

Chapter Two

The Coaching and Scaffolding Intervention

2.1 Introduction

While Chapter One presented an overview of the current research, Chapter Two provides an explanation of the instructional intervention implemented to guide the teacher-students towards a better understanding of their learning content, as well as towards collaborating in a technologically enhanced learning environment. It describes the implementation of coaching and scaffolding intervention strategies designed to develop teacher-students to become less dependent on instructivist teaching methods and adopt constructional teaching methods. The instructional aim of the study was to create an understanding of the research principles part of the BEd Honours programme that the teacher-students were enrolled for at the North West University. This chapter describes the coaching teacher-students received during peer-tutoring and peer support. The conceptual framework of Kruger (2012) (Figure 3.1) formed the basis of the coaching and scaffolding intervention. This chapter describes the context of the participants, participants' profiles, facilities, compilation of the group page on Facebook, metaphor, and coaching and scaffolding interventions. Chapter Five describes the participation record of the participants in terms of their affective experiences.

2.2 Context of participants

The participants in this research were isiXhosa speaking teacher-students living and working in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. The Eastern Cape is the second largest of the nine provinces in South Africa and is situated along the southeast coast (Fobosi, 2013) (Figure 2.1). It comprises an area of 169 580 km² and has between 6,5 and 6,8 million inhabitants (Bhaktawar, 2012; ECSECC, 2012). The primary languages spoken are isiXhosa (83,4%), Afrikaans (9,3%) and English (3,6%) (Bhaktawar, 2012; Burger, 2006). The communication statistics from the 2011 census show that 81,2% people have cellular phones and 75,9% have no access to the Internet.

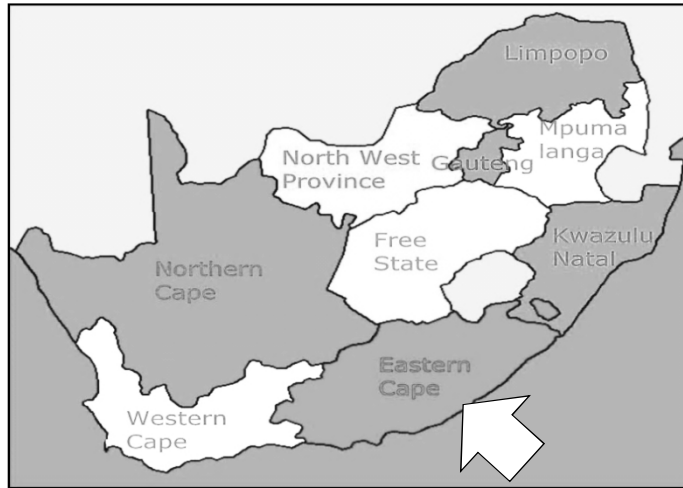


Figure 2.1 **Nine South African Provinces**

Rural areas can be described as industrially underdeveloped, outlying areas that are often inhabited by subsistence farmers (Evans, 2005). By definition, rural areas in the Eastern Cape are those that are without access to ordinary public services like water, sanitation and formal local authorities (Fobosi, 2013; Makoe, 2010). Infrastructure is limited; roads are in a poor condition, and only some homes have running water and electricity (Evans, 2005). The majority of the participants who participated in this research lived in the townships and scattered settlements surrounding Queenstown and daily travelled to their various sites of work in the neighbouring rural areas. They used public transport as it was cheaper than using their private vehicles because the maintenance on their private vehicles was too expensive due to the bad road infrastructure. The one participant, who worked in a township school in Cathcart, lived in the rural village areas of King William's Town where he returned to every weekend to be with his family. Only a few participants lived in the towns where they worked. Teachers working in the same vicinity often hired a taxi to transport them to and from their sites of work.

