's Perceptions of their Preparation and Professional Development..* Msida: Unpublished B.Ed(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta .

Billett, S., 2003. Workplace mentors: Demands and Benefits. *Journal of Workplace Learning,* 15(3), pp. 105-113.

Blandford, S., 2000. *Managing Professional Development in Schools.* 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Bleach, K., 2012. *Induction and Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers: A New Deal for Teachers.* New York: Routledge.

Blumenfeld-Jones, D., 1995. Fidelity as a Criterion for Practicing and Evaluating Narrative Inquiry. In: C. Ellis & A. Bochner, eds. *Life History and Narrative.* London: Faler Press, pp. 25-35.

Boreen, J., Johnson, M., Niday, D. & Potts, J., 2009. *Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Guiding, Reflecting, Coaching.* 2nd ed. s.l.:Stenhouse Publishers.

Borko, H., 2004. Professional Development and Teacher Learning: Mapping the Terrain. *Educational Researcher,* 33(8), pp. 3-15.

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Ronfeldt, M. & Wyckoff, J., 2012. Recruiting Effective Math Teachers: Evidence from New York City. *American Educational Research Journal,* 49(6), p. 1008–1047.

Brown, A., 2009. *Higher Skills Development at Work: A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme.* London: ESRC, TLRP.

Bubb, S., 2013. *A Newly Qualified Teacher's Manual: How to Meet the Induction Standards.* 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Bubb, S. & Earley, P., 2013. The Use of Training Days: Finding Time for Teachers' Professional Development. *Educational Research,* 55(3), pp. 236-248.

Burton, D., 2000. The Use of Case Studies in Social Science Research. In: D. Burton, ed. *Research Training for Social Scientists: A Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers.* London: Sage Publications, pp. 197-206.

Byington, T., 2010. Keys to Successful Mentoring Relationships. *Journal of Extension,* 48(6), p. Article 6TOT8.

Campbell, L. & Campbell, B., 2009. *Mindful Learning: 101 Proven Strategies for Student and Teacher Success.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Carter, M. & Francis, R., 2001. Mentoring and Beginning Teachers' Workplace Learning. *Asia-pacific Journal of Teacher Education,* 29(3), pp. 249-262.

Chambers, F., Armour, K., Luttrell, S., Bleakley, W., Brennan, D. & Herold, F., 2012. Mentoring as a Profession-Building Process in Physical Education Teacher Education. *Irish Educational Studies,* 31(3), pp. 345-362.

Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S. & Major, L. E., 2014. *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research,* s.l.: The Sutton Trust .

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., 2011. *Research Methods in Education.* 7th ed. Oxon: Routledge.

Collinson, V., Kozina, E., Lin, Y., Ling, L., Matheson, I., Newcombe, L. & Zogla, I., 2009. Professional Development for Teachers: A World of Change. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 32(1), pp. 3-19.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A., 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cordingley, P. & Buckler, N., 2012. Mentoring and Coaching for Teachers' Continuing Professional Development. In: S. Fletcher & C. Mullen, eds. *The Sage Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Ecducation.* London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 215-227.

Costa, A. L., Garmston, R. J. & Zimmerman, D. P., 2014. *Cognitive Capital: Investing in Teacher Quality.* 1st ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Craft, A., 2000. *Continuing Professional Development: A practical guide for teachers and schools.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Creswell, J. W., 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches.* 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Croft, A., Coggshall, J. G., Dolan, M., Powers, E. & Killion, J., 2010. *Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well,* Washington: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Richardson, N., 2009. Research Review/Teacher Learning: What Matters?. *Educational Leadership ,* 66(5), pp. 46-53.

Darling-Hammond, L., Chung Wei, R., Andree, A., Richardson, N. & Orphanos, S., 2009. *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in United States and Abroad,* Stanford University: National Staff Development Council.

Day, C., 1999. *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning.* London: Falmer Press.

de Vaus, D., 2001. *Research Design in Social Research.* London: Sage Publications.

Department for Education and Skills, 2013. *Statutory Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers: A handbook for schools,* Cardiff: Department for Education and Skills.

Department for Education, 2015. *Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers (England): Statutory guidance for appropriate bodies, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies,* London: Department for Education.

Directorate for Quality and Standard in Education, 2013. *Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers: Handbook,* Malta: Ministry of Education and Employment.