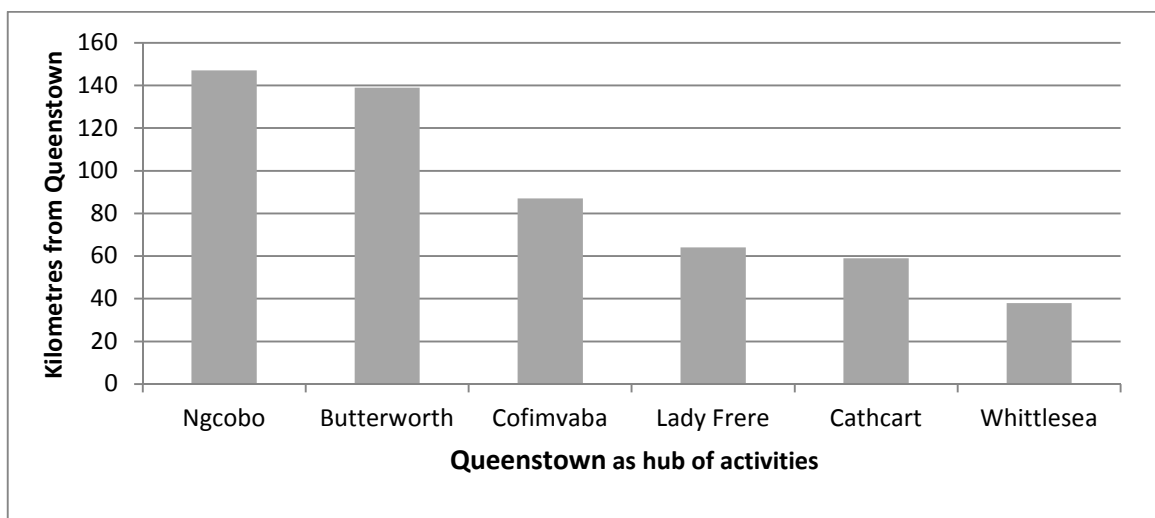


Figure 2.2 **Travelling distances in relation to Queenstown**

None of the schools where the participants taught, and only one school in Queenstown, had a functioning library. Prior to the start of the research project, the participants were not aware of the services which the Queenstown library offered in respect of research, i.e. an Internet service similar to an Internet café where participants could search the Internet at an hourly rate, and access a printing facility at additional cost. Internet access at the schools where they taught was generally unreliable and not conducive to search for research information on the Internet. At one school, for example, there was only one computer connected to the Internet, which only the administrative clerk used. This computer was supposed to serve fifteen teachers. Teachers had to make appointments with the administrative clerk when they wanted to access the Internet. Often, just when they started working, the Internet connection would be interrupted. Only two teacher-students participants owned laptops. The only Internet connection available to all the participants was through cellular phone connections. Nobody had personal access to printing facilities. The procurement of literature needed for their BEd research proposals remained a major stumbling block.

The transcripts of nine of the participants' higher education, who attended a focus group session on 21 June 2013, indicated that: (i) two obtained their BEd degrees in 2002 and 2006 respectively; (ii) three obtained an NPDE in 1999, 2002 and 2006 respectively, and (iii) four obtained ACE certificates between 2009 to 2011—mostly through distance education.

2.3 Instructional Interventions

The aim of the research was to compile a support group on Facebook to enhance the learning experience of teacher-students in the rural Eastern Cape. Using Facebook, I compiled a group page where teacher-students could interact supportively, on an academic level, with one another, and with me (the group facilitator and researcher) towards completing their research proposals for the BEd Honours Research Project (RSPR 671). The content of the RSPR 671 was a logical choice for content as the basis of the theoretical coaching and scaffolding for the current research. This module is a compulsory module for all BEd Honours degree students. During the first session, I ascertained that 98% of the attending teacher-students were engaged with the proposal-writing of the RSPR 671 module. Therefore I decided to use that section of the module as content base. It also fitted in with my own study timeframe and I, as a full-time Master's student have to fulfil the research requirements within a specific timeframe.

I organised face-to-face sessions where I implemented coaching and scaffolding concepts regarding the theoretical content of the module and also held interviews with the participants. These sessions also served as motivation to (i) assist the participants with connectivity issues, and (ii) break through technological barriers which they experienced.

The plan of the instructional intervention was to coach and scaffold a section of the proposal theory each week, and then allow the students to implement the theory during the following week. Thereafter I would coach and scaffold the next section on the academic Facebook group-page (Table 2.1). However, this plan failed because of the low level of technological skills of the participants, challenges of access to the Internet, and their poor understanding of the course content. This forced me to conduct six face-to-face coaching and scaffolding sessions over the eight-week period of data collection (Table 2.2).