Desimone, L., 2009. Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualisations and measures. *Educational Researcher,* 38(3), p. 181–99.

Desimone, L. M. & Garet, M., 2015. Best Practices in Teachers' Professional Development in the United States. *Psychology, Society, & Education,* 7(3), pp. 252-263.

Edwards, G. & Thomas, G., 2010. Can Reflective Practice be Taught?. *Educational Studies,* 36(4), pp. 403-414.

Elliot, D. & Campbell, T., 2013. 'Really on the Ball': Exploring the Implications of Teachers' PE-CPD Experience. *Sport, Education and Society,* 20(3), pp. 381-397.

Elliott, R., Fischer, C. T. & Rennie, D., 1999. Evolving Guidelines for Publication of Qualitative Research Studies in Psychology and Related Fields. *The British Journal of Clinical Psychology,* 38(3), pp. 215-229.

Ennis, C. & Chen, S., 2012. Chapter 16: Interviews and Focus Groups. In: K. Armour & D. Macdonald, eds. *Research Methods in Physical Education and Youth Sport.* New York: Routledge, pp. 217-236 .

European Commision Staff Working Document SEC, 2010. *Developing Coherent and System-Wide Induction Programmes for Beginning Teachers: A handbook for policy makers,* Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

European Commission, 2013. *Supporting Teachers Competence Development: for better learning outcomes,* s.l.: European Commission.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies,* Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission, 2005. *Strengthening teaching in Europe: New evidence from teachers compiled by Eurydice and CRELL,* s.l.: European Commission.

European Commission, 2008. *European qualifications framewrok for lifelong learning,* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Everston, C. & Smithey, M., 2000. Mentoring Effects on Protégés' Classroom Practice: An Experimental Field Study. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 93(5), pp. 294-304.

Fallon, M. & Brown, S., 2002. Crossing over from Student Teaching to First Year Teaching. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue,* 4(1), pp. 37-46.

Feiman-Nemser, S., 2001. Helping Novices to Learn to Teach: Lessons from an exemplary Support Teacher. *Journal of Teacher Edcuation,* 52(1), pp. 17-30.

Ferguson-Patrick, K., 2011. Professional development of early career teachers: A pedagogical focus on cooperative learning. *Issues in Educational Research,* Volume 21(2), pp. 109-129.

Flyvbjerg, B., 2011. 17. Case Study. In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research.* 4th ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 301-316.

Foster, J. M., Toma, E. F. & Troske, S. P., 2013. Does Teacher Professional Development Improve Math and Science Outcomes and Is It Cost Effective?. *Journal of Education Finance,* 38(3), pp. 255-275.

Fowler, J. & O'Gorman, J., 2005. Mentoring Functions: A contemporary view of the perceptions of mentees and mentors. *British Journal of Management,* 16(1), pp. 51-57.

Fraser, C., Kennedy, A. & Reid, L., 2007. Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: Contested concepts, understandings and models. *Journal of In-Service Education,* 33(2), pp. 153-169.

Freire, P., 1996. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New Revised ed. London: Penguin Books.

Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Birman, B. & Yoon, K., 2001. What Makes Professional Development Effective? Results From a National Sample of Teachers. *American Educational Research Journal,* 38(4), pp. 915-945.

Gehrke, N., 1988. Toward a Definition of Mentoring. *Theory Into Practice,* 27(3), pp. 190-194.

Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Jayanthi, M., Kim, J.S. & Santoro, L.E., 2010. Teacher Study Group: Impact of the professional development model on reading instruction and student outcomes in first grade classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal,* 47(3).

Goodall, J., Day, C., Lindsay, G., Muijs, D., & Harris, A., 2005. *Evaluating the Impact of Continuing Professional Development, Research Report No.659,* London: Department for Education and Skills.

Guion, L. A., 2002. *Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies,* Florida: University of Florida.

Guskey, T., 2002. Professional Development and Teacher Change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice,* 8(3), pp. 381-391.

Guskey, T. R. & Yoon, K. S., 2009. What Works in Professional Development?. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 90(7), pp. 495-500.

Hairon, S. & Dimmock, C., 2012. Singapore Schools and Professional Learning Communities: Teacher Professional Development and School Leadership in an Asian Hierarchical System. *Educational Review,* 64(4), pp. 405-424.

Hancock, D. R. & Algozzine, B., 2011. *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers.* 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College.

Hardman, K. & Marshall, J., 2005. Physical Education in Schools in European Context: Charter Principles, Promises and Implementation Realities . In: *Physical Education: Essential Issues.* London : Sage Publications , pp. 39-64.

Hargreaves, A., 1994. *Changing Teachers: Changing Times..* Toronto: OISE Press.

Harland, J. & Kinder, K., 1997. Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: framing a model of outcomes. *British Journal of In-service Education,* 23(1), p. 71–84.

Harris, A., Day, C., Goodall, J., Lindsay, G. & Muijs, D., 2006. What difference does it make? Evaluating the impact of continuing professional development in schools. *Scottish Educational Review,* 37(Special), pp. 90-98.

Hayes, D., 2001. The Impact of Mentoring and Tutoring on Student Primary Teachers' Achievements: A case study. *Mentoring and Tutoring,* 9(1), pp. 5-21.

Healy, M. & Perry, C., 2000. Comprehensive Criteria to Judge the Validity and Reliability of Qualitative Research within the Realism Paradigm. *Qualitative Market Research – an International Journal,* 3(3), pp. 118-126.

Heilbronn, R., 2004. From Trainee Teacher to Newly Qualified Teacher. In: S. Capel, R. Heilbronn, M. Leask & T. Turner, eds. *Starting to teach in the Secondary School: A companion for the newly qualified teacher.* 2 ed. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer, pp. 3-16.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I. & Bailey, A., 2011. *Qualitative Research Methods.* 1st ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Hiebert, J., 1999. Relationships between Research and the NCTM Standards. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education,* 30(1), pp. 3-19.

Hobson, A. & Malderez, A., 2013. Judgementoring and other Threats to Realizing the Potential of School-Based Mentoring in Teacher Education. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education,* 2(2), pp. 89-108.

Holland, H., 2005. Teaching Teachers: Professional Development To Improve Student Achievement. *American Educational Research Association: Research Points,* 3(1), pp. 1-4.

Holloway, I. & Galvin, K., 2017. *Qualitative Research in Nursing and Healthcare.* 4th ed. Cichester: Blackwell Publishing, Inc.

Holstein, J. & Gubrium, J., 2016. Narrative Practic eand the Active Interview. In: D. Silverman, ed. *Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc, pp. 67-82.

Hunzicker, J., 2011. Effective Professional Development for Teachers: a checklist. *Professional Development in Education,* 37(2), pp. 177-179.

Jacob, S. & Fergurson, S., 2012. Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report,* 17(42), pp. 1-10.

Jaquith, A., Mindich, D., Chung Wei, R. & Darling-Hammond, L., 2010. *Teacher Professional Learning in the United States: Case Studies of State Policies and Strategies,* Stanford: Learning Forward and Stanford University .

Kajs, L., 2002. Framework for Designing a Mentoring Program for Novice Teachers. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning,* 10(1), pp. 57-69.

Kennedy, A., 2005. Models of Continuing Professional Development: a framework for analysis. *Journal of In-Service Education ,* 31(2), pp. 235-250.

Kiely, R. & Davis, M., 2010. From transmission to transformation: Teacher learnining in English for speakers of other languages. *Language Teaching Research,* 14(3), pp. 277-295.

Kolb, S., 2012. Grounded Theory and the Constant Comparative Method: Valid Research Strategies for Educators. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies ,* 3(1), pp. 83-86.

Kraft, N. P., 2002. Teacher Research as a Way to Engage in Critical Reflection: A Case Study. *Reflective Practice,* 3(2), pp. 175-189.

Lai, E., 2005. *Mentoring for In-service Teachers in a Distance Teacher Education Programme: Views of Mentors, Mentees and University Teachers.* Parramatta, Sydney, s.n.

Leitch, R. & Day, C., 2000. Action Research and Reflecive Practice: Towards a holistic view. *Educational Action Research,* 8(1), pp. 179-193.

Lia, V. & Mifsud, S., 2000. *Exploring the Expectations of Newly-Qualified Teachers.* Msida: B.Ed (Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Educaion, University of Malta .

Lichtman, M., 2010. *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications, Inc.

Lichtman, M., 2013. *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G., 1985. *Naturalistic Inqury.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc.

Lindgren, U., 2005. Experiences of beginning teachers in a school-based mentoring program in Sweden. *Educational Studies,* 31(3), pp. 251-263.