I knew some of the participants because we had previously met while I completed my BEd Honours. These students had failed their research project module. I had a good rapport with the students and I asked a mutual contact to introduce me to the current teacher-student group.

2.4 Facilities for the face-to-face sessions

It was important for me to procure a central and easily accessible venue to ensure maximum teacher-student participation in the research programme. In Queenstown, I was able to hire the library hall. In Cathcart, the high school's authorities made the school library available to me at no cost. The library hall in Queenstown is situated adjacent to the public library in the centre of town. The hall had seating space for up to sixty people, conference tables as well as overhead projector facilities. The library hall was conducive to learning and teaching sessions as it provided a safe, quiet and academic environment with no interferences from outside. Participants could also access the venue easily. The main disadvantage of this venue was that we had to adhere to tight time-restrictions. I booked the hall ahead of time for the specific hours, and we had to adhere strictly to these arrangements. On the other hand, this motivated the teacher-students to focus on the work at hand within the set time-frames.



Figure 2.3 **Queenstown Public Library**

The Anne Nash Library at Cathcart High School, a quiet venue, provided tables and chairs for all participants. It was a convenient venue to use on a Saturday. Unfortunately the participants had to travel further in order to attend face-to-face coaching and scaffolding sessions at this venue. The advantage

of using this venue was that sessions could carry on as long as needed for everyone to benefit most from the learning experience as no time restrictions were stipulated.



Figure 2.4 Cathcart High School Library

2.5 Creation of a group page for academic use on Facebook

To make use of Facebook as an academic tool, I compiled a group page according to the three group options: (i) an open group, (ii) a closed group, and (iii) a secret group. I chose the latter because it prevented others not invited to join the group, from becoming a member. The interaction and information could only be shared by the invited members. I named the group FaceFunda. *Face* was taken from Facebook and *Funda* from isiXhosa that means *to learn*. I designed the group by finding the *applications* menu on the left side of the Facebook Home Page, where the options of *groups* are displayed (Kennan, 2009; Stern, 2013). I clicked on the *create group* button, and a step-by-step window opened up which guided me through the process (Kennan, 2009). I added descriptive information which personified the group's character and purpose. I added the group page logo (Figure 2.5), and the aims of the group. I chose the name of the group carefully because it had to portray the image of the page appropriately (Aase, 2009; Stern, 2013). Only invited teacher-students could become a member of the academic Facebook support group page, FaceFunda. Every participant that intended to join the group had to have a Facebook account. I, as the group administrator, invited each participant to join the group in order to gain access. When exiting the group, they had to click on the removal option that showed below the profile picture of the group on the Home Page. When they selected this option, they were removed from the group's member list (Kennan, 2009) and were not able to participate further. The screen capture of the FaceFunda website can be seen in Addendum 2.1.



Figure 2.5 Metaphor of the academic group on Facebook

Figure 2.5 shows when participants joined the FaceFunda group. During the first face-to-face session, only one participant joined the group; eight days later one more was added, six days later the next participant was added. I took along an Information Technology (IT) expert to the third session and he managed to register five more participants on FaceFunda. Within the next five days, a further five participants joined. During and after the fourth session, five more participants joined FaceFunda. After the technology workshop, the IT expert added the last four participants. Ultimately 22 teacher-students joined the FaceFunda support group website. The IT expert and I created and joined the group first, which meant that there were actually 24 group members, of which 22 were teacher-students.

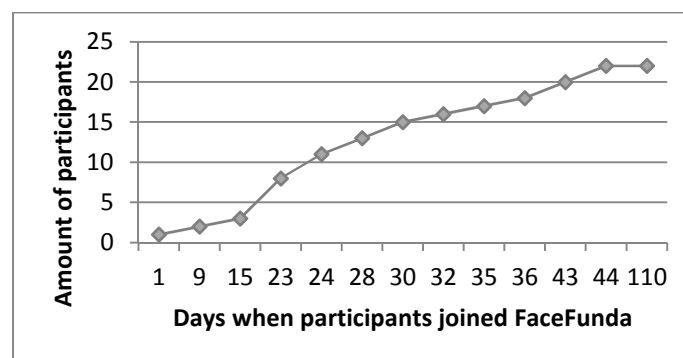


Figure 2.6 When participants joined FaceFunda

2.6 Metaphor

I introduced the metaphor of FaceFunda to the group as a taxi which transported teacher-students to their new academic destinations (Figure 2.5). The teacher-students ascribed to this metaphor as taxis were common in their every-day lives. They also understood that they would be a group of passengers that would benefit from support from the driver as well as from group support. While inside the taxi, they could communicate with one another, share information, support one another and work together to achieve academic success. I, the researcher, acted as the taxi-driver. The knowledge and space we shared, were the fuel in the tank, enabling the teacher-students to move forward towards their destination, their BEd Honours degree. I invited the teacher-students to the taxi:

*This taxi is here today, it's saying phoop-phoop, phoop-phoop! Come and get in, come and get in! We are going from this place to that place! I want all of you to know the work nicely—so that you can pass these things. I do not want you to fail it, because then you get despondent...*¹ (P10-11)

*...and eventually you leave it. And I don't want it to be like that. We must all go forward, so that everyone knows these things—you must understand the work so that you can go forward yourself*² (P11-12).

¹ *Le taxi ilapha ngoku namhlanje ithi: Phoop-phoop! Phoop-phoop! Yizani nizokukhwela! Sizaku suka apha siye phaya. Ndifuna nonke niazi kakuhle ukwenzela nikwazi ukuziphumelela ezi zinto. Andifuni ningaphumeleli, mane passe ezisinto! Andifuna lento umto o lailayo, failishayo...*

² *...and ojaekela lento. And asi funi into enjalo. Ok? sia funa o hambe phambile, siase khakhuhle lento, nawe uachonda, naywo oya hamba phambile.*

2.7 Coaching and Scaffolding

Coaching and scaffolding is a teaching method whereby a facilitator lays solid foundations of knowledge to enable students to build onto their own knowledge-structure (Puntambekar, 2013) (§ 3.2.3.1). During the constructivistic approach towards teaching and learning, students required coaching and scaffolding to move from the instructivist approach they knew towards a more constructivist approach where they were more responsible for their own learning. This approach was in line with Bruner's spiral curriculum (Theories of Learning in Educational Psychology, s.a.) (§3.2.2.1), which entailed the (i) revisiting of basic ideas, (ii) building and elaborating to new levels of understanding, and (iii) students' mastery of learning content. Vygotsky's ZPD (Puntambekar, 2013) (§3.2.2.1), underpins the idea of coaching and scaffolding. More knowledgeable peers guided their fellow students to bridge the distance between the actual developmental level and the required level of potential development. Visual aids, textual explanations, and real examples blurred the difference between beginning and advanced knowledge. The appropriate sequencing of the steps as indicated in the RSPR 671 study guide also supported the teacher-students in their grappling with the learning content. Coaching and scaffolding assisted the teacher-students to (i) verbalize their areas of incompetence, (ii) develop confidence in their learning, (iii) set personal goals, and to (iv) accomplish their potential by passing the research module.

In order to accomplish these goals, I designed different stages for the research activities (Table 2.1). I could, however not execute these plans exactly as planned because of various factors. These factors were mainly (i) the irregular attendance of most of the teacher-students: previous work had to be re-explain at every coaching and scaffolding session (peers explained the work to one another); (ii) the level of technological skill of the participants prevented me to only post new sections on FaceFunda—I had to discuss much background-theory to be at the level where the students are before I could move on to new work. Figure.2.7 shows the separate sections which were to be introduced every week. I divided the course material into manageable pieces, evenly distributed across the eight-week period, and printed these section-headings on various coloured posters and displayed the posters at the coaching and scaffolding sessions and on FaceFunda.