Loucks-Horsley, S., Stiles, K. E., Mundry, S., Love, N. & Hewson, P.W., 2010. *Designing Professional Development for Teachers of Science and Mathematics.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Sage Publications.

Maaranen, K. & Jyrhämä, R., 2016. Easing the Entry into Teaching? Experiences of Co-Teaching in Student Teacher's Supervised Teaching Practice. In: T. Norton, ed. *Professional Development: Recent Advances Future Directions.* New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., pp. 137-154.

Magnusson, E. & Marecek, J., 2015. *Doing Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Learner's Guide.* 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Makopoulou, K. & Armour, K., 2011. Teachers' Professional Learning in a European learning society: a case of physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy,* 16(4), pp. 417-433.

Marable, M. & Raimondi, S., 2007. Teachers' Perception of what was most (and least) Supportive During their First Year of Teaching. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning,* 15(1), pp. 25-37.

Markula, P. & Silk, M., 2011. *Qualitative Research for Physical Culture.* 1st ed. Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan.

Mays, N. & Pope, C., 2000. Assessing Quality in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Research in Health Care,* Volume 320, pp. 50-52.

McCaughtry, N., Cothran, D., Hodges Kulinna, P., Martin, J. & Faust, R., 2005. Teachers Mentoring Teachers: A View Over Time. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education,* 24(4), pp. 326-343.

McConnell, T. J., Parker, J. M., Eberhardt, J., Koehler, M. J. & Lundeberg, M. A., 2013. Virtual Professional Learning Communities: Teachers' Perceptions of Virtual Versus Face-to-Face Professional Development. *Journal of Science Education and Technology,* 22(3), pp. 267-277.

McCormack, C. & West, D., 2006. Facilitated Group Mentoring Develops Key Career Competencies for University Women: A case study. *Mentoring and Tutoring,* 14(4), pp. 409-431.

McIntyre, D. & Hagger, H., 1996. *Mentors in schools: Developing the profession of teaching..* London: David Fulton.

McIntyre, D., Hagger, H. & Wilkin, M., 1994. *Mentoring: Perspectives on School-Based Teacher Education.* London: Routledge Falmer .

McMillan, D., McConnell, B. & O'Sullivan, H., 2016. Continuing professional development – why bother? Perceptions and motivations of teachers in Ireland. *Professional Development in Education,* 42(1), pp. 150-167.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, M. A., 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, Inc.

Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012. *National Curriculum Framework for All,* Floriana: Ministry of Education and Employment.

Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, Malta, 2010. *Agreement between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers.* Malta: Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family.

Minnett, A. M., 2003. Collaboration and Shared Reflections in the Classroom. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice,* 9(3), pp. 279-285.

Morse, J., 2015. Critical Analysis of Strategies for Determining Rigor in Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research ,* 25(9), pp. 1212-1222.

OECD, 2009. *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from Talis,* Paris: OECD Publications.

Opfer, D. & Pedder, D., 2011. The Lost Promise of Teacher Professional Development in England. *European Journal of Teacher Education ,* 34(1), pp. 3-24.

O'Sullivan, M. & Deglau, D., 2006. Principles of Professional Development. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education,* 25(4), pp. 441-449.

Owen, L., 2014. 7. Continuing Professional Development: Can it ever be creative?. In: J. Hallgarten, L. Bamfield & K. McCarthy, eds. *Licensed to Create: Ten essays on improving teacher quality.* London: RSA Action and Research Centre, pp. 60-64.

Patton, K., Griffin, L., Sheehy, D., Arnold, R., Gallo, A., Richardson, K., Dodd, P., Henninger, M. & James, A., 2005. Chapter 2: Navigating the mentoring process in a

research-based teacher development project: A Situated learning perspective. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education ,* Volume 24, pp. 302-325.

Portner, H. & Portner, M., 2012. Using Best Practices for Teaching the Process of Coaching. In: S. Fletcher & C. Mullen, eds. *The Sage Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education.* London: Sage Publishers Ltd, pp. 399-411.

Price, M. & Chen, H., 2003. Promises and Challenges: Exploring a collaborative telementoring programme in a pre-service teacher education programme. *Mentoring and Tutoring,* 11(1), pp. 105-117.

Punch, K., 2009. *Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* 1st ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Punch, K. F. & Oancea, A., 2014. *Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Rhodes, C. & Beneicke, S., 2002. Coaching, Mentoring and Peer-Networking: challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools. *Journal of In-Service Education,* 28(2), pp. 297-310.