Table 2.1 **Planned research phases and activities**

Stages	Activity	Time-frame
Phase 1 Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain names from OLG of students in Eastern Cape, Queenstown surroundings Send SMSs to prospective participants inviting them to a group session Selection criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a technological device that can connect to Internet for Facebook willing to travel to a venue for two face-to-face group sessions 	15 February 18 April
Phase 2 Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information group session on Saturday morning Information on the research project Explanation of academic Facebook group page Invitation to join Facebook group (FaceFunda) Explanation of RSPR 671 time frame Explanation of the coaching and scaffolding process 	27 April
Phase 3 Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 1: Research question and background to problem (Face-to-face session) Week 2: Literature review (Face-to-face session) Week 3: Methodology (On FaceFunda) Week 4: Data collection (On FaceFunda) Week 5: Data analysis (On FaceFunda) Week 6: Bibliography (On FaceFunda) Facebook interactions with participants 	4 May 11 May 18 May 25 May 1 June 8 June
Phase 4 Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 3: Beginning of individual interviews Week 8: Focus group interview with the participants (Face-to-face session) 	15 June

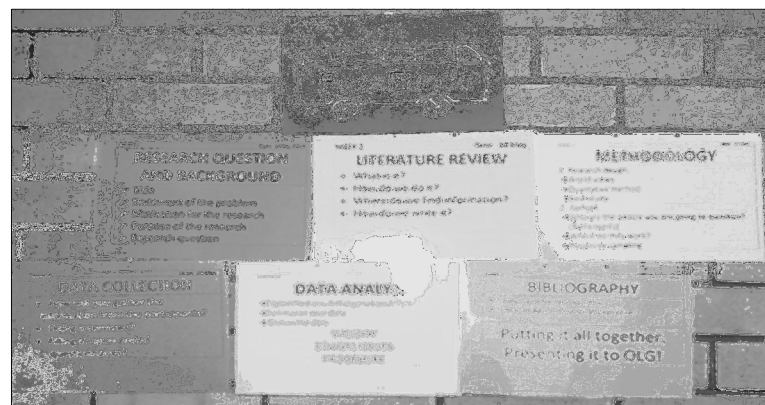


Figure 2.7 **Posters of the planned weekly programme**

Table 2.2 reflects a summary of the six coaching and scaffolding sessions which were held at various intervals, as well as the researcher's reflections after each session. The table indicates the number of teacher-students that attended the sessions, where the sessions were held, how many joined FaceFunda at various stages, the coaching and scaffolding planned for the sessions, as well as the facilitators involved at the various sessions.

Table 2.2 Details of participation in face-to-face coaching and scaffolding sessions

Session	Facility and rationale	Invitations sent out	Participants attending	On FaceFunda	Coaching and scaffolding	Responsible	Reflections
First session: 26 April	Queenstown library Introduction and overview	74 via SMS	24	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduce myself and assistants. A teacher-student whom I knew while we studied for our BEd Hons modules, to introduce me to the group of teacher-students • to guide them through the proposal phase of RSPR 671 • Introduction to metaphor: FaceFunda group was a taxi to transport teacher-students to new academic insights • Explaining the six-week Facebook sessions • To sign consent forms 	R Bester A Kene N Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session took place according to plan • A mutual contact introduced me to the new teacher-students as I wanted to diminish cultural barriers • 24 teacher-students signed consent-forms • Teacher-students felt excited to receive additional support for RSPR 671 • During the first session only one teacher-student joined FaceFunda group due to technological and connectivity barriers • (Find audio recording as Addendum 2.2)
Second session: 7 May	Queenstown library Coaching and scaffolding	74 via SMS	9	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduce myself (the researcher) and assistants • Describe the research, i.e. to guide them through the proposal phase of RSPR 671 • Introduce the metaphor: FaceFunda as taxi to transport teacher-students to new academic destinations • Discuss reasons for Facebook interaction and the FaceFunda group as taxi • Discuss connectivity issues • Hear about problems associated with their cellular-phones • Form small groups and discuss topics for the teacher-students' chosen topics • Engage with the RSPR 675 manual pages 23-24 • New participants: to sign consent forms • Support teacher-students to open Facebook accounts • Join teacher-students to the FaceFunda group 	R Bester M Cossie N Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session not according to plan as too few participants arrived for effective group-work • Discussion held regarding aspects of research methodology: (i) the title, research question and background, (ii) how teacher-students should choose their topic, and (iii) how teacher-students should explain their own situation in their project • Time restrictions of use of library facilities was not conducive to complete the session's agenda with teacher-students • Assistants could not solve all the technological issues relating to the teacher-students' cellular phones • I realised that I needed to obtain the support of an IT expert to assist with technological and connectivity issues in order for more teacher-students to join FaceFunda group • Teacher-students who attended for the first time, signed consent forms as they also wanted to be part of the FaceFunda support group

Session	Facility and rationale	Invitations sent out	Participants attending	On FaceFunda	Coaching and scaffolding	Responsible	Reflections
Third session: 17 May	Queenstown library Coaching and scaffolding	74 via SMS and FaceFunda	19	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduce myself (the researcher), assistants, and the IT expert to assist with technical and connectivity issues • Give detail about the support available on the FaceFunda group • Explain the procedures of navigating to the FaceFunda group by means of a hand-out (Addendum 2.3) • Present a motivational talk on: <i>Internal decisions to be made about learning and interpreting own work</i> (Boughey, 2013) (Mail & Guardian, Addendum 2.4) • Discuss how to do a literature review • Demonstrate an Internet search for academic journal articles • Sign consent forms • Assist teacher-students to join the FaceFunda group • Address of technological issues 	R Bester J Rossouw W Mbangeli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many teacher-students who attended for the first time, signed consent forms as they also wanted to be part of the FaceFunda support group • I explained the role of Facebook as part of additional course interaction • IT expert explained step-by-step how to obtain a Facebook account and join the FaceFunda group on the teacher-students' cellular phones • Group work: Teacher-students who attended the previous sessions became group-leaders and discussed the topics with the new people • Group-discussions and peer interaction took place in isiXhosa, but research terminology mostly remained in English • Discussion on the literature review • Demonstration of how to search for scholarly books and articles on Google Scholar was well received • The assistant made a video recording of a section of the session (Addendum 2.5) • IT expert invited twelve new participants to Facebook and accepted them to the FaceFunda group
Fourth session: 25 May	Cathcart library Coaching and scaffolding	34 via SMS and FaceFunda	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Recap previous discussion on literature review • Work in groups as per their chosen topics • Conclude the session in terms of the feedback from the teacher-student groups • IT expert to give talk on use of cellular phone to access on FaceFunda group • Outline the following session information (methodology, participants and sampling) that will be posted to FaceFunda group only—no face-to-face session • Watch a video to be posted to FaceFunda group 	R Bester J Rossouw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letter of permission from the principal to use the School Library as a venue for a session during the weekend is attached as Addendum 2.6 • Students did not arrive on time, but at intervals due to the distances which they had to travel • I could not follow the planned coaching and scaffolding agenda due to external issues such as late arrivals, technology issues and low competence of the teacher-students • After the arrival of the first two students, we discussed the scope of the research proposal which I summarized

Session	Facility and rationale	Invitations sent out	Participants attending	On FaceFunda	Coaching and scaffolding	Responsible	Reflections
					about the research design (Addendum 2.8)		<p>in table format (Addendum 2.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These students in turn explained the concepts to new arrivals, who in turn again explained the concepts to later arrivals • Peer tutoring mainly took place in isiXhosa. English concepts were highlighted and explained. The audio recording of this session is Addendum 2.9 • The teacher-students scrutinized my personal literature files, academic journals and books • The teacher-students were excited about the discussions as they felt secure in their understanding of the requirements of the research proposal • The teacher-students left the library feeling that they could continue with their own research topics
Fifth session: 7 June	Queens-town library IT Workshop	34 via SMS and FaceFunda	13	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Discuss why only a few teacher-students are participating on FaceFunda • Practice (i) accessing FaceFunda, (ii) writing a message on FaceFunda, (iii) accessing a video, (iv) reading a file, (v) linking a page, (vi) answering a poll-question, and (vi) searching on Google Scholar for scholarly articles • Join more teacher students to FaceFunda • Recap the requirements of a research proposal 	R Bester J Rossouw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IT expert assisted some teacher-students to join the FaceFunda group • I recapped the requirements of the research proposal by means of a summary page (Addendum 2.7) • I reiterated that FaceFunda was the group page, especially created to support the learning experience of the teacher students for the research module • I, the facilitator, and peers could ask questions, provide feedback, and post other relevant information to FaceFunda group • I highlighted specific problem areas like copying of other students' work, and plagiarism • The IT expert presented a workshop on the following: (i) logging onto Facebook, (ii) going to FaceFunda group, (iii) posting ideas by clicking on comment, (iv) answering poll questions, (v) moving beyond Facebook, and (vi) using Google Scholar in search of articles. (Addendum 2.10)