Richter, D., Kunter, M., Lüdtke, O., Klusmann, U., Anders, Y., & Baumert, J. 2013. How Different Mentoring Approaches Affect Beginning Teachers' Development in the First Years of Practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* Volume 36, pp. 166-177.

Rockoff, J. E., 2008. *Does Mentoring Reduce Turnover and Improve Skills of New Employees? Evidence from Teachers in New York City.* Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc..

Rose, J. & Reynolds, D., 2006. *Teachers' Continuing Professional Development: A New Approach.* s.l., 20th Annual World ICSEI, pp. 219-240.

Saldaña, J., 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd..

Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M. & Cheraghi, M. A. 2014. Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: the necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History Medicine,* 7(14).

Seale, C., 2002. Qauality Issues in Qualitative Study. *Qualitative Social Work ,* 1(1), pp. 97-110.

Seidman, I., 2013. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education & the Social Sciences.* 4th ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Shenton, A., 2004. Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information,* 2(2), pp. 63-75.

Shkedi, A., 2005. *Multiple Case Narrative: A Qualitative Approach to Studying Multiple Populations.* 1st ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Snape, D. & Spencer, L., 2003. *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for Social Science Students and Researchers.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Stake, 2005. 17. Qualitative Case Studies. In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research.* 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 443-466.

Stanulis, R., Fallona, C. & Pearson, C., 2002. 'Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing?': Mentoring Novice Teachers Through the Uncertanities and Challanges of their First Year of Teaching. *Mentoring & Tutoring,* 10(1), pp. 71-81.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: grounded theory procedures and techniques.* London: Sage Publications.

Taylor, P. & Medina, M., 2013. Educational Research Paradigms: From Positivism to Multiparadigmatic. *The Journal of Meaning-Centered Education,* 1(2), pp. 1-13.

Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H. & Fung, I., 2007. *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration,* Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Tracy, S., 2010. Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 16(10), pp. 837-851.

Van Driel, J. H. & Berry, A., 2012. Teacher Professional Development Focusing on Pedagogical Content Knowledge. *Educational Researcher,* 41(1), pp. 26-28.

Vonk, J., 1993. Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Mentor knowledge and skills. *Mentoring,* 1(1), pp. 31-41.

Walby, K. & Luscombe, A., 2016. Criteria for quality in qualitative research and use of freedom of information requests in the social sciences. *Qualitative Research,* pp. 1-7.

Wang, J. & Odell, S. J., 2002. Mentored Learning to Teach According to Standards-Based Reform: A Critical Review. *Review of Educational Research,* 72(3), pp. 481-546.

Wang, J., Strong, M. & Odell, S. J., 2004. Mentor-Novice Conversations About Teaching: A Comparison of Two U.S. and Two Chinese Cases. *Teacher College Record,* 106(4), pp. 775-813.

Wechsler, M. E., Caspary, K., Humphrey, D. C. & Matsko, K. K., 2010. *Examining the Effects of New Teacher Induction.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Wei, R., Darling-Hammond, L. & Adamson, F., 2010. *Professional Development in the United States: Trends and Challenges.* Dallas: National Staff Development Council.

Wenger, E., 2001. *Supporting Communities of Practice: a survey of community-oriented technologies.* Available at:

https://guard.canberra.edu.au/opus/copyright_register/repository/53/153/01_03_CP_technology_survey_v3.pdf

Woodside, A. G., 2010. *Case Study Research: Theory, Methods and Practice.* 1st ed. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Yan, C. & He, C., 2015. 'Short courses shouldn't be short-lived!' Enhancing longer-term impact of short English as a foreign language INSET initiatives in China. *Professional Development in Education,* 41(5), pp. 759-776.

Yin, R., 2003. *Applications of Case Study Research.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Yin, R., 2014. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* 5th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W.-Y., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K., 2007. *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007–No. 033),* Washington, DC: U.S.: Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest.

Zachary, L., 2012. *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships.* 2nd ed. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Zellermayer, M. & Tabak, E., 2006. Knowledge Construction in a Teachers' Community of Inquiry: a possible road map. *Teachers and Teaching,* 12(1), pp. 33-49.

Zimpher, N. & Reiger, S., 1988. Mentoring teachers: What are the issues?. *Theory Into Practice,* 27(3), pp. 175-182.