Session	Facility and rationale	Invitations sent out	Participants attending	On FaceFunda	Coaching and scaffolding	Responsible	Reflections
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In groups, the teacher-students assisted one another with cellular phone and laptop competencies • The IT expert checked each group to resolve issues • The oldest participant (lady of 55 years) helped most of the teacher-students by showing them how to combine their cellular phones with their laptops • A video on the researcher's reflections while participants collaborated with one another (Addendum 2.11) • isiXhosa and English terminology was used intermittently
Sixth session: 21 June	Queens-town library Focus group interview	34 via SMS and FaceFunda	10	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Receive nametags and sign the attendance register • Enjoy a light lunch and peer socialising • Clarify the process that will be followed during the focus group interview • Overview the contents of the previous sessions by means of a PowerPoint Presentation (Addendum 2.12) • Outline house-rules for the session • Ask questions which the teacher-students answer on their examination pads • Discuss the compilation of a bibliography • Focus group interview of semi-structured questions by the session facilitator. 	R Bester W Mbangeli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-students arrived intermittently • Teacher-students received nametags and light-lunch to enjoy while socialising with one another • I provided an overview of the events and learning that took place during previous sessions through a PowerPoint presentation (Addendum 2.12) • I recapped on the supportive group activities • I asked some open-ended questions which they answered on their gifted FaceFunda examination pads • The focus group facilitator guided the participants through the semi-structured interview questions, allowing the participants to share their experiences • The participants answered in softly-spoken sentences, spoke only English and respected one another's opinions • There was not enough time to discuss the requirements of referencing styles. Information was posted to the FaceFunda group page • The focus group interview can be seen on a video (Addendum 2.13)

2.8 Photographs of the coaching and scaffolding sessions

I took photographs at the various face-to-face coaching and scaffolding sessions that were held to assist the teacher-students who participated in the current research in order to have a picture report of the interventions³.



Figure 2.8 Photographs of the first coaching and scaffolding session

Figure 2.8 portrays the events during the first session in Queenstown. A mutual contact introduced me to the group through telling them how we met a year ago while writing BEd exams (picture 1). The second photo shows the group of teacher-students who attended and listened eagerly to the planned activities which would take place during the time to come. The old man sitting centre, never attended any further sessions, although he signed a consent form during the session. The third photo illustrates where an assistant explains to two participants how the FaceFunda support group would work and assisted them to try to join FaceFunda. Picture 4 shows the teacher-students filling in and signing the consent forms as part of ethical consent for the research project.



Figure 2.9 Photographs of the second coaching and scaffolding session

In Figure 2.9, picture 1 portrays the few teacher-students who attended the second session in Queenstown. Picture 2 shows participants getting acquainted with one another and discussing the issues at hand. Picture 3 demonstrates the participants' unwillingness to part straight after the session. They had found support and collaboration in one another and they still had more to share.

³ The participants confirmed the permission for the use of voice recorders, videos and photographs during the first coaching and scaffolding session (Addendum 4.3, P1: 4).



Figure 2.10 Photographs of the third coaching and scaffolding session

Figure 2.10 portrays the events of the third session in Queenstown where the IT expert assisted the participants to join FaceFunda. Group-work was successful as teacher-students explained the steps in proposal-writing to one another. Picture 1 shows the group-work where peers explained previous work to one another. Picture 2 portrays where I coached and scaffolded the theory of the literature review and showed them examples of literature. Picture 3 shows the intense focus of the participants during group-work and the IT expert who assisted the participants to join FaceFunda. After the session ended, many participants still wanted to talk to the IT expert and no-one was in a rush to leave the venue (Picture 4).

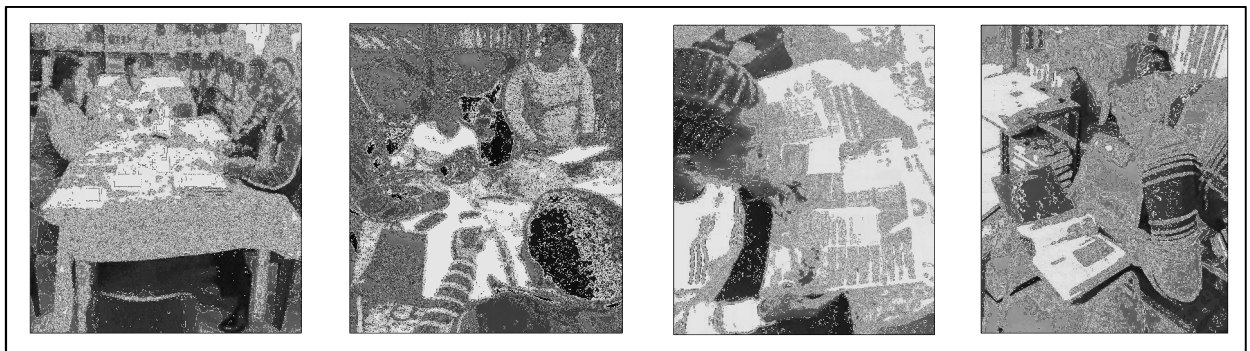


Figure 2.11 Photographs of fourth coaching and scaffolding session

Figure 2.11 displays the events which took place in Cathcart at the school library. Two participants arrived and I explained the summary of the proposal writing to them. As the other participants arrived, the first participants supported them by explaining the different aspects of proposal writing to one another. They read their written work to one another, discussed problems and worked through the summary which I provided (picture 1). Picture 2 depicts the students' focussed attention on the task at hand, while examining information relevant to their chosen titles for their Proposal. Picture 3 shows where one of the teacher-students was reviewing information. Picture 4 shows where a participant perused my files with collected information for the Literature Review section of his Proposal. This working-session developed into an opportunity for the participants to work purposefully on their individual tasks.



Figure 2.12 Photographs of fifth coaching and scaffolding session

Figure 2.12 illustrates episodes during the Technological Workshop which was presented by the IT expert. He discussed technological terminologies, pathways on how to access Facebook and FaceFunda, as well as how to go beyond these basics and to do research on Google Scholar on their cellular phones. He was very impressed with their eagerness to learn and to participate. Picture 1 shows the oldest participant, a 55 year-old lady, (who was the highly skilled technological person of all the participants), illustrating how to access information on her laptop. Picture 2 and 3 depicts how many participants grouped around her and listened and learned from her explanations which she did in isiXhosa, only using English terminology. Picture 4 illustrates how the IT expert patiently sorted out connectivity issues and spent time with individual participants, showing them how to use their cellular phones in an academic setting.



Figure 2.13 Photographs of sixth coaching session

Figure 2.13 depicts moments at the focus group interview in Queenstown. Picture 1 shows where I welcomed the participants and explained the procedure of the session. Picture 2 depicts where I presented a PowerPoint presentation about highlights of all the various sessions and interviews that were held during the eight weeks of working together. Picture 3 shows the concentrating participants watching the PowerPoint presentation. It was such a pity that only ten participants arrived, however, a constructive focus group interview was held where many insightful opinions and ideas were brought to the table. All agreed that the support group was very helpful and assisted them to overcome most of their barriers. By this stage of group cohesion, the participants were calling me and one another by nicknames and were sad that the physical sessions were finished, but they were eager to keep on supporting one another on the academic Facebook group page FaceFunda. Picture 4 shows participants socially interacting around the u-shaped tables.

2.9 Conclusion

The participating rural teacher-students experienced many challenges relating to technological and access issues, understanding of the content of the module, as well as the execution of the RSPR 671 research proposal assignment. The support group, as well as the support through the Facebook FaceFunda group page aimed to address all three of these areas. Friendship and trust developed amongst the teacher-students who experienced the same challenges. The teacher-students developed skills in terms of peer support and interacting with electronic peer support.

Chapter Three relates to the relevant literature and addresses issues relating to the research question.